



Islamabad POST

Monday, July 01, 2024

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

ME facing serious changes amid Israeli offensive in Gaza

Detailed News On Page-07

Hungary's Orban announces new EP alliance

Detailed News On Page-08

Indian allrounder Ravindra Jadeja also quits T20I

Detailed News On Page-06

No immediate levy on petrol

Tax on retailers from today: FM

Aurangzeb says IMF funding intact; govt trying to make is last IMF program; over Rs 600 billion corruption in FBR; non-filers term will not exist anymore; pension reforms not to apply on armed forces for one year

STAFF REPORT/DNA

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said Sunday he was "very optimistic" about Pakistan securing a new International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout after President Asif Ali Zardari approved the tax-heavy budget for the next fiscal year beginning on July 1. "The IMF programme is our assurance in terms of macro stability. We are taking it forward; it is inevitable. I'm very optimistic that we'll be able to take it through the finish line for an Extended Fund Programme which is going to be larger and longer in nature," the minister told reporters in Islamabad. The cash-strapped federal government adopted a Rs18.9 trillion budget laced with tax-raising measures as it had sought to secure a new bailout from the IMF after almost defaulting last year. In the budget, the government has increased the taxes on the already burdened salaried class, bought exporters into the normal tax regime, increased the petroleum levy to Rs70, and imposed new taxes on the real estate sectors, among others, to increase the tax collection. Experts have said that while the financial blueprint is expected to help the struggling nation unlock a Fund deal, but also cautioned that it could lead to further inflation, which would draw public anger. The finance minister, talking about the burden on the inflation-struck masses, said: "I completely understand the stress that people from different sectors feel about additional taxes; I completely empathise and sympathise, but we need to work for it." The finance minister said he was clear-headed and would ensure that the government works to lessen the burden on the common people and businesses in the coming days by curbing leakages and improving the management system. In a nation of over 240 million people and where most jobs are in the informal sector,

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Pak to seek Qatar's permission to resell excess LNG

Islamabad preparing to secure Gulf state's consent to either cancel shipments or sell them on spot market

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government will approach Qatar seeking the Gulf state's permission to resell the liquefied natural gas (LNG) imported from Doha in the spot market in case there's low domestic demand, quoting a senior official from the Ministry of Energy a Pakistani newspaper reported. The revelation comes in light of the long-term LNG supply contract signed between Islamabad and Doha back in 2016. The price revision under the contract is due in February 2026. Under the agreement, Pakistan State Oil (PSO) is obligated to take supplies regardless of domestic demand, causing pipeline issues for Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) when the utility fails to consume the gas. Officials have said that Pakistan is preparing to approach Qatar through diplomatic channels, seeking either to cancel shipments or

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ASEAN MOVIE NIGHT AT BRUNEI RESIDENCE



ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Brunei to Pakistan Kamal Ahmad organized a movie night at his residence in connection with ASEAN movie festival. All heads of missions of the ASEAN countries including Myanmar, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand and their families attended the event. The next movie shall be screened at the Malaysian High Commission on July 5. - DNA

Millions of French vote in snap polls

The two-round vote could put the far-right in power in France for the first time

AGENCIES

PARIS: French voters turned out in large numbers on Sunday for the first round of high-stakes snap parliamentary elections which could alter France's trajectory and see the far-right party of Marine Le Pen take power in a historic first. President Emmanuel Macron stunned the nation by calling snap polls after the far-right National Rally (RN) party's strong showing in European Parliament elections this month.

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Welcomes negotiations with PTI Fazl demands fresh polls sans involvement of the establishment

Says PTI lacks unity in leadership, Sunni Ittehad Council chief does not want alliance with JUI-F | JUI-F chief urged all departments to focus on their own work and not to violate oath

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Maulana Fazlur Rehman, leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), has called for new elections and urged the establishment to stay away from the electoral process. Addressing a press conference after the central executive committee meeting, Fazl said the incumbent government was not in a position to resolve their grievances. He said the JUI executive committee has also reviewed the contact with political parties. He said JUI will talk to anyone with the guarantee of elections.

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Fawad rules out jailed Imran's release

"All of us are suffering due to lack of political strategy of current PTI leadership," says former federal minister

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Amid reports of internal rifts within the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), former federal minister

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Six dead as rains batter Balochistan

N-70 highway connecting Balochistan to KP closed for traffic; rescue teams dispatched for stranded passengers

STAFF REPORT

QUETTA: The death toll due to heavy rains which have been battering Balochistan for the last five days has risen to six leaving 25 others wounded in various incidents across the province, Geo News reported on Sunday. The N-70 highway which connects the province to

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Briefs

Elections to be held in 2029: Tarar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar on Sunday said that the general election would only be held in 2029 upon completion of the constitutional tenure of the incumbent government. While reacting to Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) chief Maulana Fazlur-Rehman's presser, he said the Parliament was an appropriate forum to do politics in the current circumstances. "Solution to all the problems in politics lies in negotiations and dialogue," the minister added. Tarar termed Maulana a "seasoned" and "respected" politician, urging him to appreciate the government's economic policies that drove an increase in the foreign exchange reserves, and took the stock exchange to historic highest level.

Ashrafi blasts US Congress

Says it's an insult to Pakistani people's mandate

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) chief Allama Tahir Ashrafi on Sunday extended his full support to Operation Azm-i-Istehkam, calling for going ahead with the plan to root out extremism and terrorism from Pakistan. Ashrafi stressed the need for unity and consensus to fight the scourge of terrorism and implementing the National Action Plan (NAP) in its letter and spirit, as condemned the extremism-related incident in Swat, Jaranwala and Sargodha.

'Form of extortion'

Iran envoy condemns US resolution on Pakistan polls

US resolution is "open interference in domestic affairs of independent member of UN", says envoy

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Iran on Sunday criticised the resolution passed by the United States Congress, seeking an investigation of claims of "interference or irregularities" in February 8 elections. "We condemn controversial US resolution on Pakistan elections," said Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Reza Amiri Moghadam. The US House of Representatives, earlier this week, in an overwhelming majority, voted to demand a "full and independent investigation of claims of interference or irregularities" in the polls. The resolution HR 901 was passed by a massive 368 against seven votes on Tuesday, which makes 85% of the total American lawmakers in the legislature. Through the resolution, the US lawmakers had emphasised the need for the Pakistani public's participation in the country's democratic process months after its general polls were contested as "rigged" and its outcome termed "delayed" by political parties now seated on the opposition benches in the legislature.

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Senator Mushahid Hussain praises China

Senator attends event commemorating 70 years of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in China

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: Senator Mushahid Hussain has praised China for establishing an 'alternative new global' order based on equality and justice. He made these remarks at an International Conference in Beijing organised by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to commemorate 70 years of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The event was attended by over 200 political leaders, scholars, intellectuals,

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Taliban delegation attends meeting in Qatar sans women

The Taliban were not invited to the first meeting, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said they set unacceptable conditions for attending the second one in February, including demands that Afghan civil society members be excluded from the talks and that the Taliban be treated as the country's legitimate rulers

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: A Taliban delegation on Sunday attended a United Nations-led meeting in Qatar on Afghanistan after organizers said women would be excluded from the gathering. The two-day meeting is the third UN-sponsored gathering on the Afghan crisis in the Qatari capital of Doha. Zabihullah Mujahid, the chief spokesman for the Taliban government who leads its delegation, wrote on social media platform X that the delegation met with representatives from countries including Russia, India and Uzbekistan on the sidelines of the meeting. The Taliban were not invited to the first meeting, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said they set unacceptable conditions for attending the second one in February, including demands that Afghan civil society members be excluded from the talks and that the Taliban be treated as the country's legitimate rulers.

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Asif criticises Kabul for inaction against militants

Minister says Pakistan hoped for cooperation from Afghan govt; however, Kabul wasn't ready to take action

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif on Saturday rebuked the Afghanistan government for inaction against militants along the

Continued on Page 06

Sizzling WOK
ASIAN CUISINE

OPENING SOON

PAN ASIAN CUISINE
F-6/3, Kausar Market, Islamabad

Balochistan business delegation calls on Indonesian envoy

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Charge'D Affaires of the embassy of the Republic of Indonesia to Pakistan, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma on Monday said that Balochistan has a vital role in the bilateral economic and trade relations between Indonesia and Pakistan. The Charge'D Affaires of the embassy of the Republic of Indonesia to Pakistan, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma said this while talking to the delegation of a business community from Baluchistan led by former President Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry along with others. Meanwhile Minister Councilor, economic and trade affairs of the Indonesian Embassy, Ingan Malem and Axelsyah R. Miraza from the economic section of embassy and President Chaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry

were also part of the bilateral dialogue. The Charge'D Affaires of the embassy of Indonesia said the volume of bilateral trade between Indonesia and Pakistan is less than its potential, which needs to be further increased and in this regard, businessmen from Baluchistan can play an important role in the economic and trade integration of Indonesia with the Central Asian states. The senior diplomat said that Pakistan can become a trade hub of Central Asian states for Indonesia in the future, in which both countries can get economic and trade benefits by following comprehensive planning. He said that Pakistan is a very important trade partner of Indonesia in South Asia, whose importance has always been maintained. Rahmat Hindiarta said that Pakistan is a geo-strategically important country, a natural geo-economic partner of Indonesia and in the future, mutual economic and trade

relations between the two countries will increase. He said that for the promotion of bilateral trade between the two countries, not only the market but also sector diversification is needed, which will increase mutual trade. The Senior diplomat said that the role of the local private sector, especially the Chamber of Commerce of Baluchistan, is important in the bilateral economic integration of the two countries. Rahmat said that the business community and chambers in Pakistan should go ahead and promote trade between Indonesia and Pakistan. He said that there is a need for further promotion of people-to-people relations between the two countries so that the people of the two countries come closer to each other.



ISLAMABAD: CDA worker busy in showering water on plants in front of Parliament House.—APP

BMP rejects proposed 355% hike in industry power charges

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has rejected the unprecedented increase of up to 355 percent in fixed charges of electricity for industrial consumers, beside showing dismay over imposition of high capacity charges on consumers stating that high cost will make

Pakistani products completely out of competition in the international market. Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman and FPCCI former president Mian Anjum Nisar held an emergent meeting of stakeholders on higher electricity tariffs, stating that NEPRA's latest forecast for power purchase prices for the current fiscal year reveals a substantial financial burden, with consumers to bear 300% of costs for fixed

capacity payments. He was of the view that substantial fuel costs, particularly petroleum imports, potentially pose extreme volatility and strain on foreign exchange reserves. Businessmen leader said the unprecedented increase in fixed charges was tantamount to destruction of industries and burying people alive. The traders warned of the government for launching an agitation campaign. They also made it

clear that if in case, the decision couldn't be withdrawn immediately, aggressive and harsh steps would be taken against unfair and unjust hike in fixed charges, and government and relevant authorities will be responsible for any unfortunate incident, he added. Mian Anjum Nisar said the government should prioritize resolving the energy crisis by providing sufficient and affordable electricity and gas to industries.

DC calls for effective measures against dengue in ICT

ISLAMABAD : Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon has chaired a weekly performance review meeting, which was attended by all Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners here. The meeting focused on the anti-dengue campaign, following recent reports of dengue larvae in 53 locations and nine confirmed dengue cases in the city. DC calls for emergency measures against dengue in ICT. The concerned officers provided updates on their actions.—APP

Measures underway to combat potential floods

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam has said that comprehensive measures were being taken to prepare for potential floods ahead of the upcoming monsoon season. In a statement on Sunday, she said, "These proactive efforts aim to minimize the impact of floods on vulnerable communities." She said, "The ministry is serving as a collaborative platform for all relevant departments to

assess flood vulnerability in prone areas and develop a unified strategy to mitigate the effects of potential floods on livelihoods." She said, "This coordinated approach ensures a robust response to flood risks from the government departments." "This proactive approach demonstrates the government's commitment to preparedness and resilience in the face of potential floods", she added. She said, "The ministry has convened three weekly task force meetings focused on global warming and heat waves, bringing together representatives from key

agencies in June." She said, "These institutions like Ministry of Climate Change, National Disaster Management Authority, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Pakistan Meteorological Department, and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting are working together to support each other to achieve same goal." "These meetings have facilitated the sharing of expertise and inputs on effective flood impact reduction measures," she stated.

