



# Islamabad POST

Saturday, June 15, 2024

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Detailed News On Page-07

**ASEAN movie night at embassy of Indonesia**

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**Ronaldo makes bold statement about Portugal**

Detailed News On Page-06

## Praises bravery of judges

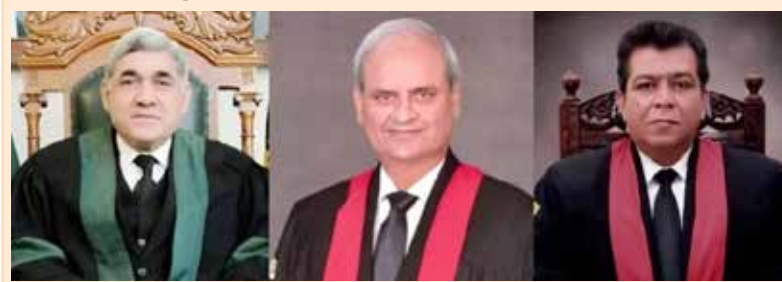
# Establishment's role in judiciary to end soon: LHC CJ

"Interference in judiciary will have to be fought with faith that it will come to an end," says Shehzad Ahmed Khan

### Elevation to SC

## Parliamentary committee approves judges' names

Committee approves all names proposed by JCP, including LHC CJ Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Parliamentary Committee on the Appointment of Judges Friday approved the names of judges proposed by the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) for elevation to the Supreme Court. The development came after a meeting of the parliamentary committee was held in Islamabad today to take a decision on the appointment of apex court judges. The committee

approved all the names proposed by the JCP which included Lahore High Court Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan, Sindh High Court Chief Justice Aqeel Ahmad Abbasi and LHC's Justice Shahid Bilal. Last week, the JCP sent the names of three high court judges to be considered for elevation to the SC for final approval by the Parliamentary committee. The names, recommended for appointment to vacant SC seats,

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NEWS DESK / DNA

RAWALPINDI: Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Malik Shehzad Ahmed Khan on Friday said he believes that interference of the establishment in the matters of the judiciary will end soon. "Interference in the judiciary will have to be fought with faith that it will come to an end," said the LHC chief justice while addressing the opening ceremony of the judicial complex e-courts in Rawalpindi. Justice Khan said there was an issue of establishment's interference in the judiciary's matters, adding that they receive letters claiming involvement in the judicial affairs. "The establishment's interference in judiciary will end soon and I have an experience that this will end," said the judge, assuring that these difficulties will end if there is fear of God. The chief justice's comments came after six Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges wrote a letter Supreme Court on March 25, accusing spy agencies of meddling in judicial affairs. The IHC judges had demanded Chief Justice of Pakistan QaziFaez Isa to convene the judicial convention to consider the matter of alleged interference of intelligence operatives in the

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### Pak out of T20 World Cup

Internal grouping led to downfall of the team

DNA

NEW YORK: To the disappointment of the cricket fans Pakistan's race for the T20 World Cup has ended as match between USA and Ireland could not take place due to heavy rain. USA and India will now qualify for the super 8 stage of the World Cup. In any case Pakistan will play its last pool match against Ireland but even if Pakistan win, they cannot qualify for the super 8 stage. After being kicked out of the world cup Pakistan, for the next T20 World Cup, will have to appear in the qualifying round and thus play against small nations. The experts have termed Pakistan performance in the World Cup dismal and pathetic. Pakistan team, as reports suggest, was divided into many groups. The internal infighting led to this ignominious outcome. The PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi has already hinted at taking a stern action against the players who did not perform or were involved in the infighting.

### Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed from Sunday to Wednesday (16-19 June 2024) on account of Eid-ul-Adha therefore there will be no newspaper on Monday to Thursday.

- Editor

### OHCHR spox reveals

## Taliban govt curbs on women's rights continue

According to Ms. Throssell, authorities had told women they could return to work when "the necessary conditions" are in place, yet women have not received any information on when that might be

### Pakistan sends 9th shipment of aid to Gaza

Alkhidmat Foundation President Dr. Hafeezur Rehman extends Eid joy to Gaza refugees

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: In accordance with the Government of Pakistan's instructions to provide humanitarian support to the people of Gaza, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with Al-Khidmat has coordinated to send another tranche of relief assistance. Mr Kesoo Mal Kheal Das, MNA was the Chief Guest at the send-off ceremony while senior officials of NDMA and Al Khidmat Foundation

Continued on Page 06

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Almost three years after the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan, women's rights continue to be under attack, the United Nations said on Thursday. UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) spokesperson Liz Throssell revealed that in its latest act of disempowerment, the Taliban have told women civil servants prohibited from working that despite qualifications or experience, their salaries will now be cut to the lowest level. The Taliban overtook Kabul in August 2021. According to Ms. Throssell, authorities had told women they could return to work when "the necessary conditions" are in place, yet women have not received any information on when that might be. But three years on, the UN said, steps to allow women civil servants to all return to the workplace have not been taken. "This latest discriminatory and profoundly arbitrary decision further deepens the erosion of human rights in Afghanistan, following decisions to restrict women and

Continued on Page 06

## Sindh aims to spend one-third of budget on development

Sindh CM Murad Ali Shah presents budget 2024-25, proposing massive hike of up to 30% in salaries

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday presented a Rs3,056 trillion budget for the next fiscal year 2024-25, proposing up to 30% massive increase in the salaries of government employees. Besides the salary hike, the budget also includes a significantly higher development expense of Rs959 billion, which accounts for 31% of the outlay. The "balanced" budget mainly centres around the rehabilitation of flood-affected people and social protection for the poor. The majority of the total projected revenue for the province comes from the 62% federal transfers, followed by 22% provincial receipts. As per the budgetary document released by the provincial government, the remaining receipts are through current capital receipts of Rs22 billion, foreign project assistance of Rs334 billion, other federal grants in the form of Public Sector Development Programme's (PSDP) Rs77 billion, foreign grants of Rs6 billion and a carryover cash balance of Rs55 billion. Provincial receipts of Rs662 billion comprise sales tax on services of Rs350 billion, tax excluding GST of Rs269 billion, and provincial non-tax receipts of Rs42.9 billion.

Continued on Page 06

## Yasmin berates Nawaz, Maryam

Requests CJP to take notice of ATC's conditions

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Dr Yasmin Rashid berates Nawaz Sharif and asks him to stop issuing false statements. In her letter from jail, she has criticised Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz, stating that they give sermons about no political revenge but on the other hand, the PTI leaders and workers are being political victimised. She stated that Nawaz Sharif's daughter Maryam Nawaz had set the worst example of injustice in Punjab. The letter mentioned that PTI women workers Sanam Javed and

Continued on Page 06

## AFRICA DAY CELEBRATED



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy Mussadaq Masood Malik, Dean of the African group Mohamed Karmoune, Ambassador of Morocco and heads of missions of the African countries cutting cake to celebrate the Africa Day. - DNA

### Court reporting is a challenging task: CJP

Culture of mudslinging cannot be completely eradicated: CJP

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) QaziFaez Isa said on Friday the culture of mudslinging could not be completely eradicated but it could certainly be reduced. Speaking at the swearing-in ceremony of the Supreme Court Press Association, CJ Isa said judicial reporting was a very challenging task. The chief justice administered the oath to the new members. Justices Athar Minallah, Jamal Khan Mandokhail, and Naeem Akhtar Afghan also participated in the ceremony. The chief justice said he and his

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### Govt reduces prices of petrol, diesel

ISLAMABAD: Two major announcements by Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif have been made in one day. After making electricity cheaper for industries, Prime Minister's big Eid for the people on Eid comes in the shape of reduction of petrol prices. A big reduction in the price of petrol by 10 rupees 20 paise per liter While Reduction in the price of diesel by 2 rupees 33 paise per liter has been announced. On June 1, the government had reduced the price of petrol by Rs 4 74 paise and the price of diesel by Rs 3 86 paise per litre. So far, a total relief of 35 rupees has been given to the public in the price of petrol per liter. - DNA

