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Unity government is South Africa's best option : Ramaphosa

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UN chief condemns Myanmar military attacks on civilians

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Williamson praises Afghan cricket team

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President Xi seeks 'safety'

Pakistan, China agree to upgrade economic corridor

The two leaders reaffirmed the time-honored 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' and expressed the resolve to further deepen cooperation

DNA

BEIJING: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a long and in-depth discussion in a meeting with the Chinese President Xi Jinping at the historic Great Hall of the People in Beijing, today. The two leaders were accompanied by the Federal Ministers and senior officials. This was Prime Minister's first meeting with the President of China since assuming office in 2024. The meeting was marked by traditional warmth reflective of the ironclad friendship and close strategic ties between the two countries. Prime Minister thanked President Xi Jinping for the warm and gracious welcome accorded to him and his delegation in China. He recalled the historic visit of the President Xi Jinping to Pakistan in 2015 where the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was formally operationalized marking a new chapter in the bilateral relationship. The two leaders reaffirmed the time-honored 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' and expressed the resolve to further deepen cooperation across diverse domains ranging from political and security to economic, trade, and people-to-people exchanges. They also exchanged views on regional and global developments including Afghanistan, Palestine and South Asia including the serious human rights situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The two sides reiterated their longstanding support on each other's issues of core interest. Commending President Xi's visionary Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Prime Minister underscored that as the flagship project of BRI, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) had significantly contributed to Pakistan's socio-economic development.

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Pak-China agree to strengthen parliamentary ties

The two sides reaffirmed support to each other's core interests

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday met Chairman of China's National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee Zhao Leji wherein they agreed to promote engagement and cooperation between NPC and the Parliament of Pakistan. The prime minister, who is on a five-day official visit to China, proposed several initiatives to strengthen parliamentary exchanges, including enhancing interactions between the China-Pakistan Friendship Groups and exchanging delegations of young parliamentarians. The prime minister paid rich tribute to Chairman Zhao for his contributions to Chinese politics and society and congratulated him on successfully convening the NPC's annual session. Prime Minister Shehbaz noted Zhao Leji's important position in the Communist Party of China (CPC) and NPC which underlined the trust placed in him by the

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JCP recommends 3 judges' for SC elevation

Names of SHC, LHC chief justices among those recommended for elevation to apex court

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) Friday sent the names of three high court judges to be considered for elevation to the Supreme Court for final approval by the Parliamentary Committee. The names, recommended for appointment to vacant SC seats, were recommended during a meeting of the Judicial Commission held under chairmanship of Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa, said the sources. During the meeting, the names of Lahore High Court Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad, Sindh High Court Chief Justice Aqeel Abbasi, and LHC Justice Shahid Bilal have been proposed, the sources said. CJP Isa had, last month, convened the JCP meeting for deliberations over the appointment of three judges in the SC. The JCP was constituted under the 18th Constitutional Amendment mandated to appoint

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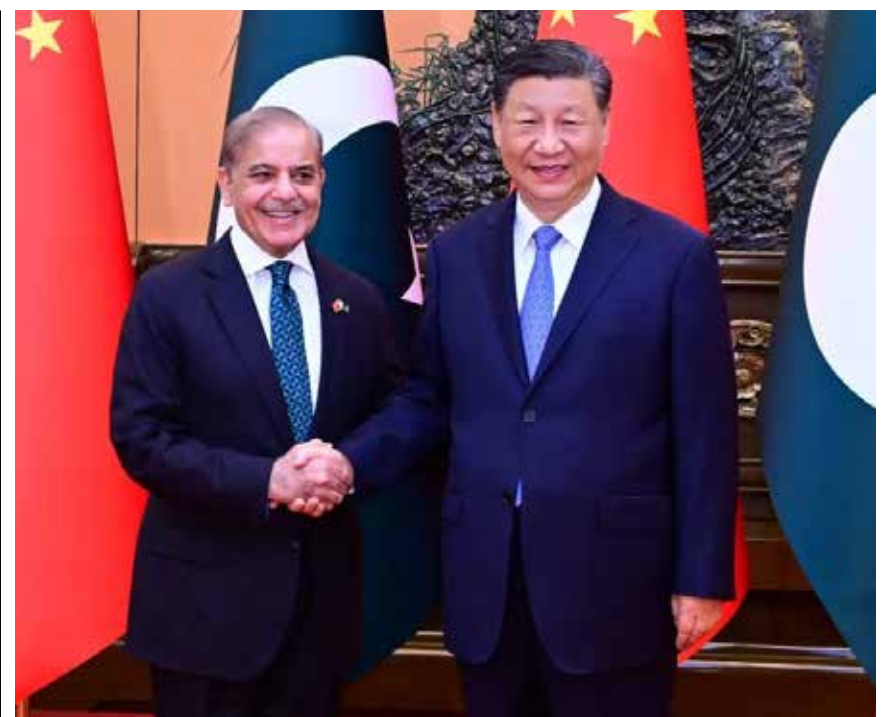
Pakistan to celebrate Eid ul Adha on June 17

Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee announces moon sighting after meeting in Karachi

DNA

KARACHI: Muslims in Pakistan will celebrate Eid ul Adha on June 17, the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee announced on Friday after sighting the Zil Hajj moon. The moon sighting committee was chaired by Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad, with central and zonal committees' members, and representatives of SUPARCO, Met Office and Ministry of Religious Affairs in attendance. Meanwhile, sub-committees in Lahore, Peshawar and other cities also convened in there respective areas to gather testimonies. Earlier, Peshawar and Quetta zonal committees also announced that the crescent was spotted in respective cities. Eid ul Adha falls on the tenth day of

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BEIJING: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with President of People's Republic of China Xi Jinping. - DNA

Imran 'joins' FIA probe

Dialogue only with those who hold 'real power': Imran

PTI founder "joins" controversial X post probe after FIA team visits Adiala Jail for third time

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Imran Khan, the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), stated on Friday that he would only engage in dialogue with those who hold "real power." "I have been kept in a death cell," he lamented, adding that he has not requested any favours or facilities in prison. "I cannot tweet from jail; I instruct my lawyers to tweet on my behalf." Speaking to the media after the hearing of the £190 million scam case in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, Khan criticised the government, saying, "The Hamoodur Rahman Commission was established for two purposes: to prevent the repetition of past mistakes and to identify those responsible."

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Institutions should work within their limits: Justice Kayani

IHC disposed of the petition for the recovery of missing poet Ahmed Farhad

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani of Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday says no one is above the law and all institutions should work within their constitutional jurisdiction.

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Pak calls for accountability over custodial deaths in IIOJK

Spokesperson says individuals wishing to enter Pakistan from Afghanistan must possess a visa and an Afghan passport

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday reiterated its call for India to be held accountable for its unabated human rights abuses in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) where over 7,000 Kashmiris had so far died in the custody of Indian forces during the last three decades. Foreign Office spokesperson

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, at her weekly press briefing, highlighted the reported death of a Kashmiri civilian at a police station in IIOJK's Pulwama district. "This is not the first incident of its kind as over the last three decades the number of custodial deaths in IIOJK has exceeded 7,000. The perpetrators of these crimes should be held accountable," she said reaffirming Pakistan's continuous political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiri people for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

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Briefs

Palestine envoy greets Pakistan on UNSC seat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Rabei has congratulated to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on its election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the period 2025-2026. In his message the Ambassador said, "We trust the ability of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and its representatives to succeed in this important position. We also trust Pakistan in its ability to support justice and human rights and against injustice and to stand by the rights of the Palestinian people and support them in international communities."

Senate devolves into squabbling

Opposition protests Palwasha Khan presiding over session

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Senate witnessed squabbling between the treasury and opposition benches on Friday as the PTI called out PPP Senator Palwasha Khan for chairing the session in the presence of Senate Deputy Chairman Syedal Khan Nasir. Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani presided over the proceedings but went away 40 minutes into the session, upon which Senator Palwasha began chairing the session.