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JOIN PAKISTAN AIR FORCE AS COMMISSIONED OFFICERS IN MEDICAL BRANCH (133 COMBAT SUPPORT COURSE)



ONLINE REGISTRATION FROM 02 JULY, 2024 TO 13 JULY, 2024 ON www.joinpaf.gov.pk

MEDICAL BRANCH (PSYCHIATRIST) (SPSSC)

Nationality: Male citizens of Pakistan | Age on 01 Nov, 2024 : 29-38Years
Rank: Squadron Leader | Training Period: 24 weeks.
Qualification:
MBBS: Minimum 2nd Div or equivalent and specialization in the following discipline from a Pakistani / Foreign medical college / university recognized by the Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PMDC / PMC).
→ Psychiatrist : FCPS / FRCP / MCRS / MRCP / Diplomate American Board

MEDICAL BRANCH (GDMOs) (SPSSC)

Nationality: Male citizens of Pakistan | Age on 01 Nov, 2024 : 24-28Years
Rank: Flight Lieutenant | Training Period: 24 weeks.
Qualification:
MBBS: Minimum 2nd Div or equivalent from a Pakistani / Foreign medical college / university recognized by the Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PMDC / PMC) having completed minimum one year house job in an institution recognized by the PMDC / PMC. Preference would be given to those who have relevant field experience after house job.

MEDICAL BRANCH (DENTAL SURGEON) (SPSSC)

Nationality: Male citizens of Pakistan | Age on 01 Nov, 2024 : 23-28Years
Rank: Flight Lieutenant | Training Period: 24 weeks.
Qualification:
BDS: Minimum 2nd Div or equivalent from a Pakistani / Foreign medical college / university recognized by the Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PM & DC / PMC) having completed minimum one year house job in an institution recognized by the PM & DC / PMC. Preference would be given to those who have relevant field experience after house job.

Candidates must be in possession of NADRA Smart Card

SELECTION PROCEDURE

- Online registration at www.joinpaf.gov.pk
- Intelligence Test followed by Academic Test in relevant subjects at respective I & SC
- Initial medical examination and interview at I & SC
- Psychological Test of Short listed candidates only
- Interview by First AHQ Special Selection Board
- Final medical examination at CMB, Lahore
- Interview by Second AHQ Special Selection Board
- Final Selection by AHQ in order of merit

FUTURE PROSPECTS

- Highly Competitive salary package
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INELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

- Following are ineligible:
 - (a) Rejected by ISSB / GHQ / NHQ / AHQ selection boards.
 - (i) Twice rejected by ISSB for Post Graduate Entry.
 - (ii) Twice rejected by ISSB for intermediate / Graduate (PMA / Graduate / Equivalent) and once rejected by ISSB OR GHQ / NHQ / AHQ based selection boards.
 - (iii) Once rejected by ISSB for intermediate / Graduate (PMA / Graduate / Equivalent) and twice rejected by ISSB OR GHQ / NHQ / AHQ based selection boards.
 - (b) Twice screened out by ISSB.
 - (c) Dismissed / Removed / Debarred from Govt Services including Armed Forces.
 - (d) Tested within four months (120 days) gap of previous appearance in ISSB except waiver granted by the competent authority. However, bar of 120 days will not be applicable to candidates appearing in GHQ / NHQ/AHQ selection boards.
 - (e) Convicted in a Court of Law for any heinous offense (to be ascertained by the competent military authority)
 - (f) Permanently declared UNFIT by Appeal Medical Board (PUF by AMB).
 - (g) Declared medically unfit due to Hepatitis B & C (AMB cannot be requested).
 - (h) Withdrawn from any bonded Armed Forces college / institution on disciplinary grounds.
 - (i) Withdrawn / discharged / resigned or purchase release from any Armed Forces officers Academy / Training institution on any ground.
 - (k) Tempering of academic certificate / forgery / concealment to get undue advantage will make an applicant permanently ineligible for all forms of commission in Armed Forces.
 - (l) Thrice screened out by Army / Navy / Air Force during preliminary selection.

For further details please contact any of the following PAF Information & Selection Centres

→ ABBOTTABAD : 310-Mansehra Road, Near Ayub Medical Complex Ph: 0992-385157,385166	→ MIANWALI : Fazaia Road, Opp Custom Office Ph: 0459-350226
→ FAISALABAD : Main Jhang Road, Near Airport Chowk Ph: 041-9201199,2577799	→ PESHAWAR : 9-The Mall, Peshawar Cantt Ph: 091-9210829,5286329
→ HYDERABAD : 49 - Salahuddin Road, Cantt Ph: 022-920093	→ QUETTA : M.A Jinnah Road Ph: 081-92017531
→ KARACHI : Main Shahrah-e-Faisal (Near PAF Base) Faisal Ph: 021-99240999	→ RAWALPINDI : 3-The Mall, Opposite AFIC Ph: 051-5701143,5701257-58
→ LAHORE : 14 - Munir Road, (Near PAF Cinema) Munir Chowk Ph: 042-99220084, 36671041-3	→ SUKKUR : Opposite Govt Islamia College, Minara Road Ph: 071-9310409
→ MULTAN : 217 - Sher Shah Road Ph: 061-9201183-9201795	→ KHARIAN : Baharwala Road, Near Punjab College, Kharian Ph: 0323-9408339
→ MUZAFFARABAD : Shoukat Lines Near APS Muzaffarabad Cantt Ph: 05822-923272	→ GILGIT : FC Road, Jutial Gilgit Ph: 05811-930088
	→ D.I.KHAN : Fazle Elahi Shaheed Raod, Near Bus stand Ph: 0966-9280311

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentine Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

July 30/Morocco 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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Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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



Hospitals

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MH.....5611116
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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

Country going through worst economic situation: Barlas

A conducive environment has to be provided for internal and especially external investment Then we will get the desired results. Khurshid Barlas further said that we have to highlight the positive image of our country in the world. One of our conferences in Jeddah raised \$19 billion in investment

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Founder Chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Mohammad Khurshid Barlas has said in his exclusive interview that there is no doubt that the country of Pakistan is currently going through the worst economic situation according to the IMF. The conditions imposed by the economic situation is not very favorable due to lack of productivity and other reasons. However, the gradual reduction in inflation, stabilization of the dollar rate, improvement in the stock exchange

are positive indicators. We have to go towards public-private partnership to improve the economic situation on a permanent basis, because the government's job is not to do business, governments are facilitators. Happens. Along with this, all the policies made in the business field have to be made in conjunction with the stakeholders and experts in the field. A conducive environment has to be provided for internal and especially external investment Then we will get the desired results. Khurshid Barlas further said that we have to highlight the positive image of our country in the world. One of our conferences in Jeddah raised

\$19 billion in investment. We do a lot of homework, select targets, do research, contact investors. Provides information to those interested in investing. Then the desired results are achieved. We have to promote investment with the neighboring countries. In this context, the government should hold an investment conference in any country. So follow up is very important. Sometimes we don't get results just because we forget to do any event and then don't follow up. In response to a question, he said that we have to set our targets in education, civil aviation, medical, tourism and there are many other sectors that can

attract the attention of investors. In response to another question, he said that the economic situation in our neighboring country India is seen better. The media has the most important role in this. Their media stands with the government. Unfortunately, the media has such a positive role in our country. It is not paying we should have a key role of media to discuss the politics and that too the internal politics on the media 24 hours a day. In this regard, the Ministry of Information should also play its role. Feedback should be sought from researchers and the experience

of successful people should be utilized. Whenever policy makers make policies, they must consult with experts in the field. Those people can give better opinion. We have to work together with stakeholders for far-reaching results. Mohammad Khurshid Barlas said that Pakistan is a country where there is a lot of potential, there are immense opportunities for investment, but here we only need to show the best image of our country to the world, then investors from all over the world can come here. In this regard, our personal efforts are definitely paying off. But government capital is also necessary for this.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Poland Maciej Pisarski hosted a lunch for a select group of media persons. From left to right, Aniq Nisar, Ameer Hussain, Moshin Raza, Mahnoor, Ali Furqan and Ansar Bhatti. —DNA

Mushahid acclaims China

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain has acclaimed China for laying the basis for an 'alternative new global order based on equality and justice'. He made these remarks at the International Conference convened in Beijing by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to mark 70 years of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which was attended by over 200 political leaders, scholars, intellectuals, economists and journalists from over 50 countries, a news release said. Senator Mushahid Hussain, who is Chairman of the Pakistan-China Institute & Co-Chairman, International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), the largest organisation of political parties in Asia, also thanked President Xi Jinping for bestowing on him the prestigious 5 Principles of Peaceful Coexistence Award, as he is the first and only Pakistani politician and parliamentarian to be given this honour by China. He was given this Award by President Xi Jinping at a special ceremony during the Chinese President's State Visit to Pakistan in April 2015. Mushahid Hussain termed President Xi Jinping's speech at the function as truly significant, having far-reaching historical significance, as China has taken political ownership of the 5 Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which today are the foundation of the new emerging global order, as well as a 'Code of Conduct' for the Global South, that is now being led from the front by China. Senator Mushahid Hussain, in his speech, said, "the Beijing Conference has a three-fold relevance for contemporary international politics. First, China's initiative for 5 Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as well as its continuity through President Xi Jinping's vision of a 'Community for Shared Future for Mankind' are visions rooted in Asian Wisdom which springs from centuries old civilisations. Second, this is the first non-Western vision of a new global order that rejects hegemony, militarism or diktat of any one power-based military might. Third, today the Global South, comprising countries of Asia, Africa & Latin America, are the World's Majority, and given the international consensus behind China's initiatives of 5 Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and 'Community of a Shared Future for Mankind', these are now the philosophical foundations for Global South, which will drive economic and political developments in the future". Giving examples from China's contribution to Asian wisdom, which is based on peace, harmony, equality and inclusivity, he cited the Chinese philosophy of 'Seek Truth from Facts' and 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics', adding that China is the only country in history to rise peacefully, without conquest, colonisation, invasion, occupation or aggression. Appealing to the West to discard notions of a New Cold War or 'containment' of China, Senator .—DNA

Raisani for strengthening democracy

ISLAMABAD: Nawabzada Jamal Khan Raisani, Secretary General of the National Assembly Young Parliamentarians Forum (YPF), emphasized the importance of the parliamentary system, stating that it strengthens democracy. He highlighted that this system allows people to participate in government through their elected representatives. Raisani urged the youth to actively engage in politics to fortify parliamentarism in Pakistan. He pointed out that 64% of Pakistan's population is comprised of young people, who represent the golden future of the country. Educating the youth about the democratic system and involving them in the parliamentary process is essential, he stressed. He mentioned that Pakistan's parliamentary history began with its independence in 1947. Raisani acknowledged that the parliamentary system in Pakistan has faced various challenges, including martial law, military dictatorships.—APP

Gilgit Baltistan's fruit industry shines

ISLAMABAD: Gilgit Baltistan, a region of breathtaking beauty and cherry orchards, has emerged as the producer of the high-quality fruit that has now paved way to international markets. The cherries of Gilgit Baltistan are renowned for their sweet and tangy taste, juicy texture, and high nutritional value. The famous cherry-producing areas of Hunza, Nagar, Yasin, Phundar, and Nomal are known for their ideal climate and fertile land. These regions produce high-quality cherries and have put Gilgit Baltistan on the map as a premier fruit-producing region. In a significant development, Gilgit Baltistan has sent its first shipment of fresh cherries to China, marking an important moment in its agricultural exports. The milestone, achieved this summer, is in implementation of the Plant Health agreement made between the two countries in 2022. China's cherry market is worth \$3 billion and needs 350,000 tons of cherries each year, providing a great opportunity for Pakistani growers. An owner of the largest cherry farm in Gilgit Rahimabad, which is approved by the Chinese Customs, emphasizes the benefits of the partnership be-

tween Pakistan and China in agricultural exports. "The approval of Gilgit Baltistan cherry orchards by Chinese customs is a testament to the region's high standards," said Arman Shah, CEO of Hashwani Group, and owner of the largest cherry farm in Gilgit Rahimabad approved by Chinese Customs. His cold storage facility allows exports even after the season ends, ensuring a steady supply. The cherries from Gilgit-Baltistan, he said, are already sold in the Middle East and that this year's export prices ranged between Rs 700-1,000 per kg. Over 100 cherry orchards and a cold storage and packing center in Gilgit's Rahimabad have been registered with China's General Administration of Customs, meeting high-quality and safety standards. This certification means growers from Gilgit Baltistan can get better prices for their cherries. Currently, Gilgit-Baltistan produces about 5,000 tons of cherries each season, but with access to the Chinese market, production is expected to increase. Experts and cherry growers are optimistic about the future of cherry exports. Dr. Fatima, a horticulture expert from Gilgit Balti-

stan, highlights the importance of this development, stating that it would boost the economy and promote the region's rich agricultural heritage. Muhammad Hassani, a local cherry farmer from Gilgit, shares his excitement about the new market opportunities, confident that their cherries would be a hit in China and beyond. However, he stresses educating local farmers through modern techniques of cherry production in a bid to increase the fruit export. "Pakistan can boost its cherry exports and earn valuable foreign exchange if bilateral agreements are signed with other countries, similar to the one inked between China and Pakistan on cherry production and trade," he said. Raja Mir Wazir Mir, a visionary farmer, made a bold move in 2020 by replacing potato crops with over 500 cherry plants. His gamble paid off, as he now earns a staggering Rs 0.5 million annually, a significant increase from his previous income. Inspired by his success, numerous farmers in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) have adopted this innovative approach, reaping handsome rewards and transforming their livelihoods.—APP