### Imran Khan denies rumors

## No point negotiating with 'powerless' govt

Ex-PM accuses administration of pressuring judges who rule in favour of PTI

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan on Friday stated that there is no point in negotiating with a government that lacks authority. During an informal conversation with the media during the hearing of the £190 million reference at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, he accused the administration of pressuring judges who rule in favour of PTI and criticised the recent budget for burdening salaried individuals. Khan alleged that a judge from Sargodha informed the Lahore High Court about pressure exerted by intelligence agencies. He claimed that the judge's household gas supply was cut off and that judges sympathetic to PTI face immense pressure. "Journalists speaking in favour of PTI are being targeted; Raouf Hassan was attacked, and Ali Zaman was tortured," Khan asserted, implicating intelligence agencies in these actions. Khan urged the Chief Justice of Pakistan

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### Moody's warns Pakistan's debt sustainability risks

AGENCIES

LONDON: Global rating agency Moody's on Friday said that the country's weak debt affordability drives high debt sustainability risks as it noted that the government spends more than half its revenue on interest payments. In a comment regarding the newly finance bill for the fiscal year (FY) 2025, it said, "The budget estimated debt servicing payments to have increased by about 18pc for fiscal 2025 compared with a year ago." "The government spends more than half its revenue on interest payments, indicating very weak debt affordability which drives high debt sustainability

Continued on Page 06

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# Ishaq Dar advocates economic diplomacy for Pakistan's growth

Ishaq Dar said that the business community has always accepted challenges and shown resilience in difficult times

DNA

RAWALPINDI : The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has organized an event for its members, titled Members Night 2024. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar was the Chief Guest on the Occasion. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in his address said that he will share the feedback and suggestions of RCCI with Prime Min-

community. He also recalled his meetings and consultations with chambers on business issues and policy decisions during the Nawaz Sharif Government as Finance Minister. Ishaq Dar said that the business community has always accepted challenges and shown resilience in difficult times. Pakistan has a bright future and now I have only one agenda to put it on the economic path through economic diplomacy. He further added that the current interest rate is not feasible for economic growth; it has now come down along

assured the business community that the Government is putting all efforts to restore economic activities in Pakistan. He urged the traders to focus on industrial and agricultural growth to enhance exports which is the only way forward. Speakers including President RCCI Saqib Rafiq Group Leader RCCI Sohail Altaf and Chairman of the event Usman Shaukat addressed the huge gathering of members at Jinnah Convention Center Islamabad and highlighted the issues being faced by business community, taxation measures and new initiatives announced in the budget 2024, etc. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq in his speech said that by keeping the tradition of the past, RCCI's Members' Night was held in the honor of its members. The major purpose of the event was to discuss the way forward, networking, connectivity and meet and greet with members to strengthen the bond. Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad, Former Presidents, Executive Committee, key dignitaries including ambassadors, Government officials, Office Bearers from Islamabad, Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Jamal Nasir, Zumrad Khan, large number of RCCI members, among others, were present on the occasion.



ISLAMABAD : Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja in a meeting with GSM's Head of Asia Pacific Julian Gorman.—DNA



ister Shahbaz Sharif and also will talk to the Finance Minister to take recommendations from the business com-

with inflation. The Government has set the target to bring the interest rate and inflation to single digit. He

## AIOU tops global rankings for sustainable development

MIRPUR : The state-run Alama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) achieved outstanding success in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings 2024, on Friday. According to Regional Director of AIOU's Mirpur Regional Campus, Sheikh Faisal Shahzad, this recognition reflected the university's strong commitment to promoting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some of AIOU's key achievements in the rankings include: "This is a testament to the university's unwavering dedication to creating a positive impact on society and the environment," he added. The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mehmood and the entire AIOU team were congratulated for this remarkable achievement. Shahzad emphasized that AIOU remained committed to providing quality education and promoting lifelong learning through its inclusive and accessible approach.—APP

## Gas task force disconnects eight meters

MULTAN : In an on-going action against illegal usage of gas meters, Sui Gas Task Force disconnected eight meters installed at different locations. As per detail provided by the official source, a connections of gas meter was severed for 'not having meter system record'. Another meter was de-installed over glass breakage. A meter of the consumer was disconnected on basis of 'carrying long-extension'. It was said that four meters were removed for illegally using compressor. In addition, five consumers were found guilty of supplying gas to the neighbours through connection of illegal rubber pipe lines. Therefore these connections were disconnected on the spot.—APP

## Panel explores Indian election results' regional impact

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD : During a panel discussion at the Institute of Regional Studies, Dr. Arshi Saleem Hashmi, Dean of the Faculty of Contemporary Studies at NDU, questioned the BJP's newfound assertion that 'democracy wins in India' following the disappointing voter turnout in the recent elections. She noted that India, the so-called world's largest democracy, still falls short of meeting the objective criteria of democracy. Dr. Hashmi emphasized that Indian democracy is facing serious challenges of internal cohesion, primarily stemming from

deep-rooted polarization within social and political realms. Earlier, President IRS, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem said that Modi's hyper-nationalist achievements, including the revocation of Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir's autonomy, implementation of a discriminatory citizenship law, and construction of the Ram temple, had proven to be ineffective in terms of Modi's ambitions for a two thirds majority with his allies reflected by the election slogan "Ab Ki Baar 400 Par" (this time 400 plus). BJP suffered a stunning setback in Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state considered Hindi heartland where

the much-hyped Ram temple was recently built. Ambassador Saleem suggested that with Modi's diminished electoral strength, the plans for constitutional amendments to establish India as a Hindu nationalist state would may not be viable. He noted that Modi's approach towards Muslims and Pakistan may witness less hate mongering rhetoric since his anti-Pakistan stance during the elections did not significantly help in bolstering Modi's voter base. Dr. Muhammad Mujeeb Afzal, Associate Professor at QAU, stated that the election results suggest a return to Vajpayee era in India.

## Punjab police is a highly professional force: IGP

LAHORE : Inspector General of Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, has said that Punjab Police is a highly professional force comprised of well-educated officers and personnel who work tirelessly day and night throughout the province, disregarding their own lives, to protect the lives and property of citizens. IG Punjab noted that this year, 195 police personnel were injured in encounters with robbers, drug dealers, and criminals, the department is providing all possible assistance for their best treatment and speedy recovery. IG Punjab further said that the scope of the Safe Cities Projects is being extended to all districts of Punjab. So far, more than 20,000 promotions have been given across various police cadres, and the process continues. Dr. Usman Anwar added that this year, 3.5 billion rupees will be spent on the welfare of the force, and a huge amount will be spent on development projects and safe cities. He expressed these views today at the Central Police Office while awarding commendation certificates and rewards to officers and personnel from the Rawalpindi region for their outstanding performance. According to the details, a ceremony was held at the Central Police Office to encourage the police teams who worked outstandingly in suppressing criminals involved in kidnapping for ransom, blind murder, and other serious crimes. IG Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, awarded cash prizes and commendation certificates to nine police teams from the Rawalpindi region, including six from Rawalpindi district, two from Jhelum, and one from Chakwal. Inspector Sajjad-ul-Hassan and his team were awarded for arresting a dangerous wanted criminal involved in five serious cases of murder and robbery. Sub-Inspector Zaheer Baig and his team were commended with certificates and rewards for bringing to justice the culprits involved in the martyrdom of Constable Ismail Rauf. Inspector Yasir Mahmood and his team were encouraged for the safe recovery of a kidnapped person who was abducted for a ransom of five lakh rupees and arresting the criminals. Sub-Inspector Zameer Hussain and his team from Chakwal were awarded certificates and rewards for recovering stolen goods worth 9 million rupees and arresting the criminals. The ceremony was attended by Additional IG Punjab, DIG Headquarters, AIG Discipline, SP City Traffic Lahore, and ASP City Shahdara, among other officers. Meanwhile, Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has said that the best welfare of police employees and their families and timely solution of their problems is among the top priorities, all supervisory officers should ensure the immediate resolution of the applications and requests presented by the subordinate staff. IG Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, emphasized that the police force is like a family, and no effort should be spared in addressing the issues faced by the families of the employees, immediate action should be taken on all applications related to welfare, discipline, and recruitment to provide relief. He expressed these views during a meeting with police employees and their families at the Central Police Office today. IG Punjab issued orders to resolve the requests presented by police employees and their families. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar forwarded the application of Inspector Muhammad Akbar of Bahawalnagar for retirement on medical grounds a year ago to DIG Welfare Punjab for relief. Dr. Usman Anwar directed DIG Welfare to provide assistance for the treatment of Head Constable Mudassar Nazar's kidney and liver disease. The request for the transfer of the junior clerk daughter of the martyred ASI Atta Muhammad's by his mother from Lahore to Sargodha was forwarded to AIG Admin and Security. IG Punjab directed Additional IG Punjab to provide relief on the request of Sub-Inspector Imran Shehzad from Sargodha regarding the refixation of seniority. The request from retired SP Rasheed Ahmad for the recruitment of his son as a junior clerk was forwarded to AIG Admin & security.—DNA