Holiday Notice

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

President confers Nishan-i-Pakistan upon Prince Rahim Aga

The award was conferred in recognition of his leadership role in advancing path-breaking initiatives in Pakistan in commercial banking, microfinance, insurance, sustainable tourism

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferred the Award of Nishan-i-Pakistan upon Prince Rahim Aga Khan in recognition of his meritorious services and role in the development, progress, and betterment of Pakistan and its people, during a special investiture ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. The ceremony was attended by ministers, members of Parliament, diplomats, and government officials. The award was conferred on Prince Rahim Aga Khan in recognition of his leadership role in advancing path-breaking

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Requiem for the Pakistan cricket team

“Drawing from this experience, it might be beneficial for cricket to adopt a similar approach, eliminating the need for a separate selection committee and allowing the coach to make team selections directly. This arrangement will also do away with various pressure groups within the team”

COMMENT

ANSAR M BHATTI



AN ignominious defeat at the hands of cricket minnows USA during the T20 World Cup match does not bode well for the future of the Pakistan cricket team. After restricting Pakistan to a modest total of 159, the USA managed to chase down the target on the last ball, forcing the match into a super over. In the super over, the USA scored 18 runs. The Pakistani openers then failed to reach this target, bringing disrepute to themselves and their country. Let's delve into the various factors that led to this debacle, starting with team fitness. Key player Imad Wasim was brought back into the team to strengthen Pakistan's middle order. However, he became unfit before the crucial match. The team had undergone numerous fitness tests at the Pakistan Military Academy in Kakul before departing for Ireland and England. After the rigorous sessions at PMA, it was expected that fitness issues would not trouble the players. Another player, Muhammad Amir, who had announced his retirement and was previously sentenced for involvement

in betting, was also called back to the squad. He was chosen to bowl the super over, during which he conceded 18 runs, including 8 runs from extras. This proved to be a poor decision, especially with regular bowler Shaheen Afridi available. We witnessed yet another disappointing performance from Azam Khan, both as a wicketkeeper and a batsman. It remains a mystery who is behind his selection for the team. I cannot recall any player in any sport with a physical structure like Azam Khan's performing well. His physique appears unfit for any kind of sport, yet he continues to be part of the team. The frequent changes in management at the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) are a significant factor contributing to the team's lackluster performance. Often, PCB Chairmen lack a cricketing background, leading to the captain and senior team members dominating the selection process. Currently, Captain Babar Azam is believed to have formed a strong group of like-minded players within the team, thereby exerting considerable influence over team management decisions. The incumbent PCB Chairman, Mohsin Naqvi, appears to be

inexperienced and easily influenced due to his lack of cricketing knowledge and administrative skills. Consequently, the team seems to be in disarray. Taking a cue from the past and considering the current system at the PCB, it is evident that everyone aspires to be the PCB chairman due to the substantial perks and privileges associated with the position. Beyond the monetary benefits, the PCB chairman enjoys free travel, five-star accommodations, and other luxurious amenities while accompanying the team. The opportunity to grant favors to close associates further enhances the appeal of this role. Amidst this indulgence, little attention is given to team performance and discipline. To move in the right direction, this trend must be reversed. The overall political system of a country undeniably has a direct impact on sports. In Pakistan, the political landscape is fluid, uncertain, and fraught with anomalies, which has disrupted the country's systems, including sports. Appointments to key positions often ignore the merit principle, leading to poor performances in various sports disciplines. The state of affairs at the Pakistan Hockey Federation is deeply troubling. Hockey,

the national game of Pakistan, has been treated with neglect, undermining its very foundations. Hockey players, despite their dedication and contributions, are among the most neglected members of society, receiving meager compensation. A recent example of their resilience was seen at the Azlan Shah Cup, where Pakistan finished second purely due to the personal efforts of the players. However, this success is overshadowed by the ongoing leadership crisis within the federation. Two factions are currently vying for control, a situation exacerbated by the government and the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination's failure to resolve this contentious issue. This prolonged dispute has had a severely adverse effect on Pakistan hockey, hindering its progress and development at all levels. Pakistan will now face India in their next match. If the green shirts are to repeat the USA performance, then for sure match against India is going to be a one-sided affair. Defeat against USA on one hand shall put extra pressure on Pakistan in the match against India while the Indian on the other hand shall feel relaxed as they will be taking on a team that was humiliated by cricket minnows.

Recently, Pakistan hired South African star player Gary Kirsten as the head coach of their cricket team. However, he cannot be blamed for the recent defeat as he did not have sufficient time to coach the team. Additionally, he likely had minimal influence over team selection, which is unfortunate. In contrast, the Pakistan hockey team performed well in the Azlan Shah Cup and the National Cup in Poland, largely due to the influence of Dutch coach Roelant Oltmans, who was given the authority to select the team. This situation arose because of disagreements between two parallel selection committees within the hockey federation. The government intervened and empowered Oltmans to make team selections until the federations resolved their issues. This arrangement proved successful, as Oltmans selected the team based purely on merit. Drawing from this experience, it might be beneficial for cricket to adopt a similar approach, eliminating the need for a separate selection committee and allowing the coach to make team selections directly. This arrangement will also do away with various pressure groups within the team.

Romina stresses collective action against global warming

Romina Khurshid emphasized on collective approach among the federal government and all the provinces to deal with global warming and heat wave effects in the country

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam emphasized on strong coordination and collective approach among the federal government and all the provinces to deal with global warming and heat wave effects in the country. She was chairing the first meeting of the task force constituted by the prime minister to propose measures to address the effects of global warming and heat wave and stressed upon the sensitivity of the issue adding that actions need to be initiated on war footing, a news release said. High-level Inter-departmental Working Group on forest fires apprised the meeting that from May 17 to June 5 2024, total 13 fires erupted in Margalla Hills National Park and adjoining areas which affected 77.58 Hectare area. The vegetation affected in that area include small trees, scrubs, shrubs and chir pine. It was apprised to the forum that well-coordinated response

was launched to control these fires by the Ministry of Climate Change, NDMA, Pakistan Army, PAF and CDA. However, the Chairperson raised concerns on the lack of fire beaters availability to firefighters. The Member Operations NDMA presented their strategy to combat heat wave effects adding that they have completed simulation exercise to combat upcoming moon soon spell. While highlighting the unprecedentedly longer duration heat wave in country, Pakistan Meteorological Department apprised the meeting that except GB all provinces would receive above normal rainfall in upcoming moon soon. Probability of urban flooding can't be ruled out, he said in response of a question. It was also apprised that besides above normal rainfall, temperatures this year would also be higher which would cause more snow melting that on one hand fulfill the water shortage need and on the other hand rise the threats of lake outbursts in northern areas. Ministry of Water Resources apprised the chairper-

son, there is zero shortage of water and every province taking its share according to index. Members of Task Force from AJK and GB while sharing their concerns and recommendations appreciated the formation of Task Force and invaluable ideas received during the meeting. The chairperson, while highlighting the issues of women in disaster-hit areas, stressed on setting up local community's committees wherein inclusion of women should be ensured who could approach needy women inside their homes to meet their hygienic needs. She directed Ministry of Information Broadcasting to ensure effective awareness in collaboration with PEMRA before any disaster. She also advised to establish a dashboard with the co-operation of ministry of information technology where all data would be readily available for all stakeholders to take timely action. While concluding the meeting, the Chairperson directed all stakeholders to submit their recommendations in writing before next meeting.



ISLAMABAD: People visiting an exhibition held jointly under the auspices of Islamabad Club, Islamabad Camera Club, and PNCA, National Art (Gallery Islamabad titled "ANNUAL MEMBERS PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION & EXHIBITION" at PNCA.— ONLINE

Cleanliness arrangements for Eidul Azha reviewed

FAISALABAD : Faisalabad Waste Management Company (FWMC) Chief Executive Officer Rauf Ahmad said on Friday that cleanliness arrangements on Eidul Azha were being made exemplary in the district. He said that all wings of the company had been put on alert and they had been directed to develop coordination with other relevant departments for better results. Presiding over a meeting, the CEO directed that all arrangements be completed before Eid and plan-B should also be a priority in case of rain, in addition to necessary repairing of vehicles and waste containers. All service delivery camps should be active. He stressed for a comprehensive strategy to distribute degradable waste bags among citizens a day before Eidul Azha. The cleanliness of cattle markets could not be compromised, he said and urged for the distribution of pamphlets among citizens for their awareness. He also directed for mechanical sweeping of roads, sprinkling limestone and water at entry paths of Masajid and Eidgahs. The officers of operation, HR, IT, Transport, Workshop and Communication departments were present in the meeting.—APP

Submit sales tax returns till June 18

LAHORE : Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry President Kashif Anwar, in a meeting with Focal Person of the Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) Omer Farooq Khan, urged the LCCI members to submit their pending Sales Tax Returns and Workers Welfare Fund (WWF) payments as the financial year 2023-24 draws to a close. With the deadline set for June 18, 2024, the LCCI president highlighted the critical importance of compliance. He urged all LCCI members to ensure that their PRA Sales Tax Returns and any due taxes are submitted promptly. "Timely submission of these returns not only facilitates smooth business operations but also upholds our collective commitment to regulatory compliance," Kashif Anwar stated. In addition to stressing the importance of meeting tax deadlines, he advocated for a more supportive approach towards taxpayers. He emphasized that entering the tax net should be incentivized with benefits rather than penalties and punishment for those not yet registered.—APP