Mansoor Rahi contributions to art world acknowledged


ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Art Gallery (IAG) organized a condolence reference in memory of Mansoor Rahi, a celebrated artist whose recent passing left an indelible mark on the Pakistani art landscape. The reference was attended by prominent artists and former Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Jamal Shah, Curator Gallery 6, Arjumand Faisal and prominent artists including Asma Abbasi, Hassan Raza, Munir Ahmad, Farah Mehmood, Amna Shah, Hajra Mansoor wife of Mansoor Rahi (late) with her daughter Saima and Danish Rahi son of Legend Artist (late) Mansoor Rahi. On the occasion, a number of artists and art lovers shed light on Rahi's life and career. To commemorate his legacy and contributions to the world of Art, Chairman of IAG, prominent artist and Former Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah said that IAG organized a special event for the remembrance of Mansoor Rahi and to pay tribute to his contributions. Paying tribute to him, Jamal Shah said that Mansoor Rahi was the leading figurative abstract painter of Pakistan and his teaching and influence have led to the emergence of a larger number of prominent artists than any other teacher artist. Jamal Shah said that cultural departments like PNCA and Culture Division should have taken the lead to organize a tribute to legendary artist Mansoor Rahi. "I feel my moral duty as an artist to take this initiative which was thankfully attended by a large group of people today", he said. Hajra Mansoor spoke about over five decades of her life with Mansoor Rahi and his contributions. She was very sad about the way his work was taken away by their son without his her consent. She said that all the work was supposed to be displayed in Rahi Museum which was the biggest wish of Rahi. The participants of reference unanimously decided to constitute a committee for resolving the issues related to Mansoor Rahi missing paintings and the museum. It was also decided that the committee would be led by Jamal Shah comprised of prominent artists, curators and art collectors. Hajra Mansoor proposed that a full-fledged Mansoor Rahi Museum should be established. The participants highly praised the idea of establishing a museum at his residence with the support of government and artist fraternity.—DNA

Park Road expansion project to be completed by July 14

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa Sunday said that the Park Road Expansion project should be completed without any delay by July 14. During his visit to the Park Road Expansion project, he said that all sections of the project must proceed simultaneously. Muhammad Ali directed the relevant officials to increase labor and machinery to expedite the development work of the project. The CDA chief said that no further delays would be tolerated. He said the project had previously faced delays due to various administrative issues. It is pertinent to mention here that the CDA chairman is taking personal interest and supervising the previously stalled Park Road Expansion project.—APP

Federal Ministry's academic coaching classes

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training said on Sunday that it has launched academic coaching classes in public schools and colleges in Islamabad. The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, in collaboration with the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), is launching academic coaching classes in public schools and colleges of Islamabad. In a first-of-its-kind initiative, this initiative aims to provide additional support to students and help them excel in their academic pursuits. In coaching classes, over 4000 students have registered for their classes, which will commence on Monday. The Ministry has selected and appointed the best teachers for these academic and coaching classes. "Despite initial challenges, we have identified and placed the best talent and our team has worked tirelessly to manage logistics, including timetables and SOPs", the ministry added. Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training said they are confident that this initiative will add another feather to the Ministry's and FDE's cap and contribute to the overall improvement of the education sector in Islamabad.—APP



Government of Pakistan

PAKISTAN ELECTRONIC MEDIA REGULATORY AUTHORITY HEADQUARTERS, ISLAMABAD

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Briefs

Govt decides to recruit 30,000 schoolteachers

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab government has decided to recruit 30,000 new schoolteachers, as students were facing shortage of teachers. The Punjab Education Department official sources told APP on Sunday that in order to improve the quality of education and overcome shortage of teachers, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has recently given task to the Punjab education minister to recruit new teachers. The recruitment process is being carried out after seven years, the sources said. The recruitment process will be carried out through the Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) in phases. Sources said the recruitment process was likely to be completed during the summer vacation 2024.—APP

PIA announces reduction in Umrah fares

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has announced a reduction in Umrah fares. According to a PIA spokesperson here on Sunday, Umrah pilgrims going to Madinah from Pakistan would benefit from discounted fares. The two-way fare from Lahore, Islamabad to Medina would be 86,000 (plus tax), while the two-way fare from Karachi to Madinah would be Rs 76,000 plus tax. Earlier, the Umrah ticket was available for Rs 120,000. Discounted fares have been applied immediately, and facility would continue till July 15, the spokesperson added.—APP

BEOE advises emigrants to reach out only valid OEPs

ISLAMABAD: The officials of the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment have advised foreign job-seekers to only reach out to valid Overseas Employment Promoters to avert any loss of time, money and their energies. Talking to APP, official sources said that there were only 2,577 Overseas Employment Promoters (OEP) licenses that were valid as more than 5048 licenses had been pronounced invalid. Out of the invalid OEPs, the licenses of some 670 were cancelled on various grounds while 805 were expired and the rest of them had surrendered, they added. They said, "All foreign job-seekers must visit the official webpage of BEOE regularly to get fresh and valid information and protect themselves from unauthorised OEPs.—APP

Authorities directed to finalize all arrangements for Monsoon

RAWALPINDI: The Commissioner of Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak, has directed the relevant authorities to finalize all the arrangements for Monsoon. According to the Commissioner, "About 30 percent more rainfall is predicted this year in the monsoon." The relevant authorities had been directed to complete the dredging and de-silting project for Nullahs, particularly Nullah Lai, as soon as possible. Section-144 would be fully implemented to prevent the dumping of garbage and solid waste in nullahs, he said, adding that the damages from natural calamities could be reduced by early measures. Solid steps were being taken regarding pre-monsoon rains, he ordered. All the arrangements would be finalized as soon as possible to prevent possible flooding, Engineer Aamir Khattak said. He further directed that the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) in Rawalpindi had also been directed to timely clean the 11 main nullahs of Rawalpindi, which fall into Nullah Lai. The relevant officers were instructed to clean the drains to improve the sewerage system across the city.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Work continue on the construction project of an Overhead bridge at Sector 1-10 for connecting Sector H-10 to 1-10 and onwards with Margallah Avenue in the Federal Capital.— ONLINE

Rawalpindi Ring Road completion by December

Efforts are underway to provide better educational facilities by giving top priority to the Education Department, adding that apart from the flagship schemes of the Education Department, Divisional Public Schools had also been started in all the districts, says Commissioner

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak has said that efforts were being made to ensure the completion of the Rawalpindi Ring Road project by December, the deadline fixed by Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz. According to the Commissioner, a total of 315 schemes of Rawalpindi district are included in the Annual Development Program (ADP). 89 schemes are new while 227 are ongoing, Engineer Aamir

Khattak said adding, various mega projects are currently underway in Rawalpindi. He said the most important mega projects to reshape Rawalpindi include the construction of the Rawalpindi Ring Road and the Dadocha Dam to meet water shortages. Rawalpindi Ring Road had been divided into three phases, he said. Phase one includes the construction of 38.3 km from Banth to Thalian. Phase two would link this road to the motorway and phase three would include the Eastern Loop, he added. The Commissioner informed

that the target for completion of Phase-I of Rawalpindi Ring project, which started in September 2023, is December 2024. After its completion, it would not only solve traffic problems but also emerge as an industrial hub, he added. The construction of Dadocha Dam had also been started to provide Rawalpindi with 35 million gallons of clean drinking water per day. The land acquisition work of the dam was completed and revised PC-I had also been forwarded, Engineer Aamir Khattak informed. Lai Expressway, Kutchery Chowk, Safe City Project, Water Supply Schemes, Holy Family and Benazir Bhutto Hospital revamping projects are in progress, he said adding, a mobile health service project, 'Vehicle on Wheels' had been launched. 150-bed Rehab Center at Wah General Hospital, Up-gradation of Pirwadhai Bus Stand, Slaughter House, Construction of Freelance IT and Gymkhana in all districts are prominent projects of Rawalpindi, Engineer Aamir Khattak said. He further said that efforts are underway to provide better educational facilities by giving top priority

to the Education Department, adding that apart from the flagship schemes of the Education Department, Divisional Public Schools had also been started in all the districts. He informed that the Government Islamia Higher Secondary School No.1 Murree Road had organized special classes for transgender for the first time. So far, 63 students had been enrolled, he added. Engineer Aamir Khattak said that 57 small dams were completed and made functional in Rawalpindi division.

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APBF calls for solid economic plan

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has called for solid economic plan, terming the new budget of 2024-25 as the uncertain one in view of deteriorating energy crisis following the tough conditionality of the International Monetary Fund. The APBF condemns the imposition of more taxes in the budget, questioning how inflation can be maintained at 11 percent when more than 45 percent of revenue targets will be achieved from tax and non-tax measures and the elimination of tax exemptions, said the APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood. Syed Maaz Mahmood said that the APBF had taken all trade and industry associations on board for preparation of proposals for the upcoming budget. He said that efforts were made to give government a set of suggestions for upcoming budget to make it business-friendly. The APBF chairman Ibrahim Qureshi said that the FBR's reforms initiatives are not bearing fruit, as the revenue collecting agency could increase the number of sales tax return filers mainly due to rise in the type of those filers, who haven't paid any tax, implying that bad governance and weak tax management of the tax department still persist. Ibrahim Qureshi emphasized the evident expectations drawn from the budget 2024-25. It highlighted the same measures which have been in discussion for the success of the IMF program, he added. First of all, she indicated the prosperous increase in the revenue which was targeted at Rs9.4 trillion in the previous year, however, it has jumped to Rs12.97 trillion which is nearly Rs13 trillion for the current fiscal year. This is a significant jump and is an over-ambitious target for the FBR to collect revenue, he said.

Syed Maaz Mahmood urged the authorities to introduce new tax incentives and extend the period of existing ones for attracting new foreign direct investments in line with the potential of the country. With a view to wipe out corruption there needs to develop local software and Apps with simplified system in Urdu so that interaction of human resource should be reduced, he suggested. He suggested that taxes should be charged one time by any provincial or federal government, as provinces levy same kind of tax which the federal government has already imposed, escalating the cost of production and discouraging the registered manufacturers. The APBF president said that Pakistan's inflation rate is the highest among all the South Asian nations. He said that the world is moving towards alternative sources of electricity generation but the Pakistan government's policies are contrary to it. He said that Pakistan is the most frequent customer of the IMF and the governments often depend on borrowing from the lending arm and accepted stringent conditions, despite the fact that this institution is merciless money lender, which has always forced Pakistan to adopt bad policies like new taxes in the budget, rupee depreciation and massive increases in the electricity and gas tariffs. He said that even though Pakistan's economic crisis is a recurring factor in the country's political unrest, it has a history of ignoring the nation's true issues, which include poor governance, a broken judicial system, outdated laws, complicated tax system, lack of transparency, duplication in the government system, ineffective bureaucracy, improper use of our human, natural and water resources, lack of efficient local government, inadequate/unreliable data for country's planning.