## RDA inflows rise to \$8.055 bn in May 24

ISLAMABAD : The inflow of remittances under Roshan Digital Account (RDA) has risen to US \$8.055 billion by the end of May 2024 as compared to US \$7.831 billion by April (2024) end, according to the latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The data showed that the inflows of remittances during April were recorded at US\$ 224 million as compared to US\$ 171 million in March and US\$ 182 million in February 2024. These accounts provide innovative banking solutions to millions of Non-Resident Pakistanis (NRPs), including Non-Resident Pakistan Origin Card (POC) holders, seeking to undertake banking, payment, and investment activities in Pakistan. The number of accounts registered under the programme also rose by 12,960 to 702,610 in May 2024 from 689,650 accounts in April 2024. By the end of May, overseas Pakistanis have invested US \$338 million in Naya Pakistan Certificates, US \$582 in Naya Pakistan Islamic Certificates, and US \$37 million in Roshan Equity Investment.

## Federal minister stresses future-ready education

Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that the government is aware of its responsibilities and has declared an education emergency to educate the youth

ABID RAZA

LAHORE :Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has said, "We must provide our youth with an education that will be essential in future." Talking to the media at the Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design (PIFD) here on Friday, he mentioned that a significant portion of our population consisted of youth, and they were our future. He stated that the government is aware of its responsibilities and

has declared an education emergency to educate the youth, adding that we should provide an education that will be relevant in ten years. In response to a question about the 18th Amendment, he said that some provinces benefited from the amendment while others did not. He mentioned that the 18th Amendment was introduced for devolution of powers, but it proved otherwise in the past 15-20 years. He noted that the federal government has very limited fiscal space after debt repayments and defence expenditure. He suggested that tax should not be

based on areas, industry and agriculture, rather, it should be on income, adding that whoever earns should pay tax. Replying to a question about differences between the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the government, he said that the PPP was present in the house during the budget session, and their protest was merely symbolic. Earlier, Prof. Hina Tayyaba Khalil, Vice Chancellor of the PIFD, along with the Registrar, faculty, staff and students, welcomed the federal minister, who attended the closing ceremony of the Thesis Display 2024.

## Ban on e-cigarettes, vapes applauded by civil society

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR :Blue Veins and the Provincial Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco Control commended District Government Peshawar for imposing a 60-day ban on the use, sale, distribution, storage, promotion, and sponsorship of e-cigarettes, vapes, and nicotine products. The ban, issued through an administrative order by Deputy Commissioner Peshawar under Section 144 CrPC, aims to extend into a permanent ban through comprehensive legislation, said a press release issued here on Friday. According to administrative order complete ban has been imposed on the sale of e-cigarettes, vapes, and nicotine pouches near hospitals and educational institutions. These products cannot be

sold to individuals under 21 years of age, besides advertising of these products in public places and on vehicles is strictly prohibited. Violators of these regulations will face legal consequences, adds the order. "This ban is a significant step under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government's Live Well initiative, showcasing its commitment to public health and tobacco control," observed Qamar Naseem, Programme Manager Blue Veins. Civil society highly appreciates the Live Well initiative, anticipating it to be a game changer for Drugs, tobacco control and public health. This comprehensive approach by the KP Government is crucial in protecting communities, reducing tobacco use, and ensuring a healthier future for all. "We deeply appreciate the leadership role of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Ali Amin Gandapur, Health Minister Qasim Ali Shah, Director General Health Dr. Saleem, Director of Public Health Irshad Roghani, and Coordinator to Minister Health Dr. Muhammad Ali Haider," Qamar added. "Their dedication to improving public health and tobacco control is exemplary. Prior to this, the KP Health Department notified a comprehensive Provincial Tobacco Control Plan to implement its roadmap, demonstrating a proactive approach to safeguarding our communities." The KP Tobacco Control Cell has also been instrumental in improving compliance with the existing legal framework, ensuring that these measures are effectively enforced and the tireless efforts of Ajmal Shah, Coordinator KPTCC, are appreciated.

## Generative AI software market set to reach \$52.2b by 2028

Nick Patience said that organizations around the world are committing resources to take advantage of this shift from traditional AI to generative AI

MEHTAB PIERZAD

ISLAMABAD: As generative artificial intelligence (AI) technology pivots from research to the monetization and product launch stages, the software part of the generative AI market is now forecast to see significant expansion, reaching \$52.2 billion by 2028 with a compound annual growth rate of 58% from 2023, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence. Published by 451 Research, part of S&P Global Market Intelligence, the report highlights an accelerated adoption rate of generative AI technologies across various sectors. This surge is attributed to advancements in AI models capable of generating new

content, including text, images and code, leading to enhanced operational efficiencies and innovative applications in business processes. "Our thorough and granular market forecast for generative AI software demonstrates the huge potential of this general-purpose technology to transform processes and eventually industries. Organizations around the world are committing resources to take advantage of this shift from traditional AI to generative AI," said Nick Patience, managing analyst of Data, AI, Info security & Risk at S&P Global Market Intelligence. Key highlights from the report include: This latest edition reflects a significant upward adjustment in market revenue predictions, with 2023 estimates increasing from \$3.7 billion to \$5.1

billion and the 2028 forecast climbing from \$36 billion to \$52.2 billion between our June 2023 and March 2024 publications. This accelerated curve can be attributed to three main drivers: expedited enterprise roadmaps for generative AI, an influx of new providers in the market, and intensified focus on monetization as demands for tangible financial results rise. North America currently dominates the generative AI market, with 64% of revenue in 2023 going to AI providers headquartered in the region. However, higher growth rates in Asia-Pacific, and Europe, Middle East and Africa are expected to gradually erode North America's dominance. The boundaries between different segments are becoming less distinct as

multi-modal models— those trained to process and generate different types of data, like text and images—grow more sophisticated and software providers create offerings that span across them. Code generators are forecast to see the most pronounced growth rate of any sector, growing their share of the market from 6% in 2023 to 10% in 2028. This growth reflects both the early demand that popular products (like GitHub Copilot) have seen, and the improving performance of leading models. According to S&P Global Market Intelligence's Voice of the Enterprise: AI & Machine Learning, Use Cases 2024 survey, where survey respondents felt they saw generative AI delivering value the most at their organizations was process automation (45%).



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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### JUNE

June 02/Italy  
National/Independence Day

June 04/Finland  
Armed Forces Day

June 06/Sweden  
National Day

June 10/Portugal  
Portugal Day (National Day)

June 10/Jordan  
Arab Revolution & Army Day

June 11/United Kingdom  
Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth

June 12/Philippines  
Independence Day

June 12/Russian Federation  
Day of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation (National Day)

June 13/Zambia  
Armed Forces day

June 17/Iceland  
National Day

June 18/Seychells  
National Day

June 25/Croatia  
National Day

June 25/Mozambique  
National Day

June 26/Azerbaijan  
Army Day

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Bomb Disposal.....15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16  
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## Hospitals

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MH.....5611116  
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11  
DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
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PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
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MD Office.....9250360-6  
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TMA.....5770886  
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Upper House witnesses mix reaction over budget 2024-25

Sarmad Ali says proposed tax on papers would have negative impact on education and newspaper industry

ISLAMABAD: Senate on Friday witnessed mix reaction on the budget as the treasury benches termed it pro-people and relief orientated while the opposition called for reviewing increase in tax on salaried class besides giving more relief to the masses. Resuming debate on the budget, Senator Raja Nasir Abbas of MWMP said that no relief was given to the poor masses in the budget. He said that sufficient fund was also not allocated for education and health sectors. The budget lacked future economic plan, he claimed. He said problems of industries should be addressed on priority basis as it played key role in country's exports. Increase in petroleum levy would further cause inflation in the country, he added. Sarmad Ali of PPP said that the

country was facing severe economic crisis and we have limited resources and fiscal space. Our over 50 per cent revenue collection spent on debt servicing, he added. He said proposed tax on papers would have negative impact on education and newspaper industry. Sarmad called upon the government to withdraw 10 per cent GST on newspaper. He said the newspaper industry was already struggling therefore tax on the industry would put extra burden on especially the small newspapers. Maulana Atta ur Rehman of JUIF said that the government should make the budget people-friendly oriented. Sadia Abbasi of PML-N said the government should review proposed increase in tax on salaried class and provide maximum relief to the common people in the budget.