Commissioner for setting up 24/7 control room during Eid

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Friday chaired a meeting regarding the preparation for Eid ul Azha arrangements in the federal capital. The meeting aimed to streamline the operation of cattle markets and maintain cleanliness across the city, said the spokesman of Chief Commissioner Office, Nouman Nazim. The meeting was attended by the representatives from various sectors, focused on managing the expected influx

of livestock and ensuring that hygiene standards remain high during the festive period. To address these challenges, Randhawa outlined several key initiatives. A 24/7 control room will be set up to handle any complaints and issues that arise. This service aims to provide immediate assistance and solutions to residents during the busy days of Eid. Additionally, biodegradable bags will be distributed to help manage waste more effectively. An awareness campaign will be launched to inform citizens about the importance of using designated facilities and

following guidelines to keep the city clean. This campaign will emphasize community cooperation and the collective effort needed to maintain a safe and hygienic environment. Chief Commissioner Randhawa stressed the importance of community participation. He urged the residents to take advantage of the facilities provided and to follow the guidelines to ensure that everyone can enjoy a clean and safe Eid ul Azha. By implementing these measures, the city administration aimed to create a smoother, cleaner experience for all during the festivities, the spokesman added.

Maldives NU, CUI strengthen higher education sector

ISLAMABAD : Maldives National University and COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) on Friday joined hands to strengthen cooperation in higher education sector. This was agreed during a visit of a delegation from Maldives led by Dr. Aishath Shehenaz Adam, Vice Chancellor, Maldives National University (MNU) and Dr Raheema Abdul Raheem, Deputy Vice Chancellor, which called on Rector CUI, Prof. Dr. Sajid Qamar. In a presentation held on the occasion, Head of CUI International Office, Dr. Hammad Omer informed that the collaboration between the two universities had been flourishing since 2016, which was inked in a memorandum of understanding for scientific and educational cooperation and has furthered with exchange visits in 2016 and 2018. For future collaborations, Dr. Omer suggested that MNU can avail various scholarship opportunities available for post-graduate students from Maldives as well as learn from CUI's experience in hybrid mode of education. Dr. Tahir Naeem, Director P&D and HRD briefed on the training need assessment carried out by CUI in 2018 at MNU, highlighted the various areas of capacity building and institutional development where CUI could provide technical assistance. Dr. Aishath expressed keen interest in upgrading MNU's learning management system with CUI's expertise. She invited CUI's technical team to visit Maldives and review MNU's existing system, provide recommendations, and train university staff members. Dr. Bilal Zaka, Head Directorate of IT Services and Dr. Muhammad Asim Noor Head CU Online were also present in the meeting. Dr. Zaka assured full support in upgrading MNU's student management systems and other technical aspects.—APP

BISP plays crucial role in women empowerment: Rubina

Ayaz Sadiq extended his heartfelt congratulations to Rubina Khalid on assuming her new role as Chairperson of BISP

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD : Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Rubina Khalid Friday said that BISP was playing crucial role in the economic empowerment of women. Speaking during a meeting with the Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, the chairperson reiterated her commitment to serve the marginalized segments of society through the programme. Ayaz Sadiq extended his heartfelt congratulations to Rubina Khalid on assuming her new role as Chairperson of BISP. "BISP is dedicated to provide essential support to the most vulnerable

communities, particularly focusing on the economic empowerment of women", she said. She said that steps were being taken to enhance the programme's outreach and impact to ensure that no one was left behind. Rubina Khalid briefed the speaker about the ongoing and recently launched initiatives of BISP. The speaker expressed his support for the programme and wished Rubina Khalid success in her endeavors. "The BISP is vital for the socio-economic uplift of marginalized communities and I wish for its continued success under the leadership of Rubina Khalid" he stated. Later, Central

Additional General Secretary of Pakistan Peoples Party, Engineer Mohammad Humayun Khan met Rubina Khalid at the BISP headquarters. The discussion was held with focus on the issues faced by women beneficiaries of BISP in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa related to the stipend disbursement and the provision of necessary facilities. Rubina Khalid assured General Secretary PPP that all problems faced by the beneficiaries would be promptly addressed. "Our priority is to ensure that every woman in need receives the support she deserves without any delays," she added.

Petroleum dealers association announces support to SBA

PESHAWAR : Patron-in-chief of Sarhad Business Alliance (SBA) and former Governor KP, Haji Ghulam Ali has said that the Alliance was formed with sole objective of naming Sarhad Chamber as real representative of business community and to open way for economic development through promotion of trade and commerce in the province. "The intention is clear, Allah will make the goal easy, I see a clear success of SBA in the upcoming Chamber's elections," he remarked. He expressed these views at a dinner hosted by Shahrukh Khan Duranpur and Sartaj Khan, office bearers of Petroleum Association, in honour of SBA members here Friday. In the event, Petroleum Association along with all its Chamber members announced their support to the SBA. Group Chairman Syed Zahir Ali Shah, Mohammad Ishaq, Sharaf Ali Mubarak, Malik Mehr Elahi, Adnan Jilil, Abidullah Ghulam Javed Bilal Mamor Khan Haji Abdul Hameed Gowwara and other officials including the corporate and associate members of Sarhad Chamber were present at the ceremony. Host Shahrukh Khan welcomed the new group and said that the current situation of the Sarhad Chamber and the plight of the business community was in front of everyone which Sarhad Business Alliance had to solve. Chairman of the group, Syed Zahir Ali Shah, Chairman PCDA Mubeen Khan, Behzad Rehman Khan of Oil Tanker Association, officials of People's Party Labor Wing and Trade Wing, Provincial President of Car Dealer Association Bakht Mir Khan, Tajran Association were present at the event. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Malik Maher Elahi, Muhammad Ishaq, Abdul Hamid Gowwara, Khawaja Yawar, Haji Umar, Adnan Jilil and others clarified in their address that this group was established purely to restore the lost dignity of the Chamber of Commerce. Zahir Shah said that the entire manifesto was being prepared to run all the affairs of the border chamber honestly, which will be put into practice. He said that this group would play the role of the first force to break the status quo. The speakers said that the group of certain people occupying the Sarhad Chamber had been rejected by the business community. Addressing the ceremony, Haji Ghulam Ali said that he was determined to restore the reputation of the Sarhad Chamber like a challenge. If the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry elections are won, the world will see how the problems of the business community of Peshawar are solved, he claimed.—APP

Salik commends ILO's efforts for Gaza workers

The minister highlighted the recent attack on Rafah mentioned in the Director-General's report, where more than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed and 77,000 injured, including 14,000 children

DNA


ISLAMABAD : Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OPHRD), Chaudhary Salik Hussain Friday appreciated the efforts and important initiatives taken by the ILO to support workers and mitigate the adverse effects of the crises being faced by Gaza and the West Bank. The minister made these remarks during the 112th International Labour Con-

ference being held on 3rd June to 14th June 2024 featured significant engagement from Pakistan. Chaudhary Salik Hussain led the Pakistani delegation, which also included Zulfikar Ahmad, Secretary, Workers Welfare Fund. The conference served as a vital platform for global labor discussions, covering topics such as labor standards, employment strategies for fostering decent work, and inclusive economic growth, a news release said. Pakistan's active participation

emphasized its commitment to addressing key labor issues and contributing to the global dialogue on work-related challenges and solutions. This involvement highlights Pakistan's dedication to improving labor conditions and aligning with international labor standards. While addressing the conference, Chaudhary Salik Hussain delivered a statement on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). He acknowledged the collective failure to uphold the

ideals of the Declaration of Philadelphia on its 80th anniversary despite the commitment to social justice. The minister emphasized the dire situation in the occupied Arab territories, particularly in Palestine, and stressed the failure of the multilateral system. He further elaborated that the initial task was to improve working conditions in occupied Palestine, but the current focus has shifted to saving lives, especially those of women and children, due to the worsen-






ing situation. The minister highlighted the recent attack on Rafah mentioned in the Director-General's report, where more than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed and 77,000 injured, including 14,000 children. He noted the severe impact on employment, with the unemployment rate reaching 45% and a significant plunge in GDP. The OIC stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire and the unobstructed delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza.