PM AJK announces number of development schemes

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that the era of corruption and nepotism was over now and the law was equally applicable to every citizen of the state irrespective of his/her status in the society. He said this while addressing a public gathering at Tehsil Sharqi of district Bagh here today (Sunday). Speaking on the occasion, PM Haq announced a number of development schemes for the area including a Degree College for Raira and a Higher Secondary School for Dharay in district Bagh. He said, "Work on Dharay Chatter Bridge will start soon and the foundation stone of bypass road Raira has been laid, which will be completed within the stipulated time frame." Earlier, the PM was accorded a warm welcome by hundreds of people at Chatter, Qadirabad and Bhot Chowk. The people of the Dharay Chatter complained before the Prime Minister regarding the dilapidated situation of the Chatter Bridge and expressed their fear in view of the accidental chances in near future.—APP

RDA takes action against illegal housing schemes

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of the Divisional Intelligence Committee has launched operation against illegal housing schemes. According to a RDA spokesman, the Task Force had accelerated its ongoing operation against illegal housing schemes. The RDA Enforcement Squad while conducting operation in Taxila took action against eight illegal housing schemes namely Aroura Housing Scheme, Al-Khan Enclave, Land Sub-Division, Wah Residential, Fahad Builders (office of illegal schemes Education Town/Wah Hills), Al-Madina Land Sub-Division, Education Town/Wah Hills/Kashmir Town and Khawas Town. The schemes are located in Mouzas Lab Thatho, Niko, Bhoti Pind, Buddu, Gari Afghana, and Bajar, Tehsil Taxila, District Rawalpindi. The Enforcement Squad sealed and demolished the site offices and land sub-divisions of the illegal housing schemes, the spokesman informed. The operation was conducted on the orders of Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Muhammad Abdul Aamir Khattak, Director General RDA, the Additional DG RDA, the Deputy Commissioner, Rawalpindi and the City Police Officer, Rawalpindi. The spokesman informed that despite warnings to cease illegal advertisements, booking of the plots, and development work, the owners of the housing schemes were operating booking offices in violation of the rules.—APP

IPPs have destroyed the country's economy

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: On Sunday, Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), said that Independent Power Producers (IPPs) have destroyed the country's economy. He said private power plants are a big threat to the country's economy and people, making national development impossible. Dr Murtaza Mughal said in a statement today that the Government should buy all IPPs from their owners to eliminate this problem. He said that at least five billion dollars would be required to purchase IPPs, which should be arranged by taking loans from international institutions. The interest on the five billion-dollar loan will be nothing compared to the payments made to the IPPs. The country's people will be saved

from a great punishment if these units are bought. According to the United Nations, elites are given benefits worth seventeen and a half billion annually. Five billion dollars can be managed even by reducing these benefits for one year. In addition, government purchases of up to fifteen billion dollars annually and a good chunk of this money are embezzled. Capital can also be managed by reducing annual purchases. Dr Mughal said that the energy sector's circular debt had reached 2310 billion rupees in May, while payments to IPPs had reached 1800 billion rupees. The Government had to pay a late payment surcharge for the delay in payment. He said that the role of private power producers is very significant among the factors responsible for the huge increase in electricity bills in Pakistan.

The IPP bill is the third largest debt owed to the Government after defence expenditures and foreign debt repayments. However, despite the payment of this amount, the circular mountain is increasing instead of decreasing. He said that to reduce the debt, the Government repeatedly hikes electricity prices, which mainly benefits these companies. At the same time, the public is punished for nothing. Dr. Mughal said that no political party speaks against IPPs because all the top leaders of political parties own these IPPs. Seventeen percent of fixed profit is paid to these companies in dollars, and consumers must pay for this whether the companies generate electricity. Apart from politicians, the power sector bureaucracy does not care about the plight of the public; all they care about is their privileges and facilities.

Sugar is one of country's most influential industries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, said on Sunday that the sugar industry is one of Pakistan's most influential industrial sectors. The exploitation of the farmers and the masses continues due to the free hand given to the sugar mills mafia. At the same time, the country can never be self-sufficient in wheat production due to this mafia, he said. Talking to the party workers, Dr Hanif Mughal said that the mafia-owned factories that exploit the public and steal billions of rupees in tax are always shown in the loss. Despite the heavy losses claimed by many sugar millers, they do not close down the mills; instead, they keep trying to set up more factories, he added. He said that despite the country's surplus sugar production, many more sugar mills have been set up, and the government has to spend heavily to keep them running. He said that payment to farmers is deliberately delayed by the sugar mills so that most of the farmers sell their crops to their agents at throwaway prices. There is also a delay in the purchase of sugarcane, which reduces its weight and causes huge losses to the farmers. The sugar mafia gains billions through illegal and unethical processes. He observed that the sugar mill mafia considers it their birthright to cheat farmers when sugarcane is being weighed, and there is no one to ask them. Dr Hanif Mughal said that whenever sugarcane production is down, the market rates increase, prompting this mafia to manage immediate sugar imports and make the sugarcane cheaper. And when the harvest is good, it earns dollars by exporting sugar while getting billions in subsidies.

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Biden's train wreck

A VIRAL political cartoon says it all about the coming presidential election in the United States. On one side is Joe Biden sitting in a wheelchair and attached to a drip, with a nurse standing beside him. On the other is Donald Trump in a prisoner's uniform, handcuffed to an armed guard. The first presidential debate may have been terrible optics for Biden and the Democrats. But outside the West, it does not mean much substantial change whoever comes out on top. Biden has to a large extent inherited the trade and foreign policies of Trump, and added some extra malignancy of his own. While his predecessor demanded "America First" and launched the first salvo of a trade war against China, Biden has doubled down with protectionism and massive industrial policy – the Inflation Reduction Act and the Chips and Science Act – while forcing European and Asian allies to follow suit. Trump, against world opinion and America's own previous policy, recognised Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel. But the Biden administration has almost unconditionally backed Israel's war in Palestinian territories. Israel now faces accusations of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Trump started no war; Biden is committed to yet another "forever war" in Ukraine. No wonder more surveys have shown a drastic decline in the positive perception of the US outside the West. For example, according to the State of Southeast Asia 2024 survey compiled by the Singapore-based ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 50.5 per cent of respondents preferred China while 49.5 per cent favoured the US if ASEAN nations had to pick a side. It was a great reversal from last year, which showed 38.9 per cent were for China and 61 per cent for the US.

The rest of the world looked on in amusement at the latest train wreck of a presidential debate from last week. The outcome should not have surprised anyone other than that part of the American political class and media elite who have spent most of Biden's term pretending their president has not been suffering from a steep mental decline. They seemed to think they had been successfully fooling everyone, perhaps because only a few fringe characters and media mavericks in the United States dared to play that impudent boy in the children's tale pointing out the naked emperor is in fact also losing his mind. For most other people, that was obvious well before the debate. Many of us have had to care for ageing parents in declining health, and recognise the symptoms. The debate may now put Biden out of his misery as a candidate, and that would be a mercy killing. But some reports are saying the Democrats are doubling down. In that case, you can only pity the old man. But whether the White House will be turned into a geriatric ward next year or a den of criminal activities, it's hard to argue we are not witnessing the irreparable decline of the American republic. Assuming Trump does re-enter the White House, he will be a felon with convictions on 34 counts of falsifying business records. There are at least three other criminal cases against him, at both the state and federal levels. Is there any reason to think President Trump 2.0 will not pardon himself for whatever criminal convictions he will have accumulated by next year, or that they won't use the full powers of his office – now that he is much more experienced – to go after his enemies, and protect and promote his own family and supporters?



Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 05 Issue: 190

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

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The emergence of a trilateral alliance

RUSSIA, Iran, and China are rapidly forging a newer anti-US bloc that is likely to support efforts to thwart US and Western isolation tactics. The joint efforts will eventually help Iran regain its former glory as an Eurasian trade hub, with the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) coming online. Iran, China, Russia, and even India would all benefit from INSTC, which would shorten the trade routes and cut down on costs while giving them options. For India, this would mean avoiding Pakistan and entering the markets of Central Asia, where Chinese companies are quickly expanding their footprint. For Iran, China, and Russia, it would mean having more options to better protect, if not eliminate, themselves from sanctions imposed by the West, spur economic growth, and advance their de-dollarization process. The primary motivation for the international conflicts of this century will be the attainment of military and economic dominance, as was the case during the Cold War. In this ongoing conflict, Iran, China, and Russia are endeavoring to enhance their standing by capitalizing on the interconnection that is developing between them. The trika considers US supremacy in various regions as detrimental, if not limiting, to its own strategic goals. Iran, for example, seeks influence in the Middle East precisely because of the US-Israel collusion against the innocent Palestinian population.

Conversely, the geopolitical objectives of China and Russia transcend national borders. What these countries want is a multipolar global order as an alternative to unipolarity. Based on their collective choices, they believe such a system would benefit their interests and boost their growing enterprise. The new bloc appears to threaten Washington. The US elite views this close friendship as a disastrous collapse of the Western sanctions regime. According to Washington, China has been providing commercial backing for Russia's defense industrial base, while North Korea and Iran have supplied Russia with military drones and ballistic missiles throughout the protracted war of attrition in Ukraine. Defense Secretary and Pentagon commander Lloyd Austin voiced worries in late April about the increasing cooperation between China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran. He stated that the US was closely monitoring this trend and found it concerning. The media has quoted Dmitry Murev, the CEO of RZD Logistics, a leading Russian logistics company that operates the INSTC, as saying that trade and economic cooperation between Russia, Iran, and India have reached historic levels. According to him, the creation of the INSTC allowed Russia to become one of India's top three trading partners in 2023 for the first time. Murev claims that the INSTC's activation was one of the key elements that led to the 4.7-fold rise in Russian exports to India in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Murev states that his company's solid partnerships with top players in the transport and logistics sectors of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran, and India have reduced the net cost of the end-to-end transportation service along the eastern route of INSTC by 50% since August 2022.

SC acquits sender, held messenger

Qamar Bashir



The clause 3(1)(e) of the PEMRA Code of Conduct, 2015, prohibits the media to not air any program which is against the integrity of the judiciary and armed forces of Pakistan." PEMRA has the authority to impose penalties and regulatory actions including fines, warnings, and notices, as well as potential suspension or revocation of broadcasting licenses for serious or repeat offenses. Unlike in Pakistan, the media outlets in the UK, US, and Sweden adhere to stringent guidelines to avoid contempt of court issues when covering press conferences or content...

THE Supreme Court expressed visible displeasure when lawyer Faisal Siddique refused to offer an unconditional apology on behalf of 36 news channels that aired contemptuous press conferences by Senator Faisal Vawda and National Assembly member Mustafa Kamal. During these press conferences, the senator and MNA criticized the judiciary, demanding ethical standards for judges' dual citizenship and transparency regarding their green cards. They also called for greater judicial accountability and scrutiny, purportedly in response to alleged interference by intelligence agencies in judicial proceedings at various court levels. Certainly! Here's a refined version: Interestingly, the 36 news channels, acting as messengers, faced rigorous scrutiny throughout the three-hour proceedings for disseminating contemptuous messages from the offenders to the public. The proceedings appeared one-sided, with Chief Justice largely dominating the dialogue, limiting the advocates' opportunity to present their case comprehensively. However, the Chief Justice attentively listened when another lawyer, purportedly aligned with the court, extensively discussed Quranic and Hadith teachings on handling heresy and backbiting in Islam, echoing the Chief Justice's stance on the case in question. It's worth noting that in my current role, I am teaching media laws to probationers of the Information Group at the Information Services Academy. Our curriculum includes a historical perspective on the development of media laws, especially those pertaining to free speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of expression. Our research underscores that countries like the US, UK, and Sweden empower courts to issue contempt notices or take action against the media, particularly when it impacts the dignity and honor of the court, especially in ongoing cases. In the United Kingdom, contempt is governed by common law principles and the Contempt of Court Act 1981, particularly Section 3, which outlines acts such as publishing material that could prejudice active legal proceedings. In the United States, Title 18, Section 401 of the US Code grants courts the authority to punish acts of contempt that obstruct justice or disrespect the court, with distinctions between civil and criminal contempt. In Sweden, contempt laws are found in