She said the government's policy should be pro-people, pro-business and pro-agriculture. She also suggested that the government should control its expenditure. Dr Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur of PTI termed the budget pro-elite rather than pro-people. She said tax has increased on the salaried class particularly on grade 1-16 employees. She claimed that exemption was given to the elite class in the budget. No tax was imposed on IPPs, members of Parliament and elite class, she said. She said that government has to curtail its own expenditure and she should start from its own door. She welcomed an increase in minimum wages of the labourer but the government should reduce tax ratio. Nasir Butt of PML-N while taking part in the debate said

that the government presented people friendly budget and announced sizable increase in salaries and pensions of the employees despite economic crisis. He said that it would take time to clear mess created by PTI government during 2018-2022. Mohsin Aziz of PTI pointed out the government for increasing indirect taxes rather than imposing direct taxes on the elite and rich people. He said that the government should enhance tax base by taking pragmatic steps. While participating in the budget debate, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Senator Rubina Qaim Khani said that the PPP has always focused on addressing the issues of common people. She said that her party is committed to strengthening democracy and the parliament. She urged the

government to provide relief to common people and farmers, as this would ensure improvements in the lives of the masses. She expressed disappointment that the PPP was not consulted during the budget preparation process and called for increased funding for the education and health sectors. She advocated for efforts to empower women and minorities in the country. Khani also proposed that the government include ten specific suggestions in the budget to address these concerns effectively. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senator Fawzia Arshad emphasized the need for increased funding for education, health, and the upliftment of common people. She suggested that the government should allocate more funds specifically for the upgrading of hospitals in the federal capital.—Agencies

## IESCO detection teams catches 13,729 power pilferers

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) detection teams caught 13,729 electricity connections through which electricity was being stolen in one way or another. IESCO detection teams imposed fines of over Rs 624.8 million on the power thieves besides registering 1,852 FIRs against them. Police have arrested 1,438 electricity thieves, said a statement issued here Friday. Dr. Muhammad Amjad Khan said, "In-line with the vision of the Federal Government and the Ministry of Energy Power Division, Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) is aggressively pursuing a crackdown on electricity theft across the region." He reiterated that the company would continue the drive till complete elimination of electricity theft.—APP

## Courts functioning without fear: CJ LHC

RAWALPINDI: The Chief Justice (CJ) of Lahore High Court (LHC), Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmed on Friday said that the Courts were functioning without any fear and no one would be allowed to interfere in the matters of judiciary. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the judicial complex E-Courts in Rawalpindi, he highlighted his instant actions upon assuming office. "I summoned a full court meeting and decided that the culture of strikes would not be tolerated. On May 13, a circular was issued to the Punjab judiciary, stating that we would not recognise any calls for strikes. Whether there is a strike call or not, we will act according to the law." Praising the role of the lawyer's community, the CJ noted that 90 per cent of lawyers are good professionals. LHC CJ Malik Shahzad Ahmed said the delay in verdicts of cases is the biggest problem and three generations wait for verdicts for a long period. "The cases are delayed due to the absence of witnesses," he said adding that he has consulted with the high court judges to resolve the issues. He said that overseas Pakistanis faced great hardships in their property cases for appearing before the Courts, adding that Pakistanis living abroad can get a video link facility by coming to the embassy.—APP

## WASA observes World Dengue Day to raise awareness against dengue

RAWALPINDI: Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Rawalpindi here on Friday observed World Dengue Day to raise awareness against dengue. A walk was organized outside Liaquat Bagh to sensitize people about precautions against the deadly disease. Managing Director, WASA, Saleem Ashraf, Director Admin, WASA Umar Farooq, other officers and employees participated in the walk. All institutions and general public should work together to prevent dengue, the MD said adding, precious human lives are lost due to dengue. WASA is making efforts against dengue within its limits, he added. Cleaning of the offices, roofs and warehouses have been completed, the MD informed. WASA Rawalpindi has taken solid steps to end water leakages to prevent dengue, Saleem Ashraf said. All-out efforts are being made to remove stagnant water around the tube wells and the valve chamber of the tube wells is also kept dry, the MD added. The employees were instructed to keep the offices completely clean. The officials were also ordered to continue anti-dengue activities on daily basis and send photo evidence to the officers concerned, the MD said adding, earnest efforts should also be made to resolve complaints of water leakages and accumulations promptly.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with JUI (F) Chief Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman.—DNA

## SECP asks companies to benefit from Regularize scheme

ISLAMABAD: A two-member team from Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) visited the Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, listened to issues and informed officials about the Companies Regularization Scheme 2024. Additional Joint Registrar Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan Multan, Kashif Islam, along with Assistant Registrar Iqbal Ghaus, visited the MCCI and met President Mian Rashid Iqbal and Senior Vice President Nadeem Ahmed Sheikh. Former Presidents Khawaja Muhammad Yousuf, Khawaja Muhammad Hussain, Khawaja Muhammad Ali, Naveed Iqbal Chughtai, senior members Muhammad Younis Ghazi, Syed Saqib Ali, Khawaja Mansoor, Secretary General MCCI Muhammad Shafiq, and others were present at the occasion. The participants informed the Additional Joint Registrar about issues related to the SECP and emphasized the need for their resolution while providing suggestions. SECP officials Kashif Islam and Iqbal Ghaus stated, "The Multan office is striving to resolve issues related to company filings and other matters. There are approximately 11,000 companies registered in the Multan office." "The government has launched the Companies Regularization Scheme 2024, which will be effective from June 15-September 15, this year," they mentioned. Under Section 424, any company that is not operational can apply to become inactive and receive a certificate. However, to reactivate the company, documents can be submitted to make the company active again. Under the Companies Regularization Scheme, companies that have not submitted their returns can do so with a one-time fee. MCCI President Mian Rashid Iqbal and Senior Vice President Nadeem Ahmed Sheikh said that SECP was extending facilities to the business community. The Chamber will inform the business community and its members to take advantage of the Companies Regularization Scheme 2024 and regularize their companies with a one-time fee before September 15.—APP

## Morgah police carry out search operation

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police here on Friday carried out search operation in Khawaja Corporation Chowk and adjoining areas in the jurisdiction of Morgah police station. According to a police spokesman, the search operation was conducted in order to maintain law and order and flush out suspects following the directions of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani. He informed, senior police officers and police personnel including women police took part in the search operation. Police checked as many as 25 houses, 15 shops, and 60 individuals during the search operation. The spokesman said that police were fully prepared to shield the lives and property of the public and combating.—APP

## Pakistan offers vast opportunities for foreign investment: Ahsan

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that Pakistan with growing economy offers potential for attractive returns and long-term growth across various sectors to Spanish corporate sector. He said this while speaking to a delegation of a Spanish Company, G.M.DEFENSA, dealing in training activities, consulting services and exploring possibilities of business opportunities comprising FRANCISCO GALVAN PRADO, ELOY ARIZA DOMINGO, Shahbaz Muhammad Khatoon and Atif Muhammad Khatoon here at the Chamber house. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Spain is the world's leading power in the olive oil and table olive sector, food processing and sharing of its expertise in solar and wind-rower sectors can be a great breakthrough for Pakistan. He added that Pakistan is an excellent tourism destination, its textile industry and information technology sectors

are equally important for Spain and that ICCI will be happy to connect the Spanish companies with Pakistan's premier defence production institution, Defense Export Promotion Organization (DEPO) for joint ventures. He further said that Spanish investors can explore partnerships in pharmaceutical, sports sectors by saying that Pakistan also wants to have access to Latin Amer

ican market via Spain to explore the business possibilities for the advantage of all the stakeholders. Francisco Galvan Pardo of GM DEFENSA said that an MoU between the Madrid Chamber of Commerce and Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry will go a long way in enhancing the close collaboration between the business communities of the two countries and

that their firm will play its role for the needful. Shahbaz Muhammad Khatoon said that they have found Pakistan completely a peaceful, safe and secure country which is best destination for investment by saying that Spain is a potential market for Pakistani Rice and fertilizer and that the main objective of their visit is to offer this opportunity to Pakistani business community. For-

mer President ICCI Akram Farid apprised the delegation about the investment friendly atmosphere in Pakistan including the tax exemption for ten years for investment in Economic Zones adding that Pakistan is the producer of the best quality rice in the world as well as the Pink Salt, Steel, Marble and Flowers and Spanish corporate sector can derive benefit by importing the products. Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan has a lot of good-will for Spain because both are connected through a shared history. He said that Pakistan is spending huge foreign exchange on the import of palm oil and that by producing olive oil with the help of Spain will usher a revolution in its agriculture sector. ICCI Vice President Azhar-ul-Islam Zafar, Khalid Chaudhry, Ch. Mohammad Ali, Rizwan Chheena, Shaikh Mohammad Ejaz, Jamshaid Akhtar Shaikh, Malik Nadeem Akhtar and Nasir Mahmood, Javid Malik of Star marketing were also present on the occasion.