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Briefs

Protest leads to adjournment of Senate session

ISLAMABAD: The continuous protest by the Opposition members in the Senate on Friday led to adjournment of the session till Monday at 05:00 pm. Soon after calling attentions business, Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan from panel of presiding officers assumed the chair as the Chairman, requested leave from the House to witness oath taking of his newly elected son as member National Assembly. However, Leader of the Opposition Syed Shibli Faraz along with other opposition members, started protest and pointed out that in the presence of Deputy Chairman, the presiding officer cannot chair the session. The Presiding Officer while quoting the Rule 14 of procedure and conduct in Senate, observed that she could preside the House. She went on to say that it was the prerogative of the Chairman Senate to nominate any member of the House as presiding officer. Senator Farooq H Naek also observed that no rule was violated and it was the prerogative of the Chairman. He said that Palwasha Khan could preside over the session. Maulana Atta ur Rehman of JUIF said that the Chairman announced the panel of presiding officers for the session as per the rules, but any presiding officer could not chair the session in the presence of Chairman and Deputy Chairman.—APP

Weekly inflation up by 0.45 pc

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.45 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on June 06, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 309.91 points as compared to 308.52 points during the past week. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 21.69 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732, increased by 0.81 per cent and went up to 301.25 points from the last week's 298.82 points. The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,732-22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, increased by 0.70 per cent, 0.56 per cent, 0.51 and 0.33 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 19 (37.26%) items increased, 14 (27.45%) items decreased and 18 (35.29%) items remained stable. The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included bread (3.02%), garlic (2.00%), petrol (1.74%), pulse masoor (1.43%), diesel (1.42%), rice basmati broken (1.32%), chillies powder (1.31%), eggs (0.94%), wheat flour (0.77%) and mustard oil (0.46%). The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on week-on-week basis included onions (33.21%), tomatoes (15.34%), bananas (4.93%), pulse gram (3.69%), potatoes (2.62%), chicken (1.84%).—APP



ISLAMABAD: Senior politician Raja Zafarul Haq visited the PNCA and witnessed ongoing photo exhibition. He lauded efforts of the NCA for the promotion of art and culture.—DNA

Section 7E of income tax Ord should be abolished, says Atif

FPCCI Chief also highlighted that the Sindh government collects infrastructure cess on import stage at 1.25 percent; which translates into PKR. 225 billion per year. Logically, the better part of that cess should be spent on the infrastructural development and maintenance of Karachi; and, if that happens, the real estate of Karachi will be in a much better shape and its market will also pick up

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has echoed the collective demand of the business, industry and trade community that the section 7E of the income tax ordinance (ITO) 2001 should be abolished for being unproductive and unfair for levying deemed or imaginary income on immovable properties. 7E has produced no significant increase in the tax collection; instead, it has created chaos and discontentment in the otherwise very vibrant real estate sector,

he added. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh stressed that a real estate regulatory authority (RERA) should be established in Pakistan like other regional countries as no sector can perform at its optimum and contribute to the national economy in absence of a regulatory authority. However, he added, that this should be done in consultation with the sector's stakeholders.

FPCCI Chief also highlighted that the Sindh government collects infrastructure cess on import stage at 1.25 percent; which translates into PKR. 225 billion per year. Logically, the

better part of that cess should be spent on the infrastructural development and maintenance of Karachi; and, if that happens, the real estate of Karachi will be in a much better shape and its market will also pick up, he added. Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, maintained that real estate can help bring more foreign exchange to the country in the form of remittances. The sector should make it as their top agenda to attract investment from the overseas Pakistanis as it will also help the economy through stabilizing rupee-dollar parity and shore up the foreign

exchange reserves (FER). Mr. Magoon added that, for the sake of policy advocacy in the national interest, any sector that can contribute to inward remittances should be facilitated and encouraged. Instead of investing in the real estate of other countries, the government should enable and welcome overseas Pakistanis to invest back in their home country, he added. Syed Saquib Shah, Convener of FPCCI's Central Standing Committee on Real Estate Property and Builders, said the systemic shortcomings and lack of facilitation for the real estate sector

can only be addressed through digitalization of the registration system; in order to bring transparency, fairness and validity in the documentation of the properties. Karachi should also get e-stamp system at the earliest like Punjab has implemented, he added. Syed Saquib Shah added that taxes are being unfairly imposed; and, the phenomenon is bringing disenchantment and stagnation in the industry. He also emphasized that taxes should be imposed on the property owners; instead of the real estate agents – who simply provide their services to buyers and sellers.

Pakistan's exports to UK increase by 2.31% in 10 months

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's export of goods and services to the United Kingdom (UK) witnessed an increase of 2.31 percent during the first ten months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to the UK were recorded at US \$1.683 billion during July-April (2023-24) against exports of US \$1.645 billion during July-April (2022-23), SBP data revealed. On a year-to-year basis, the exports to the UK also surged to \$154.613 million in April 2024 against the export of \$151.111 million in April 2023. Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to the UK decreased by 13.39 percent during April 2024 as compared to the exports of \$178.517 million in March 2024, the SBP data revealed. Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 10.64 percent in the first ten months, from US \$23.199 billion to US \$25.669 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from the UK into the country during the months under review were recorded at US \$695.909 million against US \$512.171 million last year, showing an increase of 35.87 percent in July-April (2023-24). On a year-on-year basis, the imports for the UK also increased to US \$43.003 million in April 2024, against the export of US \$31.875 million in April 2023. On a month-on-month basis, the imports from the UK into the country witnessed a nominal decrease of 2.21 percent during April 2024, as compared to the imports of US \$43.976 million during March 2024, according to the data. The overall imports into the country witnessed a decrease of 5.27 per cent, from \$45.766 billion to US \$43.353 billion, according to the data.—APP

Expert on WFS day stresses awareness

The WFS day reminds us of the need to strengthen food safety regulations and standards that govern the production, processing, and distribution of food

ISLAMABAD: Member of Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), Sadiq Afridi stressed media awareness for stepping up efforts to ensure food safety and to fight malnutrition with the adoption of a healthy lifestyle. Talking to the PTV news in connection with World Food Safety Day (WFS), he explained the theme for WFS Day 2024 is "Safe Food Now for a Healthy Tomorrow," adding, this theme emphasises the critical role that safe food plays in ensuring a healthy future for individuals and communities. It underscores the need for sustainable food production systems that can prevent food-borne illnesses and contribute to long-term health and well-being, he added. He said, "The responsibility of each of us to preserve safe food along the supply chain", adding, changing lifestyles, junk food, unphysical activities, over-eating and obesity were the root causes of the many diseases. By promoting awareness, encouraging best practices, and fostering global collaboration, this observance plays a crucial role in reducing food-borne illnesses and promoting a healthier, safer world, he added. Unsafe food should be minimised, he said, adding, food unsafe for consumption causes millions of cases of food-borne diseases and deaths every year. Furthermore, he said that the burden of

food-borne diseases are borne by individuals of all ages, but particularly by children under five years of age and by persons living in low-income regions of the world. He said that the provision of safe and healthy food was a collective responsibility that demanded the contribution of all stakeholders, adding, food insecurity and food-borne disease are closely linked; unsafe foodstuff is consumed when safe food is not accessible. Food-borne illnesses have become a major public health concern in recent years, he said, adding that safe food is the responsibility of all those involved in food production until consumption", he maintained. He said that the campaign will focus on engaging the youth and committing them to making food safety a part of their culture, adding, "We cannot compromise on food safety in any way". "We always try to create awareness about food safety among our customers to practice good habits at their homes and offices," he added. "We can minimise the risk of food contamination and adulteration and ensure food safety by ensuring strict compliance with these standards", he highlighted. The WFS day reminds us of the need to strengthen food safety regulations and standards that govern the production, processing, and distribution of food.—DNA

National Dialogue on World Food Safety Day held

ISLAMABAD: The National Alliance for Safe Food (NAFS) on Friday hosted a National Dialogue on Food Safety to enhance awareness and understanding of food safety issues among producers, consumers, industry and other stakeholders. The day's dialogue themed: "Food safety: prepare for the unexpected" was organized with the collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO-UN) Islamabad, Riphah Institute of Public Policy and the Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) and Shafaq Cooking Oil (A&Z Agro Industries). This year's theme underscored the importance of being prepared for food safety incidents, no matter how mild or severe they may be. The event aimed to commemorate World Food Safety Day, for enhancing awareness and understanding of food safety issues among producers, consumers, and industry stakeholders.—APP