the Swedish Penal Code, Chapter 7, addressing offenses against the administration of justice. In Pakistan, the Supreme Court derives its power from Article 204 of the Constitution which empowers the Courts to punish any person who abuses or interferes with or obstructs the process of the court in way of disobey, scandalize the court, does anything which tends to prejudice the determination of a matter pending before the court and does anything which by law constitutes contempt of the court. The Section 3 of Contempt of Court Ordinance 2003 says that whoever ... does anything which is intended to or tends to bring the authority of a Court or the administration of law into disrespect of disrepute, or to interfere with or obstruct or interrupt or prejudice the process of law or the due course of any judicial proceedings, or to lower the authority of a Court or scandalize a Judge in relation to his office, or to disturb the order or decorum of a Court, is said to commit "contempt of Court". Whereas, Section 5 of the Ordinance determines the punishment of which may extend to six months', or with fine which may extend to one hundred thousand rupees, or with both. The clause 3(1)(e) of the PEMRA Code of Conduct, 2015, prohibits the media to not air any program which is against the integrity of the judiciary and armed forces of Pakistan." PEMRA has the authority to impose penalties and regulatory actions including fines, warnings, and notices, as well as potential suspension or revocation of broadcasting licenses for serious or repeat offenses. Unlike in Pakistan, the media outlets in the UK, US, and Sweden adhere to stringent guidelines to avoid contempt of court issues when covering press conferences or content related to ongoing legal proceedings. In the UK, media must refrain from publishing material that could substantially risk prejudicing active legal cases, especially criminal trials, and avoid speculative or detailed reporting that could impact trial fairness. In the US, the media follow federal and state laws to prevent contempt, ensuring accuracy, fairness, and avoiding sensationalism or inflammatory content that could undermine judicial authority. In Sweden, the media focuses on maintaining respect for the judiciary and refraining from statements that could disrupt legal processes, thus upholding the integrity of the legal system while

safeguarding freedom of the press. Like in Pakistan, in the US, UK, and Sweden as well, the media are considered messengers of information, at the sometimes, they are legally responsible for what they broadcast or publish, especially when airing contemptuous statements made by others. In these countries even though primary responsibility may lie with the original sender of the statement, the media is held accountable, if they knowingly disseminate material that could interfere with justice or undermine the authority of the courts. This requires the media to uphold standards of responsible journalism, including verification of information and avoidance of content that could harm the integrity of legal processes. In various countries, media outlets have faced penalties for airing contemptuous statements against the judiciary. In the UK, The Daily Mirror and The Sun were fined under the Contempt of Court Act 1981 for publishing prejudicial articles during a murder trial. Similarly, in the US, the New York Post was fined for potentially biasing a jury with its coverage of a murder trial. Sweden's Expressen also encountered penalties for publishing information that could sway a criminal trial. In India, Prashant Bhushan's tweets critical of the judiciary led to a contempt ruling by the Supreme Court. In Pakistan, Geo News was temporarily banned and prosecuted for content seen as undermining judicial authority. Given the circumstances, regardless of the arguments put forth by the lawyer representing the 36 channels, it is unlikely to save them from facing punishment for their deliberate negligence and failure to adhere to the explicit provisions of the Constitution, the Contempt of Court Ordinance 2003, and the PEMRA Code of Conduct. Therefore, instead of attempting to assert his professional prowess, which is likely to be unsuccessful, Mr. Faisal Siddique should file an unconditional apology and leave the fate of the defendant channels in the hands of the court. Failure to do so may result in penal actions under both the Contempt of Court Ordinance 2002 and the PEMRA Act 2007.

– **Former Press Secretary to the President**
Former Press Minister to the
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former MD, SRBC

The Red Sea geopolitical battleground

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Russia and China are working to strengthen their positions in the Red Sea area. Russia is teaming up with Eritrea to build a naval facility at Massawa port, confirmed by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov during his visit to Eritrea in January 2023. A Russian naval ship also visited Massawa in March 2024, suggesting Russia wants another port in the Red Sea besides Sudan

RECENT reports say that the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Russian government might sign a military and economic agreement soon. This deal shows that Russia wants to gain access to ports on the Red Sea, which would help its navy and increase its influence in the region. Russia also wants to build stronger political and military relationships across Africa. By working with countries like Sudan, Russia hopes to increase its power, challenge Western influence and find new economic opportunities. This situation shows how global power is changing in Africa. Lt. Gen. Yasir al-Atta confirmed in late May that the Sudanese Armed Forces and Russia are close to signing this important agreement. The deal would let Russia set up a naval support facility on the Red Sea. In return, Russia would give weapons and ammunition to Sudan. This agreement is a strategic move by the Sudanese Armed Forces, showing they are unhappy with the West for not stopping outside support to their enemy, the Rapid Support Forces, in Sudan's civil war. The deal, which has been in the works since February 2023, has been delayed because of Sudan's civil war. Russia wants to strengthen ties with African nations facing sanctions from the EU and the US. However, tensions in the region, especially between the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar regarding Sudan's conflict, and the ongoing Red Sea crisis, have made things more complicated. These tensions have made it hard for these nations to effectively respond to attacks by the Houthis, showing the geopolitical challenges affecting the deal and regional stability. Russia and China are working to strengthen their positions in the Red Sea area. Russia is teaming up with Eritrea to build a naval facility at Massawa port, confirmed by Russian Foreign Minister

Sergey Lavrov during his visit to Eritrea in January 2023. A Russian naval ship also visited Massawa in March 2024, suggesting Russia wants another port in the Red Sea besides Sudan. China is increasing its activities near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a key route between the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. With its military base in Djibouti, China has expanded its naval presence, allowing an Iranian spy ship to dock nearby. This shows China's deeper military involvement in the area. These actions by Russia and China show their growing influence, challenging the Biden administration's policy in Africa. Critics, like Senator James Risch, say the current U.S. approach isn't working. He suggests stronger ties with Somaliland to counter China and Iran's influence. Russia and China's moves highlight the Red Sea's importance for military and economic control. Russia is using attacks by Houthis on commercial ships to increase its influence, offering safe passage to ships under the Russian flag. Russia might also support Houthis in placing sea mines, disrupting shipping and potentially forcing vessels to fly the Russian flag for safety. Russia might collaborate with various groups in the Horn of Africa to bypass sanctions and boost illegal oil and grain sales, which could help with energy and food challenges due to U.S. sanctions over Ukraine. Russia has used grain diplomacy, providing grain to African nations, including 25,000 tons to Somalia and forgiving \$684 million in debt. Somalia, struggling with finances due to fighting al-Shabaab, might seek Russian military help. With rising tensions between Somalia and Somaliland, especially before Somaliland's November election, Somalia could turn to Russia and China for support. Abdirahman Irro, an opposition leader and former ambassador to Russia, supports China and could play a role in

this. Russia might interfere in Somaliland's elections or disrupt its port agreement with Ethiopia to gain access to Berbera port. Africa is likely to see more of Russia because of the United States' weak policies in the region. This is especially concerning because the Horn of Africa, which includes the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, is very important for global shipping and trade. Whoever controls this area gains a big geopolitical advantage, making it a target for military and economic power. Russia is getting more involved in Africa, taking advantage of the gaps left by the US. This includes military cooperation, selling weapons, and economic investments. The possibility of Russia militarizing the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden is worrying. It could increase regional tensions and disrupt the stability of a key maritime corridor. Russia's military presence could affect security far beyond Africa, including the Middle East and globally. This could lead to an arms race and more conflicts in an already unstable region. The US needs to respond strongly to maintain balance and prevent any one power from dominating this area. To reduce this risk, the Biden administration should look at the Somaliland Partnership Act again. This proposal suggests officially recognizing and supporting Somaliland, which has stable governance and a strategic location. Partnering with Somaliland could counter Russian and Chinese influence. The US can secure an important ally in the Horn of Africa, ensuring a cooperative presence in the region. Additionally, working more closely with the Department of Defense is essential. A better military strategy, including joint exercises, security assistance, and infrastructure development, would improve regional security and deter adversaries.

Briefs

Tax on
retailers from
today: FM

FROM PAGE 01
only 5.2 million filed income tax returns in 2022. To boost tax collection, the government among other measures, blocked mobile phone SIM cards and will now also restrict non-filers from travelling abroad. While the budget has been criticised for not bringing in new sectors into the tax net, the finance minister defended the financial blueprint and said that new sectors would be taxed. "I'm repeating myself. When Miftah [Ismail] sb proposed taxing retailers in 2022, it should have been implemented. We cannot have any segment that is not contributing to society and the exchequer."

Pak to seek
Qatar's...

FROM PAGE 01
sell them on the spot market if domestic demand for LNG falls short. The disclosure was made during a public hearing held on Friday by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) regarding a petition by power distribution companies seeking permission to collect an additional Rs3.41 per unit from consumers due to fuel adjustments for May 2024. During the hearing, power distribution companies noted that the actual fuel rate was Rs9.12 per unit, compared to a reference price of Rs5.7 per unit, resulting in an increase of Rs3.41 per unit.

Taliban
delegation..

FROM PAGE 01
The Taliban seized power in August 2021 as US and NATO forces were in the final weeks of their pullout from the country following two decades of war. No country has officially recognized the Taliban as Afghanistan's government, and the UN has said recognition is almost impossible while bans on female education and employment remain in place. Mujahid on Saturday in the capital, Kabul, told reporters the delegation was going to Doha "to seek understanding and resolve issues."

Asif criticises
Kabul for...

FROM PAGE 01
Pakistan-Afghanistan border, despite repeated requests made by the Pakistan government. In an interview with British media outlet, Asif said Pakistan hoped for cooperation from the Afghan government, however, the latter was not ready to take action against the militants. "Pakistan (even) offered to grant Rs10 billion to shift the militants towards the western border; however, it was feared that they could come back from there too," he said.

Iran envoy
condemns...

FROM PAGE 01
Following this, the National Assembly on Friday passed a resolution to condemn the US Congress resolution and termed it "contrary to facts" and "interference" in its internal affairs. The resolution was tabled by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) lawmaker Shaista Pervaiz Malik, and passed by a majority in the National Assembly amid a noisy protest of the opposition benches.

Senator
Mushahid...

FROM PAGE 01
economists, and journalists from more than 50 countries. Chairman of the Pakistan-China Institute and Co-Chairman of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) Senator Mushahid also expressed gratitude to President Xi Jinping for awarding him the prestigious 5 Principles of Peaceful Coexistence award. "China has taken political ownership of the 5 Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which today are the foundation of the new emerging global order," Mushahid said.

Rising Stars Hockey player
Jawairia gets rousing welcome

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Jawairia Azeez, a member of the Rising Star Girls Hockey Academy in Islamabad, has been selected for the Pakistan Education Board Hockey Team's tour of Turkey. Upon her arrival at the ground, she received a rousing welcome. Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins, High Commissioner of Brunei Kamal Ahmad, and other team officials greeted her enthusiastically. The diplomats commended Jawairia's efforts and encouraged her to maintain her excellent performance.

Djokovic inspires
Osaka before
daughter's birthday

LONDON: Naomi Osaka said Sunday she hopes to mark her daughter's first birthday by making a winning return to Wimbledon thanks to a helping hand from Novak Djokovic. The Japanese superstar, a four-time Grand Slam champion and a former world number one, hasn't played at the All England Club since 2019. Osaka takes on Diane Parry of France in her opener on Monday, the day before she celebrates daughter Shai's first birthday. "She's one on Tuesday so it will be very exciting day," said the 26-year-old. "It's been a great journey and I'm lucky and blessed to have happy girl with lots of energy. It's a dream to be here with her now." Osaka's four majors came on the hard courts of the US Open and Australian Open. She made the third round at Wimbledon in 2017 and 2018, losing to former champions Venus Williams and Angelique Kerber respectively. - Agencies

After Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma,
Ravindra Jadeja also quits T20I

"With a heart full of gratitude, I bid farewell to T20 int'l's," announces Indian all-rounder

NEW DELHI: Indian all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja joined star batters Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma in stepping down from the T20 Internationals a day after Men in Blue defeated South Africa to win coveted title in the shortest format. "With a heart full of gratitude, I bid farewell to T20 internationals," Jadeja wrote on his official Instagram page a day after India's win over South Africa in a thrilling World Cup final in Bridgetown. "Like a steadfast horse galloping with

pride, I've always given my best for my country and will continue to do so in other formats. Winning the T20 World Cup was a dream come true, a pinnacle of my T20 International career. Thank you for the memories, the cheers, and the unwavering support," he added. In less than 24 hours, three of India's most senior and important players announced their retirements which may make things a bit difficult for the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to find their replacement as all three were widely considered greats in their respective positions and roles. In 74 T20Is played, Jadeja scored 515 runs and bagged 54

wickets. After India's T20 World Cup win, Kohli announced his retirement immediately during a post-match ceremony saying that it is time for the next generation to take over. On the other hand, Rohit Sharma confirmed during a post-match press conference that he, too, is quitting the shorter format. Rohit and Kohli's retirement from the T20I format was not entirely unexpected. Neither player had featured in any T20Is following India's semi-final defeat in the 2022 T20 World Cup, and they only resumed playing T20Is in January this year, with their focus on the 2024 T20 World Cup. - DNA

Fazl
demands..