## Briefs

## Chairman PTA meets with head of APAC, GSMA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman, met with Mr. Julian Gorman, Head of APAC GSMA, at the PTA HQs on Friday. This meeting is part of PTA's ongoing efforts to strengthen collaboration with GSMA and to discuss key initiatives shaping the future of Pakistan's telecommunications sector, said a news release. During the meeting, both sides engaged in substantive discussions about PTA's current and future initiatives, regulatory frameworks, and technological advancements in the telecommunications industry.—APP

## Education ministry to start advance learner course

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has announced to start advanced learner course for Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 students to ensure a smooth transition and a strong foundation for new students of Islamabad Colleges. According to the Education Ministry, this program will run for the whole month of July. Sharing the key highlights of the programme, the ministry said that the best teachers have been identified for English, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. Additional salary for teaching faculty has also been finalized for this purpose. "Our commitment is to provide the best academic ecosystem for our students. We are leaving no stone unturned to ensure our students receive the best possible support and resources to excel in their academic journey", the ministry said. The ministry is also inviting students from private schools to join this exciting initiative.—APP

## One killed, 5 injured in train-car collision

ISLAMABAD: One person was killed, while five others, including women and children, were seriously injured after being hit by Baba Farid Express on Friday. According to a private news channel, the accident occurred due to the absence of gates on the 67EB track. According to railway police, Mohammad Nawaz, a resident of 16 KB, was returning from Borewala with his family when his car got stuck on the railway track while crossing the railway line at 67 EB and was hit by the Baba Farid Express. As a result of the accident, the car driver, Mohammad Nawaz, died on the spot, while family members Zainab, Tahira, Saira, and 7-year-old Noor were seriously injured. The rescue team reached the spot and removed the dead body and the injured women and children from the vehicle and shifted to THQ Hospital Arifwala. The railway police started the investigation.—APP

## IESCO issues 2-day power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Friday issued 2-day power suspension programme for Saturday and Sunday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period on Saturday from 07:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, PWD-II Feeder, From 07:00 AM to 03:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, NCP Feeder, On Sunday, from 06:00 AM to 08:00 AM, GSO Circle, Pindi Point, Barian, Public Health, Gharial, PAF, Upper Topa, Lora, Patriata, Company Bagh, Cecil Roster, Lora.2, MCM, TDCP, Kohala, Sunny Bank, Kaldana, PC, Dhirkot, Chamkhot, Ringla.—APP

## High prices of animals push people towards 'Ijtamai Qurbani'

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Due to the high prices of the sacrificial animals, most people are giving preference to the collective Qurbani ritual instead of sacrificing animals individually on Eid ul Azha. The record increase in prices of sacrificial animals is being witnessed across the country and the trend of 'Ijtamai Qurbani' is becoming popular. The residents of various localities have arranged for combined sacrifices with the cooperation of various religious and social organizations including local madrasas and mosques. A large number of people have also arranged for combined qurbani with their relatives and friends. "It is better to take part in the collective Qurbani arranged by a nearby madrasa or mosque during these hard times of inflation, and we will do so because we will have to spend only Rs 30,000 to Rs 40,000 for a share, and it is affordable," said a resident Majeed. The prevailing economic crunch leading to limited incomes and livelihood amid steady increases in animal prices in recent years has led to the trend of collective sacrifices, another citizen Nadeem said. The prices of the sacrificial animals have further increased this year as compared to last year owing to an increase in transportation charges and other associated expenses. The prices of bulls in the market have increased



Photo Online

from Rs70,000 to Rs150,000 per animal as compared to last year while the price of A category bull has increased from Rs200,000 to Rs300,000 and onwards and the price of B category bull has increased from Rs100,000 to Rs150,000 and prices of C category has surged from Rs50,000 to Rs100,000.

The prices of goats and sheep have also increased by up to 50 percent. The price of A category goat/sheep has increased from Rs40,000 to Rs60,000. Prices of the B category have increased from Rs30,000 to Rs40,000 and C category to Rs25,000 and above. The price of a goat and sheep in the cattle market was

witnessed from Rs 65,000 to Rs 140,000 while the prices of the bull were recorded from Rs 300,000 to Rs 450,000. Meanwhile, as Eid day was drawing near the sale of sacrificial animals was gaining momentum. Rawalpindi district administration had set up temporary cattle markets at 11 different places in

the district in connection with Eid ul Azha. According to a district administration spokesman, the administration on the directives of Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi had finalized all the arrangements. Five cattle markets were established in Rawalpindi city, two in Gujjar Khan, two in Taxila, and one each in

Kallar Syedan and Kahuta. Assistant Commissioners, Chief Officer Municipal Corporations concerned had been directed to supervise the cattle markets, he informed. The spokesman informed that no one is being allowed to set up a market for sacrificial animals in city areas. Special teams had been formed to take action against the violators, besides imposing fines and confiscating their animals. Like last year, the sellers of sacrificial animals are not being allowed to enter the city in a bid to keep the city clean. According to RCB sources, the sale of sacrificial animals had been banned in cantonment areas. Special teams had been formed to fine the violators and even confiscate their animals, they added. The officials of the Livestock and Health Department while talking to APP informed that they have established special camps at the city's entry points, all cattle markets, and sale points of sacrificial animals for the prevention of the Congo virus. All possible precautionary measures in this regard were being taken, they said adding, that solid steps for the treatment of animals suffering from any disease including the Congo virus were also being taken so that the citizens could be protected from any threat. Besides all the sale points and cattle markets were being sprayed, they added. The staff of the authorities concerned had also been deployed and the exercise would continue without any break till Eidul Azha, they said.

## Pakistani cherries set to enhance competition in Chinese market

BEIJING: China is the world's largest cherry market and Pakistan has reached a milestone by exporting its first shipment of fresh cherries to China. Utilising a reefer container, Pakistan aims to export 260 tonnes of fresh cherries to China in reefer containers by the end of June. This achievement is a result of a phytosanitary agreement signed between China and Pakistan in 2022, which granted Pakistani fresh cherries access to the Chinese market. Fruit farmers in Pakistan's northern Gilgit-Baltistan region are optimistic that their new access to the Chinese market will bolster the local economy and the successful dispatch of this consignment marks a promising step forward, CGTN reported. The Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan, known for its diverse fruit varieties such as sweet cherries, tangy apricots and juicy pears, benefits from an ideal environment. Nourished by fresh glacial water, ripened under golden sunbeams and sustained by gentle breezes from some of the world's highest peaks, these cherries offer a delightful taste experience. Exporting fresh cherries to the Chinese market could significantly improve the lives of local Pakistani growers. Chinese consumers hold cherries in high regard due to their rich colour – red traditionally symbolises good fortune – and their juicy, sweet flavour. Cherries are commonly gifted as presents, making both taste and appearance crucial factors. In China, there is a preference for cherries that are sweet, firm and have a deep red colour ranging from mahogany to dark, measuring between 28 and 30 millimetres. Despite its recent success, Pakistan faces challenges in becoming competitive in cherry production and processing on a global scale. Currently, Pakistani cherries have only reached a handful of international markets, such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This limitation is largely due to local farmers' lack of knowledge about the processes and procedures required to register their products internationally. Without proper guidance and modern technology, obtaining international certifications remains challenging, thus hindering their access to foreign high-end trading hubs. In the Chinese market, Pakistani cherries are not only facing competition from domestically grown cherries from Shandong and Liaoning provinces but also from fresh cherries imported from countries like Chile. Dominant market players, like Chile, are currently exporting 85 per cent of their cherries to China annually. Kyrgyzstan is also one of the newly listed cherry suppliers to China. In 2024, it is possible that Kyrgyzstan will export up to 10,000 tonnes of fresh cherries to China. Additionally, new entrants, such as Tajikistan, are making inroads into the Chinese market. Pakistan's entry into the Chinese cherry market represents a promising development while achieving greater competitiveness will be crucial in the long run. Providing local farmers with the necessary knowledge, guidance and technology can help them meet international standards and tap into lucrative markets.—DNA