Inflation-stricken masses terrified of upcoming budget

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Friday that people reeling under inflation for years are afraid of the coming budget. He added that the business community is experiencing sleepless nights because of the expected measures being adopted under pressure from the IMF. Talking to the business community, Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the public is not expected to get any relief in the budget, and they are bracing for a huge increase in inflation. He said that no budget in Pakistan has ever brought good news to the people. Still, the upcoming budget will be very painful. He added that the budget will make electricity, gas, medicines, and many other necessities of life more expensive, which will make people worse off. The business leader said that Pakistani people are still buying electricity and gas at very high costs compared to neighbouring countries, and the burden on them will be further increased after the budget. The masses will pay the price of politicians' inefficiency and mismanagement, while no burden will be placed on the elite; rather, efforts will be made to give them all possible relief.—DNA

ICCI to have 'police centre of services'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General of Police Islamabad Syed Ali Raza Naqvi has applauded the hard work of the traders' community for the development of the country by saying that all out efforts will be made to provide them a peaceful environment for the growth of businesses. He said that security will be beefed in all the shopping centers by ensuring the functioning of the safe city cameras and that issues like beggary, snatching, drug trafficking etc. will also be curbed with the cooperation of the business community. He said this during his interaction with traders' leaders of different markets of the capital city at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry along with SSP Traffic Sarfarz Virk. On this occasion, he announced that a 24/7 'Police Centre of Services' will be established at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry from where the traders' will be able to



obtain Character Certificates, verifications and other required documents under one roof. He added that as per the demand of the ICCI President a 'Police Reconciliation Centre' will also be established in the ICCI premises for the quick and amicable resolution of traders' disputes by their own representatives. He added that ICCI has to constitute a Police-Corporate Liaison Committee for the purpose and assured that there will be no police intervention in the matter as long as the disputes will be settled on merit. In his address, Ahsan Zafar Bakht-

awari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that ICCI has been playing the role of a bridge between the government and business community for ensuring the viable atmosphere for ease of doing business and that resolution of community's problem on priority basis is need of the hour. Highlighting his achievements as President ICCI, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtwari termed maintenance of law and order as pre-requisite for the development of the country and affirmed business community's fullest cooperation to police for

the objective, by asserting that traders' representatives must be taken on board vis-à-vis the matters pertaining to the community. He also apprised the DIG about some of the issues being faced by the community that need immediate action like dysfunctional safe city cameras, traffic problems, beggars' influx, drugs peddling etc. Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari by terming the posting of visionary IG and DIG Police in Islamabad as the blessing for the inhabitants said that availability of peaceful, congenial and business friendly environment will surely bear fruit and go a long way in strengthening the economy of the country. SSP traffic Sarfarz Virk said that six driving test centres have been established in different localities of the capital city and a state of the art Police Facilitation Centre will be established at the ICCI from where business community will be able to get renewed its driving licenses.

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

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Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

Biden's peace bluff

THE Biden administration last week proposed a "ceasefire" deal which it claimed had originated from "Israel", seeking a pathway to ending the war on Gaza by guaranteeing the release of hostages, arguing that the military capability of Hamas had been destroyed. Although swiftly dismissed by Tel Aviv, Washington quickly rallied its allies and other Arab states to support the measure. This, however, is wishful thinking, given that the US was clearly being disingenuous with the idea that "Israel proposed it." First, the Biden administration has a well-established political strategy of effectively lying on behalf of "Israel". The White House effectively sets red lines, but moves the goalposts when Netanyahu subsequently violates them anyway. The administration claimed that it opposed an IOF invasion of Rafah, but when that happened, they claimed the "red line had been crossed," among numerous other things. Every action the US has taken in regards to the conflict has been merely symbolic, if not outright disingenuous, while nonetheless keeping support for Tel Aviv unconditional. However, domestic politics comes first in the United States, and the Biden administration is now seeking to bring the war to an end, or to at least given the appearance of such, because the growing backlash against it will undermine Biden's re-election interests, as well as his attempt to claim a massive political scalp by upgrading ties with Saudi Arabia and pushing normalisation with "Israel". In doing so, the real intention of this ceasefire proposal has been to comprehensively isolate Benjamin Netanyahu and back him into a corner, as toothless as this may be. As Reuters noted, "The decision to announce unilaterally - an unusual step for the United States to take with a close ally - was deliberate, officials say, and narrowed the room for Israel or Hamas to back away from the deal."

However, it is politically untenable for Netanyahu to possibly consider ceasing the fighting at this stage, for he is aware this will certainly mean the end of his tenure in office. Already, hardliners in his cabinet have threatened to resign over it and jeopardise the ruling coalition. For his administration, agreeing to a ceasefire now is an effective return to a pre-October 7th status quo that amounts to "co-existence" between "Israel" and Hamas in Gaza, and this is impossible because Netanyahu has repeatedly and publicly affirmed that the goal of his invasion has been to change the political status quo in the Strip. This means first, the destruction of Hamas, and second, what he has described as a "new security regime" in the strip, which should be described as a full military occupation in all but name. The ceasefire proposal, however, requires that "Israel" withdraw from the populated areas of the Gaza Strip. This means ceding political control, and therefore contravenes his maximalist objectives. Already, "Israel" has seized control of Gaza's entire border area and therefore is preparing to establish de-facto sovereignty over it. It is precisely for this reason that the most hardline Zionists will not agree to it, because their broader objective is to effectively incorporate and settle the territory. Therefore, a retreat from this would be nothing less than a huge political defeat for him, a loss of legitimacy, and an upheaval of the political regime he has built. All in pursuit of these goals, Netanyahu has overseen the global ruination of "Israel's" reputation. To turn round and say, "Let's go back to square one" means that all of that would have been absolutely in vain.



Malaysia's big chip dreams

MALAYSIA has big semiconductor ambitions. The Southeast Asian nation is already a major cog in the global supply chain, feeding about 13 per cent of demand in the packaging and testing space. But it wants to be more. Global semiconductor firms have been shopping around the region for suitable locations to either expand or shift their operations out of China, to "de-risk" from sanctions imposed by the US in an increasingly tech war. This involves tens of billions of dollars in investments and the building of highly coveted wafer fabrication plants, or fabs, which developing nations believe will help fast track their growth towards becoming hi-tech economies. Malaysia - much like Vietnam, Indonesia and India - wants in on the fab action. Southeast Asia has already seen a flurry of fresh investments, amounting to billions of US dollars. But these have mostly focused on back end processes, as Washington looks to keep the more lucrative, and highly sensitive, front end wafer manufacturing among its closest allies in Europe and Japan. Last week, in his strongest pitch yet, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim told a regional semiconductor industry conference in Kuala Lumpur that Malaysia was their best bet to avoid getting caught in the US-China crush, leveraging the country's long-held policy of neutrality and non-alignment. It's arguably an attractive proposition. Anyone who sets up shop in "friend to all" Malaysia can conceivably claim that they are not acting for or trying to undermine any side. This stance theoretically enables companies to engage with and sell to any party seeking to do business in the country - barring those entities or nations facing multilateral sanctions - allowing Malaysia to maximise the opportunities and profit.

For Malaysia, a surge in semiconductor investments would help speed up its transition to developed nation status, as more plants mean more jobs, including high-skilled roles that will boost per capita income. But nations, like people, tend to have different motivations. Malaysia is heavily reliant on external trade, which was a key driver of its rapid industrialisation from the 1980s to 1990s and remains an important contributor to economic growth. Its often stated position of neutrality has been useful in paving the way for establishing bilateral ties, especially economic links, with numerous nations across the globe. But what happens when one of your biggest partners starts pressuring you to pick a side? Just last year, the US and EU envoys to Malaysia sent a letter to the government warning of national security risks associated with allowing Chinese tech giant Huawei to develop 5G infrastructure. Analysts only expect such pressure from the US to intensify, especially if it escalates its sanctions and policy responses against China's access to high-end chips that can be used to run supercomputers and develop sophisticated artificial intelligence. The US began unilaterally imposing sanctions on China in the form of export controls under the 2022 Chips Act, which bars chip makers that have interests in the US from expanding semiconductor manufacturing in China or any country deemed by the Americans as posing a national security risk. Malaysia has made it clear that it will not recognise any sanctions unless approved by multilateral bodies such as the United Nations. Prime Minister Anwar himself has repeatedly said that Malaysia will not allow itself to be pressured into taking a position for or against any country.

Why aren't more European countries recognising Palestinian statehood?