FROM PAGE 01
He emphasized that the current government lacks the flexibility to address their grievances effectively. Maulana Fazl stated that words of persuasion have no value without the guarantee of fair elections. He welcomed negotiations with PTI but criticized the party's lack of unity and failure to announce a negotiating team. Maulana Fazl also noted that the Sunni Itehad Council's chief has expressed no interest in forming an alliance with JUI.

Fawad rules
out jailed...

FROM PAGE 01
Fawad Chaudhry has said there is "no chance" of the incarcerated party founder Imran Khan's release in the presence of the current PTI leadership. "[Due to] lack of political strategy of current PTI leadership, all of us are suffering," said the former senior vice-president of the party, who parted with Khan following May 9 violent protests that saw attacks on public and military installations.

Millions
of French...

FROM PAGE 01
With Russia's war against Ukraine in its third year and energy and food prices much higher, support for the anti-immigration and eurosceptic party has surged despite Macron's pledges to prevent its ascent. The two-round vote could put the far-right in power in France for the first time since the Nazi occupation in World War II.

Six dead as
rains batter..

FROM PAGE 01
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been closed off for traffic, said the PDMA. The PDMA further revealed that a large number of vehicles are stranded at Dhana Sar due to landsliding due to heavy rains in eastern Balochistan's Koh-e-Suleman mountain range. Traffic from Peshawar, Swat, Islamabad and Pindi have been instructed to stop at Dera Ismail Khan the PMD said, adding that the Zhob-DI Khan Road has been blocked at Dhana Sar due to rains in Zhob and Sherani.

ICCI council members
unite on election decisions

The meeting took a number of important decisions about the forthcoming ICCI elections



ISLAMABAD: A meeting of Council Members of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry held with Chairman Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik in chair. It was attended by Mr. Zafar Bakhtawari, Mr. Ejaz Ahmed Abbasi, Mr. Tariq Sadiq, Mr. Khalid Javaid and Mian Akram Farid. The meeting took a number of important decisions about the forthcoming ICCI elections. A consensus was evolved that all the decisions with regard to the elections will be taken unitedly as to serve the business community in best possible way. - DNA

Pak announce squad
for ACC Women's
T20 Asia Cup

KARACHI: Nida Dar will lead the Pakistan squad for the ACC Women's T20 Asia Cup, scheduled to take place in Dambulla, Sri Lanka, from July 19 to 28. The squad was finalized following a four-day training camp that concluded in Karachi on Saturday. From the 17-member team that toured England last month, Aysha Zafar, Natalia Parvaiz, Rameen Shamim, Sadaf Shamas, Umm-e-Hani, and Waheeda Akhtar have been included. In their place, the selectors have included Iram Javed, Omaira Sohail, Syeda Aroob Shah, and Tasmia Rubab. The Pakistan women's national cricket team will begin their training camp for the ACC Women's T20 Asia Cup in Karachi on July 5, continuing until their departure on July 16. Head coach Muhammad Wasim will lead the camp, with support from Abdur Rehman (spin bowling coach), Junaid Khan (assistant coach - bowling), and Hanif Malik (assistant coach - fielding). Hina Munawar, Rabia Siddiq, and Waleed Ahmed will serve as the team manager, physiotherapist, and analyst, respectively. Pakistan is placed in Group 'A' alongside India, Nepal, and the UAE, while Group 'B' consists of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, and Malaysia. - Agencies

Germany beat Denmark, advances to euro 2024 quarters

Kai Havertz scored penalty in second half, followed by Jamal Musiala's curling strike

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

DORTMUND: Let that patriotic fervor soar. Host nation Germany is headed to the quarterfinals at the European Championship after a wet and wild win over Denmark on Saturday. "We're going to Berlin," sang the jubilant German fans who were first battered by rain and hail after a thunderstorm that stopped play for 25 minutes, then saw their team benefit from back-to-back video review calls that helped to set up a 2-0 victory in Dortmund. Two more wins will take Germany to the capital for the July 14 final, in what could yet turn into a summer fairy tale for a nation whose soccer team is coming out of a sorry run of performances in major tournaments. It could have been so different against the Danes, though. The host-nation buzz was burst when, with the score at 0-0, Denmark defender Joachim Andersen swept home a close-range finish that looked to have put his team ahead in the 50th minute. The Video Assistant Referee spotted an offside in the buildup, a free kick was awarded and the ball was played downfield immediately, leading to a cross by David Raum hitting the outstretched right arm of - who else? - Andersen. The VAR got involved again and a penalty was awarded. Kai Havertz converted the spot kick and Jamal Musiala added a second goal - his third of the tournament, which is tied for the most with Georgia's Georges Mikautadze - in the 68th. "We played a super game - we had crazy fans again today," Germany defender Nico Schlottnerbeck said. "We're playing

with euphoria, we're playing with fun, and that's what the most beautiful thing about football is." It was Germany's first win in the knockout stage of a major tournament since 2016, since when the national team has failed to advance from the group stage at back-to-back World Cups and lost in the last 16 of the last Euros in 2021 to England. Germany will play Spain or Georgia next and became the



second team to advance from the round of 16, after Switzerland beat defending champion Italy 2-0 earlier Saturday. Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann told German broadcaster ZDF that he used the rain delay to show his players incidents from the first half-hour of the game which his team dominated, playing the most soccer of the tournament,

in his opinion. Indeed, the players were able to head into the confines of the locker room while thunder, lightning and torrential rain struck, leaving spectators in the front rows particularly exposed as they scrambled higher in the stands. Many used black-yellow-and-red flags they had waved before the match, to welcome the players onto the field, as makeshift umbrellas. "Oh, how lovely it is," some sang, and a few Danish supporters danced in waterfalls in the stands. There was about a 20-minute delay before the rain relented and players re-emerged, undertaking warm-ups before play resumed a few minutes later. The pitch held up well in the circumstances. Denmark coach Kasper Hjulmand was left to rue those crucial couple of minutes when the big VAR decisions were made. "I have the photo here," he said, whipping out his phone at the post-match news conference. "It was one centimeter (offside). In terms of statistics and data, it doesn't make sense. This is not how we are supposed to be using VAR. "And I am so tired of the ridiculous handball rule. Joachim was running normally. It's a normal situation." Nagelsmann sympathized with Hjulmand, saying: "I would also be annoyed if it was the other way round." However, it's Denmark going home and Germany heading to Stuttgart on Friday. "It was a wild game altogether," Nagelsmann said. "We came through adversity in those seconds where it was, 'Was it a goal or not a goal?' and 'Was it handball or not a handball?' That makes me proud. The team deserves it and hopefully we are getting rid of the old memory stick and understand how good we actually are."

Briefs

UN Chief praises new small arms limits

UNITED NATIONS : UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres praised the adoption of a "strong outcome document" at the end of a conference dedicated to combating illicit small arms and light weapons worldwide, saying it was an important sign of progress. "The proliferation, diversion and misuse of small arms and light weapons continue to undermine peace, security and sustainable development around the world - fueling conflict and causing devastating human costs", the UN chief said in a statement. He congratulated member states on successfully concluding the Fourth Review Conference, welcoming the setting up of an open-ended technical expert group to address developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design. The secretary-general also recognized the commitments States have made to strengthen international cooperation and assistance and to implement gender-responsive policies. Guterres said he "strongly believes that the progress made... will help strengthen our collective and national efforts to combat illicit small arms and light weapons until the next review conference in 2030". The UN chief added that he hoped the commitments regarding small arms would inform discussions at the Summit of the Future in September "to find forward-looking and action-oriented solutions for a more peaceful future.—APP

5 dead after storms lash France, Switzerland

GENEVA : Ferocious storms and torrential rains that lashed France, Switzerland and Italy this weekend have left five people dead, local authorities said on Sunday. Three people in their 70s and 80s died in France's northeastern Aube region on Saturday when a tree crushed the car they were travelling in during fierce winds, the local authority told AFP. A fourth passenger was in critical care, it added. In neighbouring Switzerland, two people have died and a third is missing after torrential rains triggered a landslide in the southeast, police in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino said. According to local daily La Regione, the dead were two women who were on holiday in the Alpine region. Emergency services were assessing the best way to evacuate 300 people who had arrived for a football tournament in Peccia, while almost 70 more were being evacuated from a holiday camp in the village of Mogno.—APP

Turkiye 'neutralizes' 7 PKK/YPG terrorists

ANKARA : Turkish security forces "neutralized" a total of seven PKK/YPG terrorists in northern Iraq and Syria, Türkiye's National Defense Ministry said on Sunday. "Our heroic Turkish Armed Forces neutralized 3 PKK/YPG terrorists detected in the Euphrates Shield and Peace Spring zones in northern Syria and 4 PKK terrorists detected in the Operation Claw-Lock zone," the ministry wrote on X. Türkiye in 2022 launched Operation Claw-Lock to target the terror group PKK's hideouts in northern Iraq's Metina, Zap, and Avasin-Basyan regions. The terrorist PKK is known for using northern Iraq, near the Turkish border, as a hideout to plot terror attacks and for launching attacks both on nearby Türkiye and locals in northern Syria. Since 2016, Ankara has launched a trio of successful anti-terror operations across its border in northern Syria to prevent the formation of a terror corridor and enable the peaceful settlement of residents: Euphrates Shield (2016), Olive Branch (2018), and Peace Spring (2019). Turkish authorities use the term "neutralize" to imply the terrorists in question surrendered or were killed or captured.—DNA

ME facing serious changes amid Israeli offensive: Sisi

Egypt's president also said that incoming government's top priority to alleviate suffering amid price hikes

NEWS DESK

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi said Sunday that the Middle East region is going through "serious changes" amid a deadly Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip. "The region is going through serious changes recently amid intense Israeli war in the Gaza Strip and attempts to impose forced displacement towards Egyptian territories," he said in a televised address marking the June 30, 2013 resolution, which ousted former President Mohamed Morsi. In this war, "the conscience of humanity was absent, and the international community remained silent, turning its face away from tens of thousands of innocent victims," he added. More than 37,800 Palestinians have been killed and nearly 87,000 others injured in a deadly

Israeli onslaught on Gaza since last Oct. 7 following a Hamas attack. Over eight months into the Israeli war, vast tracts of Gaza lie in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water and medicine. Sisi said the top priority of the incoming government in Egypt is to alleviate the suffering resulting from rising prices and create more job opportunities. "I address all Egyptians ... who have endured the grind of life and the rising prices during the recent period to provide a good life for their children ... I fully know the extent of the suffering," he said. "I assure you that my main concern and the highest priority of the new government is to alleviate that suffering, create more job opportunities, and build a better future for all," Sisi said. Egypt has grappled with a foreign currency crunch, soaring commodity prices, and disruptions to interna-



tional supply chains, which raised the cost of living. Meanwhile, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi affirmed on Saturday that the "relations between Egypt and the European Union are experiencing positive progress across multiple domains." This came during Sisi's address at the opening session of the investment conference between Egypt and the EU, scheduled for Saturday and

Sunday, with the participation of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The Egyptian president stated that "relations between Egypt and the European Union are experiencing positive progress in various areas of cooperation." "This progress culminated in the signing of a political declaration in March, elevating relations between the two sides to the status of a strategic and comprehensive partnership," he added. "We are convening for the second time in a brief span to witness the 2024 Egypt-European Union Investment Conference," Sisi added. Sisi viewed the conference as "initiating the first practical measures in advancing relations and underscores Egypt and the European Union's commitment to progress from promises to concrete actions." According to the Egyptian

president, the strategic partnership between Egypt and the EU encompasses "six pillars, with investment being the most significant." He highlighted expectations of mobilizing approximately 5 billion (\$5.3 billion) in European investments and providing 1.8 billion in investment guarantees for the private sector. Sisi also emphasized that these efforts would enhance the EU's role as Egypt's foremost trade and investment partner. The president emphasized Egypt's commitment as a reliable partner in promoting security and stability in the regional context. In March last year, the EU unveiled a financing package totaling 7.4 billion for Egypt from 2024 to 2027. Over the past four years, Egypt has received around \$12.8 billion in total funding from Europe.