## Weekly inflation up by 1.30 pc

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 1.30 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on June 13, 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 313.93 points as compared to 309.91 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 23.03 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 1.01 per cent and went up to 304.28 points from the last week's 301.25 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 1.31 percent, 1.11 percent, 1.07 and 1.29 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 19 (37.26%) items increased, 08 (15.68%) items decreased and 24 (47.06%) items remained stable. The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included onions (5.00%), chillies powder (1.95%), rice

## ANF seizes 1784 kg drugs; arrests eight accused

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover over 1784 kg drugs and arrested eight accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that in two operations conducted at Peshawar Airport, 4.6 kg ice and 99 grams hashish were recovered from two passengers going to Qatar. 1501 kg opium and 93 kg ice were recovered from the Chagai and Chaman areas of Balochistan in two operations. 87.6 kg opium and 80.4 kg hashish were recovered from a vehicle intercepted near M-1 Islamabad while an accused was arrested during the operation. 9.5 kg hashish and 1.5 kg weed were recovered from the Malir area.—APP

## JQMWA to set up 350 slaughtering points

The president of JQMWA asked the capital administration to make the best cleanliness arrangements at the slaughtering point for proper disposing of waste

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ul-Quraish Meat Welfare Association (JQMWA) will set up around 350 slaughtering points in various areas of the city on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. President of JQMWA Khurshid Ahmed Qureshi told APP that slaughtering points would be established to facilitate the residents of the federal capital at the locations including Sector G/6 Abpara Market, Sector G/7 Sitara Market, Sector G/8 Markaz, Sector G/9 Markaz, Sector G/10 Markaz, Buland Market, Shehraz Markaz, Sector G/11 Markaz, Service Road, Sector G/ 13 Markaz, Sector F/6, Sector F/7 Rana Market, Bhara Kahu, Seri Chowk, Nai Abadi, Tirana Chowk, Alipur, Terlai, PWD, Jinnah Garden, Gulberg Green, Sohan Garden, Karal Chowk, Ghori Town, Swan, Sangiani, Golra, Bani Gala, G-15, D-17 and others area. The public is requested to get their animals slaughtered by the registered and expert butchers of Jamiat Al-Quraish instead of seasonal butchers, Qureshi also urged the residents to avoid slaughtering sacrificial animals at home to keep the cleanliness of the city and slaughter them at the slaughtering points made by Jamiat Al-Quraish. The president of JQMWA asked the capital administration to make the best cleanliness arrangements at the slaughtering point for proper disposing of waste.—APP

## IRSA releases 295,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 295,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 257,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1445.06 feet and was 47.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 101,300 cusecs and 120,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1183.20 feet, which was 133.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 45,400 cusecs and 65,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 169,200, 153,600, 104,000 and 53,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 74,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 9,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Syria and his family enjoying the Indonesia movie screened at the Indonesia embassy. Detailed news on the Back Page. —DNA

**WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED**

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EXPORTERS OF  
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## Austria criminalises Palestinian movement

THE march was rather small: A few dozen students assembled for a protest march outside the Technical University of Vienna in Austria on Thursday afternoon—their destination was the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) office in the 9th district. The students demonstrated against the collaboration between FFG and Israeli research institutions. In Vienna, the first manifestations after October 7 were spontaneous, resulting in confrontations with the police and hundreds of fines. They called for an end to the war and Austria's support for the aggression against Gaza. The demonstrations were held not under the name of the "Arab Palestine Club" or any other organisation but under "Let Gaza Live", Abu Rous says. At this time, a pro-Zionist think tank under the name of "Documentation Centre of Political Islam" provided the Interior Ministry, intelligence service, and police with an assessment on the slogan "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." This, initially, internal file – published by the Palestine Solidarity Austria umbrella group in March – had been used to put heavy restrictions on manifestations. "From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free" symbolises the Palestinian people's longing for the liberation of their country. It is an old slogan that has been used even by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) since its invention in the 1960s. Police demanded that organisers sign a paper beforehand that the slogan would not be used. If it is done regardless, police would stop the manifestation and prohibit follow-up rallies and pickets in support of Gaza – activists refused.

"They want to force you, as organisers, to denounce the central aim of the Palestine liberation movement. And, of course, no one with self-respect would sign this paper. So, we refused to sign this paper, and then the manifestations were prohibited", Abu Rous says. However, instead of prohibiting all protests point blank, organisers and police found a compromise: Not signing that they would not use "From the river to the sea..." but signing that they do not "intend to use it". – "That was the only way that the manifestations were not banned and dissolved", Abu Rous, who had organised protests in autumn and registered them with the police, remembers. The same dynamics recently occurred surrounding the term "Intifada". After the student camp protest, the authorities also adopted the interpretation of a Zionist think tank, which had previously consulted the authorities on "From the river to the sea..." and for the term "Intifada". "What they are saying is that Intifada means 'Kill the Jews' and Global Intifada means 'Kill the Jews everywhere'" Abu Rous said, explaining the distorted interpretation of the term. Since May, the police have informed the organisers and participants of each manifestation that the use of "From the river to the sea..." and "Intifada" is forbidden, and if anyone uses them, the manifestation will be dissolved. Intifada means uprising, "standing up against oppression and injustice", Abu Rous says. Any form of uprising can be called Intifada, he explains. "The uprising against the Nazis in the Warsaw Ghetto was the Warsaw Ghetto Intifada, any workers' struggle, we call Workers' Intifada."



## G7 now leaves world with only disappointment

THIS year's G7 summit has just kicked off, and it is the Western media that are the first to seem deflated, with some even giving off a funeral vibe for the G7. The Politico says that "this week's gathering of G7 leaders in Italy looks more like the last supper than a display of Western power." CNN describes the meeting as G7 leaders gathering in Italy to "escaping political peril at home," and questions how effective the G7, referred to by US President Joe Biden's aides as the "steering committee of the free world," can actually be amid anger and discontent from their own populations. "Does the G7 have any power?" When BBC asks the seemingly calm question, it also displays a sense of helplessness behind it. Although the US is not the host of this G7 summit, so far all the topics exposed by the media have been framed by the US, which is consistent with the US' diplomatic style internationally. Of course, this does not mean that Europe can only passively nod and accept. According to "sources," the US is preparing to persuade other G7 leaders to agree to use the interest income from the frozen 300 billion euros of the Russian central bank as collateral for a loan to Ukraine, with the EU as the sole guarantor of the loan. This has caused anger within the EU. The differences on issues related to China are even more pronounced, with the US trying hard to warn Chinese banks that "support Russia" and trying to rally Europe to form a united front against the so-called China's overcapacity. However, "some European countries have very intense commercial relations with China" and "are anxious to avoid a trade war." Washington's calculations are almost smashing into the faces of its allies. Washington aims to maximize its own interests through the above-mentioned issues, while also making other G7 countries voluntarily bear risks and sacrifice their national interests to cooperate with it. It's no wonder that even before the summit convenes, various internal divisions within the G7 have been brought to light through various channels. In general, when the US proposes one thing, Europe pushes back with another. Although in the end, the G7 may still reach a statement emphasizing "unity," the disappointment and anger from Europe toward the US, disregarding these allies' sentiments and interests, are quite evident. In recent years, the G7 has found a way to increase its visibility and the so-called cohesion by hyping up issues related to China. Last year's joint communiqué mentioned "China" 20 times, almost exhausting all possible topics for sensationalism. The G7 now seems to be trending toward becoming "1+6," being led by the US agenda to contain China. However, considering the reactions from various sectors in Europe after the EU's tariffs on Chinese goods, whether other G7 countries will disregard their own interests to follow the US agenda still remains a significant question. The G7 is increasingly being turned into a tool for US geopolitical self-interest by Washington, and the "international issues" discussed at the summit are either misaligned with or opposed to those of the international community.