Hamzah Rifaat

Today, the mindset of the far right remains pretty much the same. Islamophobia, anti-immigration and pro-Zionism all continue to go hand-in-hand. Last month, Dutch politician Geert Wilder's Party for Freedom, which campaigns on an anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and populist platform in the Netherlands, signed a coalition agreement with several other political parties on controlling asylum and migration. They included the conservative liberal People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, the centre-right New Social Contract and the agrarian, right-wing, populist, Farmer Citizen Movement. Within this agreement, Wilders inserted an "examination" into moving the Dutch embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv

LESS than a week after Spain, Norway and Ireland officially recognised Palestine, UN experts including the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Palestinian territories, urged the rest of the world to follow suit to ensure peace and stability in the Middle East. Currently, 10 EU member states recognise Palestine (including three in the last month), while 17 have not. Universal recognition of Palestine in the continent remains elusive in large part due to the presence and efforts of far-right entities and conservative political parties that tout nativist, ultranationalist and pro-Zionist views. These parties' positions on Palestine are likely in keeping with their already established anti-Muslim and anti-migrant platforms. This perspective stems in part from an unfair association between the growing influx of Muslim migrants into Europe and rising terrorism concerns. Such fear has been stoked by far-right parties themselves for political gain and relevance. As protests against Israel's war in Gaza grow, many EU states are continuing to crack down on Palestine solidarity. We spoke with Yanis Varoufakis about the West's complicity in the war and the prospect of building a different kind of Europe. It has also spurred ultranationalist parties such as Vox in Spain and Alternative for Germany to call for a curb on Muslim immigration. Far-right groups have also weaponised rising unemployment in Europe, blaming migrants for that issue as well. Hence, the commencement of Israel's genocide in Gaza aligned perfectly with the European far-right's Islamophobic orientation. It has allowed groups such as the Alternative for Germany to call for funding cuts to Palestinians and submit parliamentary proposals to halt financial donations to UNRWA. Both proposals were rejected; however, their anti-Muslim/Palestine rhetoric remains. In Denmark, Israel's campaign against Palestinians prompted the Danish People's Party to step up its anti-immigrant rhetoric while also appealing to the safety of Jews living in the country. The link between conservative parties, far-right entities and support for Israel in Europe runs deep. Two decades ago, an assessment of voting in the European Parliament's ninth term by the European Council of Israel in 2004 found that the 20 political parties voted in favour of Israel on the Palestine issue and

all of them belonged to far-right, Eurosceptic, conservative and reformist schools of thought. Today, the mindset of the far right remains pretty much the same. Islamophobia, anti-immigration and pro-Zionism all continue to go hand-in-hand. Last month, Dutch politician Geert Wilder's Party for Freedom, which campaigns on an anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and populist platform in the Netherlands, signed a coalition agreement with several other political parties on controlling asylum and migration. They included the conservative liberal People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, the centre-right New Social Contract and the agrarian, right-wing, populist, Farmer Citizen Movement. Within this agreement, Wilders inserted an "examination" into moving the Dutch embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv. This is a break from the long-standing European position that the status of Jerusalem must be decided through negotiations between Israel and Palestine. Wilder's pro-Israel stance is echoed by the Vox party in Spain, which campaigns on a Spanish unionist and Roman Catholic platform. Vox voiced opposition to Pedro Sanchez government's decision to recognise Palestine, with party leader Santiago Abascal expressing his disapproval at a meeting with Benjamin Netanyahu. Far-right support for Israel also comes from lead candidates for European Parliament in the upcoming 2024 elections. Marion Marechal of the far-right French Reconquete Party is one such politician who is campaigning on an anti-Islam platform. At a recent debate, Marechal stated that France recognising a Palestinian state would be tantamount to creating an Islamist entity that could prove dangerous for Western civilisation, morals, principles and political systems. Notably, many of these far-right parties do not have seats in the government and find themselves to be part of coalitions or oppositions in countries such as Spain, France and the Netherlands. However, they still remain a potent force. As disruptors, far-right parties often form a coalition or in Italy's case form a government at the centre. Regardless of their position, they have an inherent ability to scuttle, pressurise and disrupt any attempt by socialist governments or left-wing governments to introduce resolutions and bills calling for Palestinian statehood. The far-

right's pro-Israel orientation is also championed by conservative governments which are either in power or in a coalition. Denmark is a prime example, where the parliament's decision to vote down a bill for Palestinian recognition was due to conservative parties in the ruling coalition voicing their opposition to Palestinian statehood. Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said that Denmark would not recognise an independent Palestine as preconditions of statehood have not been met. Recently, an effort by four left-wing parties to push recognition through failed, in part because of Rasmussen's Moderates Party. Danish parliament rejects proposal to recognise Palestinian state. Similarly, in France, Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron mullied over Palestinian recognition at a suitable time, but is threatened by potential losses for his Renaissance Party in the upcoming European Parliament elections. French candidates from centrist, conservative, far-right and right-wing parties seek to capitalise on Macron's softer stance on Palestine by using this against him and touting their own support for Israel. This has been the case for Marine Le Pen's National Party, which is expected to trounce Macron in the 2024 ballot as it campaigns on a nativist, anti-immigrant and Islamophobic platform. Another important player in Europe is Italy. The promise of a two-state solution by the far-right Giorgia Meloni government cannot detract from the fact that Rome might not recognise Palestine anytime soon. Her opposition, the Five Star movement, has called out Meloni for intransigence and an inherent inability to follow in the footsteps of Norway, Ireland and Spain. Despite Meloni's support for a two-state solution, no policy change from her far-right Brothers of Italy party is expected. The far-right, conservative parties in Europe are hence a major roadblock for Palestinian recognition. As disruptors and policy makers, nativist, Christian, white supremacist and anti-Islam parties and their sympathy for Israel's genocide clearly suggests that the UN's calls for universal recognition of Palestinian statehood may not materialise in the near future. As long as Europe's far right continues to demonise Muslims, there is little hope on the horizon for universal acceptance of Palestinian statehood.

Be wary of Washington setting trap in Asia

Hu Xijin

Marcos is trying, with the support of the US, to scare China off with sensational behaviors over the territorial dispute. They have fabricated a false sense of victimhood for themselves. Marcos' keynote speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue on Friday and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's speech on Saturday are both aimed at cajoling Asian countries. Austin denied on Saturday that NATO's expansion has caused the Ukraine crisis, and trumpeted that the US was secure "only if Asia is"

ASIAN countries should be wary that a similar trap to the one Ukraine fell into is being set in Asia, and they must be smarter than Europe. No country in Asia would willingly want to be dragged into the conflict in Ukraine. However, the US is employing similar tactics in certain Asian countries as it did in Ukraine, causing them to be cautious of China and even harbor animosity toward it. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr has clearly fallen into this trap. In fact, the situation in Asia is much more complicated than in Europe, as there are numerous disputes over territorial claims as well as maritime rights and interests. Fortunately, there is no NATO in Asia and no geopolitical conflicts between blocs have been formed. Previously, territorial disputes mostly occurred between countries on a case-by-case basis. Suddenly, however, certain countries' disputes and controversies with China have come to the forefront due to the strategic involvement of the US. In the past, the US generally took a "hands-off" approach when it came to territorial disputes in Asia. However, now whenever a dispute involves China, the US always supports the country that opposes China. It tries to portray China

as a regional "bully" and encourages countries in the region to confront China. Nevertheless, the situation between China and the Philippines has been in a deadlock for many years. The Philippine warship that ran aground on Ren'ai Jiao in 1999, the day after the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia, is still there. China has shown restraint in its dealings with the Philippines, with the friction between the two countries focusing on the details of how the Philippines resupplied the ship. Where in the world can you find such a good-tempered "bully"? Today, the Philippines is even more shameless. Marcos is trying, with the support of the US, to scare China off with sensational behaviors over the territorial dispute. They have fabricated a false sense of victimhood for themselves. Marcos' keynote speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue on Friday and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's speech on Saturday are both aimed at cajoling Asian countries. Austin denied on Saturday that NATO's expansion has caused the Ukraine crisis, and trumpeted that the US was secure "only if Asia is." He touted the importance of the extensive network of partnerships under the US Indo-Pacific Strategy, claiming that the US would do its utmost to fulfill

its commitments to the Indo-Pacific region. Obviously, although there is no NATO in Asia, to serve its global hegemonic strategy of containing China, the US wants regional countries to be hostile to China following the model of NATO allies or partner countries. As a Chinese media professional who has been observing geopolitics for a long time, I really hope that Asian countries will not be dazzled by the US and will maintain their strategic sobriety. Territorial disputes are left over from history. We have never made use of our vast national resources to solve these disputes, so China is not a "bully," not to mention an "aggressor."

However, if countries like the Philippines try to intimidate China with the backing of other powers, they will definitely suffer a setback and face consequences, and at that time the US will not be there to support them. When Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky arrived at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Asian countries should have seen a nation influenced by the US and NATO, leading to the tragedy of war. Although the US and NATO express support and offer assistance, it is Ukraine and its people who suffer. We must not allow external forces such as the US to set the similar trap in Asia, nor should we fall into the trap ourselves.