'Economic violence' against women must stop: Turk

WEB DESK

UNITED NATIONS: The UN human rights chief, Volker Turk, has told a Human Rights Council panel that it's time to eliminate laws and practices that contribute to "economic violence" against women and girls. During his opening statement Friday to the all-day panel dedicated to women and human rights, Turk said there had been "extraordinary progress" thanks to the worldwide women's movement. But the very fact that a separate panel needed to be convened on gender-based violence shows that progress has been "hard-won and fragile", he added. The meeting's focus on so-called economic violence as a part of a wider pattern of gender-based violence occurs when a woman or girl is denied access to financial resources as a form of abuse or control. Turk noted that one in three women have

been subjected to some form of violence - physical, sexual, psychological or economic - at least once in their life. "If one in three men globally were subject to such devastating and pervasive harm, an emergency summit would be convened," he said. The High Commissioner said economic violence often goes unseen or unregulated but could be just as harmful as physical violence, as it usually includes forms of control, exploitation and sabotage. "While economic violence most commonly occurred in the home, it could also be enabled and perpetrated by the State through discriminatory legal frameworks which restricted women's access to credit, employment, social protection, or property and land rights," he said. Turk declared that so far, global efforts to deliver on gender equality have failed, pointing out that 3.9 billion women worldwide faced legal barriers affecting their econom-

ic participation and women earn only 77 cents for every dollar paid to men, among other inequities. He said there needed to be a thorough revision of discriminatory laws and practices to put a stop to economic violence. "Gender equality needed to be positively fostered through laws governing all areas of life and there needed to be policy measures to ensure these laws were applied," he said. Further, he said there needed to be a stronger effort to ensure survivors of economic violence could seek justice and assistance. "There needed to be better complaint mechanisms, economic and social support systems, more widely available psychological assistance, and for perpetrators to be brought to justice," the High Commissioner said. He emphasized that violence against women and girls was "abhorrent and inexcusable." During the session, members of civil society also weighed in on the

harm caused by economic violence. Esther Waweru, Senior Legal Advisor at Equality Now, said inequality in the family was one of the main reasons for economic violence, paired with "retrogressive patriarchal gender norms." She said that 1.4 billion women globally lived in countries where economic violence was not recognized and where there are no protections; a practice she believes could leave more women and girls vulnerable to exploitation. Ms. Waweru recommends that Member States enact comprehensive laws to criminalize sexual and gender-based violence and intimate partner violence - along with economic violence. She called for laws to "repeal and revoke marital power clauses designating husbands as the head of the households" to "ensure equitable sharing of the joint property deriving from marriage" and equal labour rights.

China, Pakistan form digital education alliance

BEIJING: China, Pakistan have formed a digital education alliance to foster skills development. This is a milestone in the educational cooperation between the two countries, achieved this week, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday. The alliance, jointly initiated by ITMC Technology Co., Ltd. and UNI International, along with over 160 Chinese and Pakistani technical and vocational education and training (TVET) partners. This aims to strengthen Pakistan's TVET system and transform it into a leading digital education hub. The formation of the alliance was announced during the International Digital Skills Exchange Seminar of the 2nd Belt and Road International Skills Competition held in Chongqing from June 24 to 26. Over 200 experts from both countries, representing more than 140 colleges and universities, witnessed the historic event both online and offline. Leading the alliance from Pakistan is Rao Rashid Ali, Director General of Punjab TEVTA. Ali highlighted the importance of this collaboration in bridging the digital skills gap in Pakistan and underlined its potential to transform the education landscape in the country. From China, Professor Xue Maoyun, former president of Jiangsu Commerce Vocational and Technical College, assumed the role of chairman of the alliance. He stressed the shared vision of advancing digital education and fostering mutually beneficial partnerships. Muhammad Omar, Counsellor and Head of Chancery at the Pakistani Embassy in China and Afifa Shajia Awais, Counsellor of Education also attended the seminar. Praising China's achievements in talent transformation, especially in the development of highly skilled talent, Omar expressed the hope that Pakistan could leverage China's experience in digital transformation to enhance its own educational institutions.—DNA

Myanmar Central Bank denies UN weapons report

WASHINGTON : Myanmar's central bank denied a UN report that the country's military government can still access money and weapons for its war against anti-coup forces, saying financial institutions under the bank's supervision followed prescribed procedures. The Central Bank of Myanmar "expressed our strong objection to the UN Special Rapporteur's report," it said in a statement published in a junta newspaper on Saturday. "The UN report severely harms the interests of Myanmar civilians and the relationship between Myanmar and other countries." The rapporteur on Myanmar's human rights, Tom Andrews, reported on Wednesday that while international efforts to isolate the junta appear to have denied its ability to buy military equipment, it still imported \$253 million worth of weapons, dual-use technologies, manufacturing equipment and other materials in the 12 months to March. The report said Myanmar had the help of international banks, including those from Southeast Asian neighbor Thailand, for its purchases. Facing its biggest challenge since its 2021 coup against Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's government, Myanmar's military is caught up in multiple, low-intensity conflicts and grappling to stabilize a crumbling economy. Western countries have imposed multiple financial sanctions on Myanmar's military, banks and associated businesses. The central bank said local and international banks engaged in transactions with Myanmar have undergone comprehensive due diligence measures for all business relationships and transactions. "The financial transactions are only for the importation of essential goods and basic necessities for Myanmar civilians, such as medicines and medical supplies, agricultural and livestock supplies, fertilizers, edible oil and fuels," it said. The UN report said exports from Singapore had plunged to just over \$10 million from over \$110 million in 2022 but that Thai companies in Thailand partially filled the gap, transferring \$120 million worth of weapons and materials in 2023, double from the previous year.—APP



BEIJING: Pakistan Ambassador Khalil Hashmi meet with Anivar Tursen, Commissioner of the Kashi Prefectural Region. Both exchanged views on strengthening bilateral cooperation.—DNA

Spain intervenes in SA's genocide case against Israel

South Africa filed the lawsuit against the Israeli regime at the end of December

FOREIGN DESK

MADRID : Spain has intervened in a genocide case that was initiated late last year by South Africa at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against the Israeli regime, over the latter's months-long genocidal war on the Gaza Strip. "This intervention is motivated by our responsibility as a State party to the Genocide Convention and our firm commitment to international law," the Spanish foreign ministry said on Friday. South Africa filed the lawsuit against the Israeli regime at the end of December, after nearly three months of Israeli aggression against Palestinians in Gaza. Before filing the lawsuit, the country stated

that the occupying regime had failed to uphold its commitments under the 1948 Genocide Convention. In its interim ruling on January 26, the top United Nations court ruled that Pretoria's claims were plausible, ordering provisional measures. The Hague-based tribunal also said that the Israeli regime had to implement steps to prevent genocidal acts and allow humanitarian aid to flow into Gaza. Following South Africa's complaint, several countries, including Turkey, Libya, Nicaragua, Colombia, the Maldives, Egypt, Belgium, Ireland, Mexico, and Chile, submitted requests to join the case. Commenting further on Madrid's decision, the Spanish ministry said, "We seek to contribute to bringing peace

back to Gaza and the Middle East." "We urge the ICJ to address the obligation to prevent genocide and ensure compliance with the Court's binding precautionary measures," it said. Spain has committed to abiding by the ICJ's ruling, demonstrating its support for international judicial decisions and its dedication to fostering global peace and stability, it added. The Israeli regime launched the war on the coastal sliver on October 7 after Palestinian resistance groups carried out a surprise retaliatory operation into the occupied territories. Concomitantly with the war, the regime has been enforcing a near-total siege on Gaza, which has reduced the flow of foodstuffs, medicine, electricity, and water into the Pales-

tinian territory into a trickle. So far during the military onslaught, the regime has killed at least 37,765 Palestinians and injured over 86,429 others. Thousands more are also missing and presumed dead under rubble. Meanwhile, The Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said Saturday it evacuated its temporary headquarters in the southern Gaza Strip because of Israeli attacks. The PRCS "fully evacuated its temporary administrative headquarters in the Mawasi Khan Younis area due to shrapnel falling on the building and direct shelling, which posed a danger to the staff working inside," it wrote on X. Flouting a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate cease-fire, Israel has forced in-

ternational condemnation amid its continued brutal offensive on Gaza since an Oct. 7 attack by the Palestinian resistance group, Hamas. More than 37,800 Palestinians have since been killed in Gaza, most of them women and children, and more than 86,800 others injured, according to local health authorities. Over eight months into the Israeli war, vast tracts of Gaza lie in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water and medicine. Israel is accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice, whose latest ruling ordered Tel Aviv to immediately halt its operation in Rafah, where more than 1 million Palestinians had sought refuge from the war before it was invaded on May 6.

1 dead, five injured in France wedding hall attack

THIONVILLE: One person was killed and five others wounded in northeastern France when several masked gunmen opened fire at a wedding ceremony, police sources said on Sunday. Sources suggested that the attack in the northeastern city of Thionville was linked to a settling of scores between drug traffickers. The shooting took place at a reception hall overnight Saturday to Sunday, with around a hundred people in attendance. Two people were seriously injured and one of them was in a critical condition. The perpetrators of the shooting have fled the scene. "It was during a wedding," a police source said. "At a quarter past one in the morning, a group of people went outside to smoke in front of the hall, and then three heavily armed men arrived and opened fire in their direction. The assailants arrived in a 4x4 vehicle, "probably a BMW," the source said. It was not immediately clear where the vehicle had come from. Thionville is located close to the borders of Luxembourg and Germany. Members of law enforcement believe that a settling of scores linked to drug trafficking was behind the violence. "The wedding was not targeted as such, it was people who were at the wedding," the source said. A glass door pierced with bullet holes could be seen at the scene on Sunday morning. In the neighboring town of Villerupt shootings between rival gangs at a drug dealing point left five people injured in May 2023.—APP

2 dead, one missing after Swiss landslide

GENEVA : Two people have died and a third is missing after torrential rains triggered a landslide in southeastern Switzerland, police said on Sunday. Violent storms lashed the Alpine country with rain this weekend, with hundreds of people evacuated in the west after the Rhone river and its tributaries broke their banks. "The bodies of two people were found by rescuers in connection with the landslide in the Fontana region," police in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino said in a statement. According to local daily La Regione, the dead were two women who were on holiday in the region. Emergency services were assessing the best way to evacuate 300 people who had arrived for a football tournament in Peccia, while almost 70 more were being evacuated from a holiday camp in the village of Mogno. The poor weather was making rescue work particularly difficult, police had said earlier, with several valleys inaccessible and cut off from the electricity network. The federal alert system also said part of the canton was without drinking water.—Agencies

M23 rebels seize key town in east DRC

KINSHASA: The M23 militia fighters have seized a strategic town in the Democratic Republic of Congo's volatile east, a local official said. "Kanyabayonga has been in the hands of the M23 since Friday evening," the administrative official said under condition of anonymity. Kanyabayonga lies on the northern front of the conflict in North Kivu province, which has been rocked by violence since 2021 when the M23 (March 23 Movement) resumed its armed campaign in the region. The town is considered a pathway to the major commercial centres of Butembo and Beni in the north. Kanyabayonga is home to more than 60,000 people as well as tens of thousands of people who have fled there in recent months, driven from their homes by the advance of the rebels. The town is in the Lubero territory, the fourth territory in the North Kivu province that the group has entered after Rutshuru, Nyiragongo and Masisi. "The population is there (in Kanyabayonga), especially those who had moved from the territory of Rutshuru to Lubero," the administrative official said.—APP

Briefs

7 dead as coaster, trailer collide

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Seven people died while six others were injured on Sunday when a coaster overturned after colliding with a trailer on Karachi's Mauripur Road, police said. According to a statement issued by the Mauripur police station, those killed in the accident included four children and two women. The deceased were 40-year-old Sughra, 45-year-old Shazia, 10-year-old Kinza Ahmed, 14-year-old Qadeer Abdul Jabbar, six-year-old Sakeena Manzoor, four-year-old Zeenat Hayat and an unidentified person aged 40.