## G-7 actions: Risking greater conflict with Russia

Qamar Bashir



Diplomatically, they would isolate Russia internationally, rallying condemnation through forums like the UN and strengthening alliances with countries opposed to Russian actions. Each of these actions carries significant risks and could lead to unpredictable and potentially catastrophic consequences, requiring careful international responses to avoid a broader and more devastating conflict. Moreover, the implementation of Russia's aggressive strategy and NATO's counter-strategy would severely impact weaker economies like Pakistan. Disruptions in Russian energy supplies to Europe would cause global energy prices to soar

THE government, people, and political elite of Pakistan seem largely unaware that the Russia-Ukraine war is taking a dangerous turn as the G-7, a powerful coalition of the world's wealthiest and most resourceful countries, is currently meeting in Italy (13-15 June, 2024) and while enjoying Italy's legendary hospitality, they have taken the decision to allow Ukraine to use U.S. and Western arms, ammunition, drones, robots, missiles, and other weaponry to launch attacks within Russia. G-7 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States) on a glass of wine has also decided to unfreeze Russian assets amounting to US\$ 50 Billion mainly parked in Europe and other parts of the world, which were frozen following Russia's invasion of Ukraine to fund Ukraine's war efforts, including repaying the U.S. and other Western countries that have been supplying weapons and military support to Ukraine. These vital and highly sensitive and critical decisions are akin to poking Russia to react violently and take desperate and drastic actions to counter these moves and protect its interests. Russia may intensify military operations in Ukraine, launching large-scale offensives targeting major cities and critical infrastructure. Additionally, Russia might employ its sophisticated cyber warfare capabilities to launch widespread cyber attacks against critical infrastructure in Ukraine, the US, and Europe, disrupting power grids, financial systems, communication networks, and other essential services. It could also use tactical nuclear weapons on the battlefield in Ukraine to force a swift and decisive victory, though this would have catastrophic consequences and likely provoke a massive international response. It may target Western supply lines and logistics hubs in NATO countries providing military aid to Ukraine, using missile strikes or sabotage to disrupt the flow of weapons and supplies and targeting NATO allies in Eastern Europe, such as Poland or the Baltic states to escalate the conflict to a broader regional war.

Beyond direct military actions, Russia could engage in economic warfare by cutting off energy supplies to Europe, shutting down pipelines, or disrupting energy exports, severely impacting European countries dependent on Russian energy. Covert operations and proxy warfare could also increase, with Russia supporting insurgent or terrorist groups within Europe and the US to create instability. Diplomatic and political moves might

involve strengthening alliances with countries opposed to US and European policies, such as China, North Korea and Iran, forming new economic or military alliances to counterbalance NATO and the G-7. If Russia implemented its strategy and US and Europe may respond with a comprehensive and coordinated approach by bolstering their military presence in Eastern Europe, deploying additional troops and equipment, and increasing direct support to Ukraine with advanced weaponry and intelligence. They may impose economic sanctions targeting key sectors of the Russian economy, such as energy and finance, and cyber countermeasures to strengthen defenses and retaliate against Russian attacks.

Diplomatically, they would isolate Russia internationally, rallying condemnation through forums like the UN and strengthening alliances with countries opposed to Russian actions. Each of these actions carries significant risks and could lead to unpredictable and potentially catastrophic consequences, requiring careful international responses to avoid a broader and more devastating conflict. Moreover, the implementation of Russia's aggressive strategy and NATO's counter-strategy would severely impact weaker economies like Pakistan. Disruptions in Russian energy supplies to Europe would cause global energy prices to soar. Pakistan, heavily reliant on energy imports, would face drastically increased fuel and electricity costs, straining its economy. This surge would lead to higher transportation, manufacturing, and household energy expenses, exacerbating inflation and reducing disposable income for its citizens. The conflict would likely disrupt global supply chains, affecting shipping routes and logistics networks. Pakistan, which depends on imports for essential goods and raw materials, would experience delays and increased costs. This disruption could lead to shortages of critical items, higher import prices, and further inflation, negatively impacting both consumers and businesses. Financial markets would experience significant volatility, with investors seeking safer assets amid the uncertainty. This could result in capital outflows from emerging markets like Pakistan, causing the Pakistani rupee to depreciate. A weaker currency would make imports more expensive, further fueling inflation and increasing the cost of servicing external debt, straining Pakistan's financial stability. Amid global economic instability, foreign direct

investment (FDI) in weaker economies would likely decline as investors become more risk-averse. Reduced FDI would hinder economic growth and development projects in Pakistan, exacerbating unemployment and slowing down infrastructure and industrial development. International aid and development funds might be redirected to address the humanitarian and economic impacts of the conflict in Europe. Pakistan could see a reduction in international assistance, leaving it with fewer resources to manage its economic challenges. The combined effects of rising energy prices, trade disruptions, financial instability, reduced investment, and decreased aid would have severe socioeconomic impacts on Pakistan. Higher inflation would erode purchasing power, leading to increased poverty and social unrest. The government would face challenges in providing adequate public services and maintaining social stability amid growing economic hardships. To safeguard its interests and economy from the aftershocks of the Russian strategy and NATO's counter-strategy, Pakistan should implement a comprehensive contingency plan.

This plan includes diversifying energy sources by investing in renewables and securing LNG imports while enhancing energy efficiency. Trade resilience should be bolstered by exploring new markets and supporting domestic production. Financial stability can be achieved by building foreign exchange reserves, encouraging remittances, and managing debt through restructuring and diverse borrowing. Attracting foreign investment through investor-friendly policies and special economic zones, alongside boosting domestic investment via public-private partnerships and local investor incentives, is crucial. Strengthening social safety nets with cash transfer programs and subsidies, and enhancing public services in healthcare, education, and employment are essential. Diplomatic efforts should focus on regional alliances and international aid. Cybersecurity measures and military preparedness must be prioritized to protect infrastructure and ensure national security. A crisis management task force should coordinate and monitor the plan to ensure effective implementation and adaptability.

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

## What is really behind China's support for a two-state solution?

Hannan Hussain

More recently, since Israel's onslaught on Gaza began, China has sought concrete momentum towards a two-state solution. It fears that a wider war could engulf the region and considers it imperative to address the root causes of the conflict to drive enduring peace.

Beijing is also keen to expand its peace-building profile in the Middle East at a time when influence from the United States is waning. For instance, China recently conducted talks between rival Palestinian factions Hamas and Fatah on home soil, and issued a joint statement with Arab states...

RECENTLY, Beijing hosted a major China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, calling for an "effective international peace conference" on Palestine and the establishment of an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Chinese President Xi Jinping also pledged an additional \$69 million in humanitarian assistance to Gaza last month, saying he is determined to work with Arab states to resolve regional hotspot issues. In his keynote address at the forum, Xi said, "Since last October, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has escalated drastically, throwing the people into tremendous suffering. War should not continue indefinitely. Justice should not be absent forever." China's support for a two-state solution is not a new development. Xi on Palestinian-Israeli conflict: Commitment to Two-State solution should not be wavered at will Xi made the remarks as he delivered a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the 10th ministerial conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum. The Middle East is a land. Since the 1970s, China has supported Palestine's struggle for statehood, with chairman Mao Zedong even characterising Israel as a base of imperialism. More recently, since Israel's onslaught on Gaza began, China has sought concrete momentum towards a two-state solution. It fears that a wider war could engulf the region and considers it imperative to address the root causes of the conflict to drive enduring peace. Beijing is also keen to expand its peace-building profile in the Middle East at a time when influence from the United States is waning. For instance, China recently conducted talks between rival Palestinian factions Hamas and Fatah on home soil, and issued a joint statement with Arab states calling for a comprehensive, enduring and early resolution of the Palestinian issue. Economic cooperation with the Arab world is also picking up, in part by scaling up investments in oil, gas and renewable sectors. Here's what China has to gain by supporting a two-state solution. Beijing is keen on positioning itself as an effective mediator in the Middle East, and sees a two-state solution as critical to achieving that outcome. China scored a diplomatic victory through the landmark Iran-Saudi peace deal last year. But it is yet to achieve "all efforts towards enhancing regional and international peace and

security," as pledged by senior Saudi, Chinese and Iranian officials in a joint trilateral statement last March.