Briefs

Pakistan, China agree to upgrade...

FROM PAGE 01 The two leaders reaffirmed the consensus to high-quality development of CPEC...

Pak-China agree to strengthen...

FROM PAGE 01 Chinese leadership and people. He stated that the relations with China were the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy...

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FROM PAGE 01 judges in the superior judiciary. It was tasked to consider names of nine judges, including LHC chief justice and SHC chief justice...

Ex-cricketers criticize Pakistan over USA upset

Pakistan endured a five-run defeat against the co-hosts in the Super Over as they failed to chase down the 19-run target

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

ISLAMABAD: Legendary Pakistan cricketers Inzamam-ul-Haq, Waqar Younis and Shahid Afridi lashed out at the national team following their upset defeat against the United States of America (USA) in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.



Legendary all-rounder Shahid Afridi, on the other hand, raised questions over the team's strategies in crucial situations.

would have suited Fakhar because of the angle of the bowling. I don't know who told Iftikhar to face the left-arm," Afridi said on his YouTube channel.

Portugal's SL Benfica, PFL boost Pakistan sports economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Portugal's national football club SL Benfica has announced partnership with the Pakistan Football League (PFL) Pearl Project to develop professional football and boost the sports economy in Pakistan.

and players. As leaders in identifying and developing players, we had to accept this challenge. This project is another historic moment for Benfica, as we will be collaborating with an international league for the first time," said Miguel Reis, SL Benfica's Operations Coordinator for Global Expansion.

region. The Portuguese club will be the central incubator of the league and the entity that will ensure that standards in football development are maintained.

Ronaldo eyes history at EURO 2024 in Germany

LONDON: Portugal's football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo looks set to go down in history as the first player to participate in six European championships as he prepares to light up the UEFA EURO 2024 stage in Germany.

PBBF announce trails for Asian Indoor Games

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) is excited to announce one day trials for the selection of the Pakistan basketball team to compete in the 6th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games-2024 in the 3x3 format (Men).

Williamson heaps praise on Afghanistan cricket team

AUCKLAND: New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson heaped praise on the Afghanistan cricket team during a press conference on June 7 ahead of their T20 World Cup 2024 opener against Afghanistan at the Providence Stadium on Friday.

land skipper stated. When asked if there are any certain players in the Afghanistan side the Kiwis are keeping their eyes on, Williamson said that "certainly a number of players in the side" and called the Afghani bowling attack "one of the better bowling attacks, I think, in the competition."

to the focus that we have on our game and how we want to skin it, I suppose, which can look different every day.

Berrington anchors Scotland to T20 WC win over Namibia This was Scotland's first-ever victory over Namibia in a T20 International

SPORTS DESK

BARBADOS: Captain Richie Berrington upstaged his Namibian counterpart in leading Scotland to a table-topping, five-wicket victory in Group B at the T20 World Cup on Thursday at Kensington Oval in Barbados.

"I don't think we'll get over this for a while. It's a hell of a feeling," said an elated Leask after receiving the 'Player of the Match' award.



rate is something he has become used to. "My role is simple: hit the ball hard, try and find gaps, and if it's in the slot, try and hit it out of the ground," he said.

of J.P. Kotze at the top of the order for this match during the toss, but the captain was well aware of his role when coming to the crease in the fourth over with his side in trouble at 19 for two following the decision to bat first.

T20 ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP WEST INDIES & USA 2024

Tuesday June 08 New Zealand vs Afghanistan Providence, Guyana (4.30am) Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh Grand Prairie, Texas (5.30am) Netherlands vs South Africa Long Island, New York (7.30pm) Australia vs England Bridgetown, Barbados (10 pm)

Dialogue only with those...

FROM PAGE 01 The commission held General Yahya Khan accountable for prioritising his power, and today, the same mistakes are being repeated, leading to economic collapse," Khan highlighted the achievements of his government, stating, "During our three and a half years in power, NAB collected Rs450 billion. An additional Rs1,100 billion was expected, but due to amendments in NAB laws, only Rs300,000 was collected once, and Rs1.5 million another time. These amendments have cost the country Rs 1,100 billion, a loss it cannot afford."

Institutions should work within...

FROM PAGE 01 He gave these remarks while hearing the petition for the recovery of poet Ahmed Farhad Shah. Advocate Iman Mazari appeared on behalf of the petitioner while senior journalist Hamid Mir assisted the court as amicus curiae.

Pakistan to celebrate...

FROM PAGE 01 Zil Hajj, which also marks the Hajj pilgrimage, and Muslims in Pakistan are expected to celebrate the occasion on June 17, as the moon will likely be sighted today.

Briefs

PNS Aslat conducts drills in Indian Ocean

The purpose of these exercises was to strengthen mutual relations and enhance mutual cooperation between navies in the region. "Pakistan Navy believes in joint efforts to maintain law and order at sea

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS), Aslat on Friday conducted exercises with ships from Japan and Spain in the Indian Ocean during the regional maritime security patrol. The PNS Aslat conducted naval exercise with Japan Maritime Defense Force Naval Ship, Onami during the regional maritime security patrol, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a press release. PNS Aslat also held naval exercise with Spanish ship SPS, Canarias. The purpose of these exercises was to strengthen mutual relations and enhance mutual cooperation between navies in the region. "Pakistan Navy believes in joint efforts to maintain law and order at sea. Joint exercises of Pakistan Navy with international naval forces is a manifestation of Pakistan's determination for regional peace," the ISPR said.

Japan contribution enhances food security in Pakistan

Wada, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, appreciated WFPs Pakistan work and reaffirmed Japans commitment by noting Food security and nutrition are among the priorities for Japanese Official Development Assistance



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) acknowledges the Government of Japans generous contributions under three projects that provided emergency assistance for the stabilization of food-insecure people in the flood-affected areas of Pakistan, implemented in Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. WFP organised a Project Completion cer-

emony to recognize the vital contributions of USD 7.2 million (USD 3.7 million, USD 2.5 million and USD 1 million) from the Government of Japan to address the critical needs of 246,000 people affected by the unprecedented 2022 floods in Pakistan. The USD 2.5 million enabled WFP to provide emergency food assistance to flood-affected communities, ensuring their immediate food security and nutrition needs in 2022, while the USD 3.7 million and USD 1 million contributions helped WFP to deliver nutritionally balanced

food every month to those actively involved in community rehabilitation, livelihood and resilience building initiatives and identified through district-level consultations in 2023. The USD 3.7 million grant also supported conditional cash assistance during the early recovery phase. Furthermore, tailored capacity-building activities were implemented to enhance local skills in disaster risk reduction, climate-smart agriculture, food production and storage, and other marketable skills. The ceremony took place at the WFP

Country office in Islamabad in the presence of Ms. Coco Ushiyama, WFP Country Director in Pakistan, H.E. Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, along with senior Japan Embassy and National Disaster Management Authority officials. Speaking at the occasion, H.E. Mr Wada, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, appreciated WFPs Pakistan work and reaffirmed Japans commitment by noting Food security and nutrition are among the priorities for Japanese Official Development Assistance, and we consider them to be the fundamental requirements for achieving sustainable development. We greatly appreciate the unwavering support provided by the Government of Japan, which enabled us to address food insecurity and rebuild livelihoods in flood-affected areas at a critical time, said Ms. Coco Ushiyama, Country Director of WFP Pakistan. In 2023, Pakistan continued to grapple with the compounding impact of the devastating 2022 floods that affected more than one-third of the country. WFP played a pivotal role in supporting nearly 4.4 million people following the flood crisis through a variety of complementary interventions to address both critical and immediate humanitarian needs through unconditional cash support to approximately 1.7 million people in 2023 and longer-term needs to build resilience, enhance livelihoods opportunities, and address malnutrition. Overall, with generous and timely support from donors and partners including this USD 7.2 million from Japan, WFP successfully mobilized over USD 150 million for its emergency flood response by December 2023.