The wounded, which included two women and a boy, were 35-year-old Azhar, 35-year-old Bushra, 35-year-old Shabbir, 25-year-old Sadiq, 20-year-old Zainab and 10-year-old Mudasar. The wounded and the bodies were moved to CHK, the police statement said, adding that further investigation was under way. Mauripur SHO Chaudhry Tufail told media the victims were relatives who were on their way to a picnic at the beach. The accident occurred when the trailer took a U-turn and the coaster — which was coming from behind and apparently speeding — rammed into it and overturned, the SHO said. He added that the driver of the trailer fled while the driver of the coaster was among the injured persons. Meanwhile, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah expressed grief at the lives lost in the incident.

Caribbean braces as Hurricane Beryl strengthens

NEW YORK: Cars are lining up at petrol stations before hurricane Beryl lands in Bridgetown, Barbados Caribbean nations are warning residents to make emergency preparations with a powerful and potentially deadly hurricane strengthening further as it moves towards them. Beryl, the first named hurricane of the season, is due to make landfall over a number of islands late on Sunday. The hurricane has been upgraded by forecasters to a "very dangerous" category three storm - meaning it is predicted to have winds of 111-130mph (179-209km/h). The major storm is expected to strengthen further as it nears the Caribbean islands of Barbados, Dominica, Grenada and Martinique, among others. Across the region, people are boarding up their homes, queuing for fuel at filling stations and stockpiling supplies and water in preparation for the storm. - Agencies

18 killed in suicide attacks in Nigeria

NIGER: At least 18 people have been killed and 30 injured in a series of deadly blasts in Nigeria thought to have been carried out by female suicide bombers. One of the bombings is reported to have killed six people and injured others at a wedding ceremony on Saturday, in the north-eastern Borno state. The state's emergency management agency said the co-ordinated attacks targeted a wedding, the victims' subsequent funeral and a hospital in the town of Gwoza. President Bola Tinubu condemned the attacks calling them "desperate acts of terror" in a statement shared by his media aide on Facebook. He vowed stern action against those responsible for the killings in the town of Gwoza and insisted that the incident had not undermined recent gains made against jihadists. "The president declares that the purveyors of wanton violence shall have a certain encounter with justice. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb presiding over a meeting of Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) in Islamabad. - DNA

IHC wants PM to reveal actors behind 'mass surveillance'

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has declared that 'any form of surveillance' on citizens was illegal and unconstitutional, asking Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif to explain who is 'responsible for the mass surveillance. IHC Justice Babar Sattar issued a written order on the plea of Bushra Bibi, wife of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, and Najam Saqib, son of former chief justice Saqib Nisar, against the audio leaks. In the written order, Justice Sattar said that the federal government was responsible for the surveillance of four million citizens and PM Shehbaz and cabinet members are "collectively and individually" responsible for the mass surveillance.

The IHC also ordered the Prime Minister to submit a report on the legal framework of the surveillance system within six weeks. The report must also clarify whether the surveillance is being carried out in accordance with the law and the constitution.

It also directed the Prime Minister to explain who is responsible for the installation of the surveillance system and mass surveillance and "who is in charge of the system that is affecting the privacy of citizens". Meanwhile, the IHC also issued contempt of court notice to PTA Chairman and its members, directing them to submit response within six weeks. "The court is of the view that the PTA apparently misinterpreted the surveillance system in the report", it added. Justice Babar, in its order, directed the telecommunication authority to submit its response on surveillance system in a sealed envelope.

Israeli tanks advance into north and south, fighting rages

One Palestinian citizen was martyred and five others were injured in an Israeli drone strike that targeted a house in Nur Shams refugee camp in Tulkarem City

NEWS DESK

Gaza: Death toll surges to 37,877

CAIRO/GAZA: Israeli forces advanced further on Sunday into the Shejaia neighborhood of northern Gaza and also pushed deeper into western and central Rafah in the south, killing at least six Palestinians and destroying several homes, residents said. Israeli tanks, which moved back into Shejaia four days ago, fired shells toward several houses, leaving families trapped inside and unable to leave, the residents said. The Israeli military said forces operating in Shejaia had over the past day killed several Palestinian gunmen, located weapons, and struck military infrastructure. On Saturday it announced the death of two Israeli soldiers in northern Gaza. The armed wing of Hamas and the allied Islamic Jihad reported fierce fighting in both Shejaia and Rafah, saying their fighters had fired anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs against Israeli forces operating there.

GAZA: The health ministry in Gaza said on Sunday that the Israeli occupation army committed three massacres in different areas of the Gaza Strip during the past 24 hours, killing at least 43 civilians and injuring over 111 others, while a large number of victims are still under the rubble of bombed buildings or lying on roads. In a statement, the health ministry said that the Israeli army killed and injured a large number of civilians in different areas of Gaza during the past 24 hours, but at least 154 of them, including 43 martyrs, were transported to hospitals. The health ministry added that the death toll from the ongoing Israeli bombardments and shooting attacks, which started on October 7, climbed to 37,877 martyrs and the number of the wounded surged to 86,969 people. The Gaza Strip has been under brutal bombardment since a cross-border operation was launched by Hamas's armed wing, al-Qassam Brigades, on October 7. Besides the large number of casualties and the huge displacement of people, basic food, fuel, water and medical supplies have run out for the 2.3 million residents in Gaza due to the tight Israeli blockade and the massive destruction of infrastructure and facilities. - Agencies

More than eight months into Israel's air and ground war in Gaza, militants continue to stage attacks on Israeli forces, operating in areas that the Israeli army said it had gained control over months ago. Arab mediators' efforts, backed by the United States, have so far failed to secure a ceasefire. Hamas says any deal must end the war and bring a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. Israel says it will accept only temporary pauses in the fighting until Hamas, which has governed Gaza since 2007, is eradicated. In Rafah, near the border with Egypt, Israeli tanks pushed deeper into several districts in the east, west and center of the city, and medics said six people had been killed in an Israeli strike on a house in Shaboura, in the heart of the city. The six bodies from the Zurub family were transferred to Nasser Hospital in the nearby city of Khan Younis. On Sunday, dozens of relatives paid their respects before the bodies, which were wrapped in white shrouds, and then carried them in their arms to prepared graves.

Joe Biden assures donors he can still win election

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden has assured Democrat donors that he can still win November's presidential election against Donald Trump, after a poor debate performance fuelled concern about his candidacy. The president, 81, attended a series of fundraising events in New York and New Jersey on Saturday, and defended his performance in CNN's Presidential Debate. Speaking at one event, Mr Biden admitted, "I didn't have a great night, but neither did Trump" on Thursday. "I promise you we're going to win this election," he said. Mr Biden's debate performance was marked by hard-to-follow and shaky answers - raising fresh fears among some Democrats over whether he is the right candidate to contest this high-stakes election. Former Democratic House speaker Nancy Pelosi said Mr Biden's debate performance "wasn't great" - while his former communications director, Kate Bedingfield, called it "really disappointing". The president said he understood the concern, but pledged to fight harder. New Jersey's Democratic governor Phil Murphy attended the fundraiser alongside Mr Biden and the First Lady - and told Mr Biden that "we are all with you 1,000%". The Biden campaign accepted that the debate had not gone as they had hoped, but said he would not step aside for another nominee. Campaign chairwoman Jennifer O'Malley Dillon said on Saturday that internal post-debate polling showed "voters' opinions were not changed". "It will not be the first time that overblown media narratives have driven temporary dips in the polls," she said. Former President Barack Obama, a close friend of Mr Biden, said on social media that "bad debate nights happen". "This election is still a choice between someone who fought for ordinary folks his

entire life and someone who only cares about himself," Mr Obama wrote. Hours after the debate, Mr Trump told his supporters that he considered the debate a "big victory" for his campaign. "Joe Biden's problem is not his age," the 78-year-old Trump said. "It's his competence. He's grossly incompetent." Mr Biden's performance was not only criticised by those in politics. A prominent editorial in the New York Times described his determination to run again as a "reckless gamble", and urged him to do some soul-searching this weekend. It said Democrats should "acknowledge that Mr Biden can't continue his race, and create a process to select someone more capable to stand in his place". Voters across the United States have also expressed concerns over voting for either candidate following Thursday's debate. Long-time Democrat Lori Gregory told the BBC that she "could not handle" watching the debate, and asked, "is this the best our country can do?" Republican Crystal Myers-Barber said it was "painful to watch", but added that she thought "Trump came across very level-headed and presidential and Biden came across very weak." Democrat Shana Ziolk said she was "frustrated" watching the debate, and thought there was no clear winner. A post-debate poll by liberal pollster Data for Progress found that 62% of likely voters who watched or read about the debate found Trump won. Only 30% of those polled said Mr Biden won the debate. Until further polling is conducted, fundraising could be another indication of continued enthusiasm for Mr Biden's candidacy. In a memo, chairwoman Jennifer O'Malley Dillon said the campaign had raised more than \$27m (£21.3m) from the Thursday debate to Friday evening. - Agencies

Ji also opposes Azm-e-Istehkam Operation

Asserted Pakistan should make a regional block with other states in the region including Afghanistan

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) has also opposed the 'Operation Azm-e-Iste-

hkam Pakistan announced by Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) led federal government. JI emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman in his statements asserted, operation will be problematic for the country and public. He stressed that JI's narrative was clear and they rejected the operation. Hafiz Naeem stressed Afghanistan soil shouldn't be used against terrorism in Pakistan. He stated in-fact the regional states including Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and Iran must hold talks for peace and stability in the region. JI emir highlighted that these states, Central Asian states and Russia could make a regional block for development and peace and order.

Hungary's Orban announces new EU Parliament alliance

Austria's far-right Freedom Party and populist Czech ANO party led by Andrej Babis also join as Hungary takes on EU presidency

FOREIGN DESK

VIENNA: Austria's far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's Fidesz and the populist Czech ANO party led by Andrej Babis are forming a new alliance in the European Parliament. "We take on the responsibility to launch this new platform and new faction. I want to make it clear that this is our goal," Orban told reporters at a joint news conference with FPÖ leader Herbert Kickl and ANO's Babis, calling for other parties' support. The new alliance has been dubbed the "Patriots for Europe" and will require backing from parties from at least four other countries to be recognised as an official group in the European Parliament - where far-right groups have made gains. Parties from at least a quarter of the European Union's 27 member states are needed to officially form a new political group. "A new era begins here, and the first, perhaps decisive moment of this new era is the creation of a new European political faction that will change European politics," Orban said. The three men signed a "patriotic manifesto", promising "peace, security and development" instead of the "war, migration and stagnation" brought by the "Brussels elite", according to Orban. Kickl's FPÖ is part of the Identity and Democracy grouping,

which also includes France's National Rally and Italy's League. The centrist ANO movement of billionaire former prime minister and eurosceptic Babis announced last week it was leaving Renew Europe. The three parties were the strongest performing in their respective countries during the EU elections earlier this month. While Fidesz has remained outside larger groupings since it parted ways with the mainstream centre-right European People's Party (EPP) in 2021, the FPÖ is part of the Identity and Democracy political group along with Marine Le Pen's National Rally party in France. ANO is not part of any political group. The new alliance is shaping as Hungary takes over the six-month rotating presidency of the EU from Monday. The bloc's presidency bloc brings little real power but enables countries holding it to put their priorities higher on the agenda. Hungary has in recent years increasingly blocked, altered or delayed a number of key EU decisions, including those on the war in Ukraine and relations with Russia and China. He has selected "Make Europe Great Again" as his motto for the presidency, alarming European politicians for its nod to the slogan of former United States President Donald Trump, whom Orban has previously called a "good friend". Leaders in Brussels earlier this week launched membership talks with candidate countries Ukraine and Moldova amid Orban's repeated threats to block Ukraine's candidacy. Amid longstanding accusations of undermining democratic institutions by Orban, an EU Parliament resolution in late May said the bloc's presidency must be taken out of Hungary's hand altogether. In this month's European Parliament election, nationalist parties capitalised on voter disquiet over spiralling prices, migration and the cost of the green transition, and are looking to translate their seat gains into more influence on EU policy.