Opp accuses Narendra Modi of 'stock market scam'

NEW DELHI: Indian National Congress stock market scam Indian National Congress Mr Gandhi has accused top BJP leaders of giving misleading financial advice Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi has demanded an investigation into a stock market crash that hit investors at the end of the general election. He accused top Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders of making misleading predictions about stock prices surging after 4 June, the day the results were announced. Mr Gandhi, from the Congress party, claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi encouraged people to buy stocks before this, which led to them losing money when the market crashed. Mr Modi's party, the BJP, has denied the allegations. Mr Gandhi has demanded that a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) investigate the alleged scam and the role of Mr Modi and senior ministers. He alleged that weeks before election results, Mr Modi, ex-Home Minister Amit Shah, and former Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman advised people to "buy stocks before 4 June", suggesting that the market would surge after, anticipating a BJP victory. In May, Mr Shah told NDTV news channel in an interview: "Stock market crashes should not be linked with elections, but even if such a rumour has been spread, I suggest that you buy (shares) before 4 June. It will shoot up." - Agencies

SC orders issuance of ad to summon Suri

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has ordered to issue an advertisement to summon Qasim Suri in the electoral irregularities case. A hearing was held in the Supreme Court on the appeal against the de-seating of former deputy speaker National Assembly Qasim Suri. Suri, once again, did not appear before the court despite summons issued for him. The court ordered to issue an advertisement to summon Suri and asked to paste the notice outside Suri's house. Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isha remarked that according to record, Suri's brother Bilal had refused to receive the notice. "Suri is deliberately not appearing in the Supreme Court. The former deputy speaker's refusal to receive the notice is unfortunate," said the CJ. The chief justice, while talking to Suri's lawyer Naeem Bukhari, said, "Your client is very active on media and social media. Naeem Bukhari replied, "I don't watch TV." The chief justice remarked, "You are a TV personality yourself and do not watch television. Are you familiar with X or Twitter?" the CJ asked. Bukhari replied, "I do not use social media nor do I know how to use it." The chief justice asked, "Why are you considering yourself old, stay young and up-to-date."

Empowering Change Serena Hotels partners with Behbud association for fundraising gala



ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels proudly partnered with the Behbud Association to host a memorable fundraising event under the banner of cultural diplomacy. The event's proceeds went directly to the Behbud Maternal and Children's Hospital, a vital institution providing comprehensive healthcare services to mothers and children, enhancing the quality of care within the community. The evening featured a spectacular fashion show featuring apparel by artisans from Behbud and a mesmerizing musical performance by Saakin, blending entertainment with philanthropy to make a significant impact. Fashion enthusiasts and music lovers were treated to an unforgettable experience, showcasing the stunning dresses and creations of Behbud Association's skilled artisans. This event highlighted their exceptional craftsmanship, traditional techniques, and unique designs, supporting community development and empowerment. Models on the runway helped bridge the gap between artisans and a broader audience, promoting the preservation of traditional crafts and supporting sustainable livelihoods for the workers involved. Abida Malik, President of the Behbud Association, expressed, "Our artisans create stunning apparel that illustrates their exceptional craftsmanship and dedication to



traditional techniques. These pieces are not just fashion statements but symbols of our cultural heritage. With Serena's invaluable support for our fundraising efforts, we can channel proceeds towards our hospital project, providing better healthcare facilities and supporting the overall development of our community." Serena Hotels recognizes the importance of community development and is committed to playing its part in creating positive change. Supporting initiatives that uplift and empower communities is fundamental to our values. Serena Hotels is proud to stand behind such endeavors, working together towards a brighter future for all. - DNA

UK's Labour to promise Palestine recognition in manifesto: Report

MONITORING DESK

LONDON: The Labour Party plans to recognize a Palestinian state if it wins the UK general election on July 4. The pledge is set to be announced as part of Labour's election manifesto, which is expected to be published next Thursday if it can be agreed upon with the UK's trade unions. It comes as the party tries to unify itself ahead of an expected victory, with the issue having caused deep divisions between members and with many voters choosing not to back it at recent local elections due to a perceived lack of support for a ceasefire in Gaza. Labour leader Keir Starmer is thought to favor recognition of Palestinian statehood "as part of a peace process," according to party insiders quoted by The Guardian, having previously stuck to the official line of the current Conservative government, which supports Israel. The manifesto will lay out a plan to recognize Palestine before a peace process is concluded, and will include a promise not to allow the move to be vetoed by neighboring countries. Starmer prompted criticism after suggesting last year that he believed Israel had the right to cut off water and electricity supplies to Gaza, but the party has subsequently

shown support for a request by an International Criminal Court prosecutor to issue a warrant for the arrest of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Attitudes in the Conservative Party have also shifted since the start of the Israeli offensive, with Foreign Secretary David Cameron saying in January that the Palestinian people would have to be shown "irreversible progress" toward a two-state solution "as (the peace process) happens." The Labour move is likely to fray ties with the Israeli government, which recently reacted with anger after Ireland, Spain and Norway recognized a Palestinian state. Despite the softening of Labour's stance on Palestine, that has not healed all internal rifts, with the party set to contest the election against numerous candidates campaigning on the issue of Gaza, including former Labour candidate Faiza Shaheen in the London constituency of Chingford and Woodford Green. The party has identified two other constituencies, Bristol Central and Sheffield Hallam, which it fears it might not win due to local support for the Palestinians, having lost the recent Rochdale by-election to former Labour MP George Galloway who ran on a similar platform. The selection of pro-Israel activist Luke Akehurst to stand as a candidate in North Durham has also worried Labour supporters.

Ukraine, Moldova ready to start EU accession talks

BRUSSELS/KYIV: Ukraine and Moldova meet all the criteria needed to formally start negotiations on EU membership, the European Commission said on Friday, as Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal expressed hope that the talks could start later this month. "We confirm that on the Commission side we consider that all the steps have been met by the two countries," Commission spokeswoman on enlargement Ana Pisonero said. "The decision is now in the hands of the member states - it is for them to adopt the negotiating framework," she said. "Once this step is done it is the prerogative of the EU Presidency to convene an intergovernmental conference to formally mark the start of the negotiations," she added. Opening talks with the European Union would be a morale boost for Ukraine as the war with Russia enters its third year and Moscow's forces are advancing in the eastern Donetsk region and opening a new front in the northeastern Kharkiv region. "Now we

expect our European partners to take the next step - to start negotiations on European Union membership already this month," Shmyhal said on the Telegram messaging app. "Every day, the Ukrainian people fight for the right to be part of the European family in the war against the Russian aggressor." The Commission assessment will now be discussed by experts in working groups and then by ambassadors of EU governments next week. The 27 EU member states have to unanimously agree to start the negotiations, which take years to conclude, by adopting the so-called negotiating framework. Belgium, which holds the rotating EU presidency until the end of June, is making arrangements for intergovernmental conferences with Ukraine and Moldova to be held on June 25 in Luxembourg if there is unanimous backing. But such backing is not guaranteed because Hungary, which maintains warm ties with Russia and has criticized Ukraine's membership bid, has doubts about the Commission's assessment that Ukraine is ready and wants to see some more items added to the negotiating frameworks, diplomats said. Belgium and the Commission are keen to get agreement in June, before Hungary takes over the rotating presidency from July 1 for six months, because EU diplomats expect Budapest will put the whole process on ice until 2025. Kyiv applied for EU membership in the weeks after Russia launched its full-scale invasion in Feb 2022 and it was granted candidate status four months later. - Agencies

Australia celebrates achievements of Australia Awards scholars

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Australian High Commission in Pakistan proudly acknowledges the achievements of the 60 Pakistani scholars who have successfully completed their studies in Australia this year under the prestigious Australia Awards scholarship program. The scholars, including 21 men and 39 women, are being recognized for their dedication and academic excellence. It is with great pride that we celebrate the achievements of the Pakistan scholars who have successfully completed their studies under the Australia Awards scholarship program, Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins said. We commend them on their hard work and are confident that they have gained valuable knowledge and skills that will contribute significantly to the development of Pakistan. The Australia Awards scholarship program is a key component of the Australian Government's development assistance to Pakistan. The program aims to equip scholars with the expertise needed to drive progress and development in their home country, and it particularly supports the empowerment of women, aligning with Australia's foreign policy priority to promote gender equality. High-

lighting the importance of this initiative, High Commissioner Hawkins welcomed the number of women scholars noting that the Australia Awards program underscored Australia's commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The High Commissioner however expressed concern over a growing trend of scholarship recipients choosing to remain in Australia post-graduation, which contravened the terms of the scholarship agreement. Such a practice undermines the very purpose of this initiative, which is to contribute to Pakistan's development. If this trend continues, it will jeopardize the future of the program in Pakistan and deprive aspiring Pakistani scholars of an opportunity to benefit from an Australian education and contribute to Pakistan's development, he cautioned. The High Commissioner urged all Australia Awards recipients to honour their commitment to return to Pakistan and contribute to its growth and development. By fulfilling your obligations, you will play a pivotal role in strengthening the ties between our two nations through sustainable development and mutual progress, he said. The Australia Awards Recognition Ceremony celebrates the successful completion of Australia Awards Scholarships and Short Course Awards from the FY 2023-24.

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