Settling the Israel-Palestine issue could change that. Israel's military occupation of Palestine has long been seen as an intractable issue in the Middle East, and more Arab nations have grown critical of Washington for supporting bloodshed in Gaza. China hopes to fill Washington's peace-making void and position Palestinian interests at the centre of a two-state solution. This explains China's vocal support for Palestinians' "national rights" and the establishment of a sovereign state along 1967 borders.

Beijing's support for an enduring ceasefire and Palestine's UN membership aligns closely with the views of Arab states, including those that have normalised relations with Israel. If Arab states put their weight behind a China-backed international peace conference on Palestine, Beijing could further cement regional consensus on Palestinian statehood that is not contingent on US approval. International reaction to China's involvement with the Palestine issue has been mixed. On the one hand, Arab countries have been overwhelmingly supportive of China's two-state solution stance, and even backed calls to end the Israeli occupation. Russia has also supported China's stance at the United Nations. But Washington and many Western powers have sought to avoid direct engagement with China on Gaza. China also has a vested interest in securing its economic and development interests through peace-building in Gaza. For instance, it is pressing ahead with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the Middle East, a sprawling infrastructure and trade connectivity project that includes a number of ports along strategic waterways. Israel's war on Gaza has exposed the fragility of cross-regional trade corridors. It risks disrupting long-term BRI investments in ports, energy and transit infrastructure, and has already raised shipping costs along maritime passages. In response to the war, Houthi rebels in the Red Sea have been attacking international shipping routes, refusing to cease unless Israel ends its genocide in Gaza.

In light of these costs, China and Arab countries have a deep stake in backing a two-state solution. However, given the growth of Israeli settlements and the invasion in

Palestinian lands, a two-state solution is still far from establishing a just peace. Both sides recently greenlit an action plan to boost developmental cooperation in areas such as investment, infrastructure and energy. Beijing has also served as the top trading partner of Arab states for several consecutive years, with annual trade volume soaring to nearly \$400 billion in 2023. Thus, a permanent solution to the Israel-Palestine issue is critical to avoid future conflict flare-ups, and the risk of a wider regional war.

Despite Beijing's support for a two-state solution, there are limits to its influence. First, Arab states will continue to engage with Washington on the war, and the US will continue to prioritise Israeli interests when it comes to any de-escalation or peace-building bid. Look at President Joe Biden's three-phase Gaza ceasefire plan. It proposes a path to a permanent ceasefire, but doesn't compel Israel to commit to one in writing. Thus, Washington's robust support of Israel marks a unique challenge for China, given its efforts to focus negotiations on an independent Palestinian state. The viability of a two-state solution is also in question. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is staunchly resistant to an independent Palestinian state. Washington has also made little effort to advance a process that demands a complete end to Israel's occupation. Illegal settlements also continue to expand and grow, damaging the credibility of a just two-state solution. Still, Israel's onslaught has made clear that the rights and liberties of Palestinians cannot be ignored. Movement on a two-state solution is critical to bringing that conversation about Palestinians' future out into the open. On the security front, the US also enjoys important leverage over Arab states. In April, it conducted high-level talks in Saudi Arabia with top Arab and UK officials, and has been a fixture in Gaza truce talks with Qatar. Doha and Cairo have also backed US guidelines for a ceasefire, while US support for Israel remains solid. These dynamics could make it difficult for China to balance competing expectations on a two-state solution. Ultimately, China's pursuit for an enduring settlement fares favourably for itself, Palestine and the region at large. By pushing for a two-state solution, Beijing hopes to expand its peacebuilding influence and secure long-term economic interests at all costs.



## Briefs

## Establishment's role in judiciary...

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judicial functions or "intimidation" of judges in a manner that undermined the independence of the judiciary. The six IHC judges — Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Justice Babar Sattar, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, Justice Tariq Mahmood Jehangiri, Justice Sardar Ejaz Shauq Khan and Justice Saman Rafiq — had written a letter to the chief justice, who is also chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC). Speaking about the issues in the judiciary, the LHC CJ said delay in verdicts of cases is the biggest problem. "Three generations [of a family] wait for verdicts and it [sometimes] take 30 years," he lamented.

## Parliamentary...

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were proposed during a meeting of the Judicial Commission held under chairmanship of Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa, said the sources. CJF 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 judges in the superior judiciary. It was tasked to consider names of nine judges, including LHC chief justice and SHC chief justice, for filling the three vacant posts in the apex court.

## Sindh aims to spend...

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These funds are strategically allocated; a total of 63% or Rs1.9 trillion goes towards current revenue, 6% or Rs184 billion for current capital, and the remaining 31% or Rs959 billion is dedicated to the development expenditure. Education receives the largest allocation at Rs519 billion, with Rs459 billion dedicated to current revenue expenditure. Healthcare follows closely with a total allocation of Rs334 billion, with Rs302 billion earmarked for current expenses. Local government rounds out the top three with a proposed budget of Rs329 billion.

## Yasmin berates...

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Aliya Hamza had been arrested again and again and shifted to jails across Punjab. She hit out at political rivals for exacting political revenge. Rashid stated that the arrest of Amjad Niaz after release and FIRs against hundreds of political workers of PTI in Sahiwal were a political revenge. She also added that six-time minister, Mian Mahmood Rasheed was shifted to jail from hospital without proper treatment.

## Court reporting...

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mother, Saeeda Qazi Isa, used to write articles years ago. In those days, writing involved a lot of research, he said. "It has become very easy to say whatever comes to mind now," the top judge lamented. The chief justice said that he compiled media rules and published them in the form of a book. He noted that the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto case had been decided, so now opinions can be formed about it. The Lahore High Court wrote 627 paragraphs and the Supreme Court wrote 963 paragraphs in judgements in the Bhutto case, he added.

## Health insurance for journalists on cards

Govt to ensure minimum wage of Rs37,000, claims info minister

## ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Ata Tarar announced that health insurance for 5,000 journalists will be ensured in the first phase. While addressing the media at the press club, Tarar stated that the government is committed to the welfare of journalists.

## NZ eliminated from T20 WC as Afgh qualify for Super 8

Afghanistan beat PNG by seven wickets to qualify for the Super 8

## SPORTS DESK

WASHINGTON: Afghanistan defeated Papua New Guinea on Friday by seven wickets at the Brian Lara Stadium, Tarouba, Trinidad, during the ongoing T20 World Cup 2024. The win helped Afghanistan qualify for the Super 8 while also eliminating New Zealand from the T20 World Cup. Chasing a modest target of 95 runs, Afghanistan reached home in 15.1 overs for the loss of three wickets. Openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz (7) and Ibrahim Zadran (0) were dismissed early but Gulbadin Naib scored an unbeaten 49 runs in 36 balls, with the help of four fours and two sixes, to take his side over the line. Earlier, a clinical bowling display helped Afghanistan dismiss PNG for only 95 runs in 19.5 overs. PNG quickly slipped to 17-4 in the fourth over of the innings which severely dented their chances of posting a competitive total on the board. Wicketkeeper-batter Kiplin



Doriga was the highest score for PNG with 27 runs in 32 balls. Pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi was the pick of the bowlers for Afghanistan

once again with impressive figures of 3-16 in four overs. "I want to congratulate the entire team because we have now officially qualified for the Super 8. I feel proud," Farooqi, who was named Player of the Match, said. "Before the warm-up match, I

was in the IPL. I did not get any chances there unfortunately. I played just one warm-up game. I know how to carry my body and I just tried to keep it simple. I try to get some wickets if there is some movement or swing. If there is nothing, then I try to go to plan B, not go for boundaries and keep it simple. We have to give our 100% and we will try our best to do it in the last match as well," he added. Afghanistan and the West Indies are the two teams that will be going through from Group C into the Super 8. PNG and New Zealand are now out of the tournament. Teams: Papua New Guinea (Playing XI): Tony Ura, Assad Vala(c), Lega Siaka, Sese Bau, Hiri Hiri, Chad Soper, Kiplin Doriga(w), Norman Vanua, Alei Nao, John Kariko, Semo Kamea. Afghanistan (Playing XI): Rahmanullah Gurbaz(w), Ibrahim Zadran, Gulbadin Naib, Azmatullah Omarzai, Mohammad Nabi, Najibullah Zadran, Karim Janat, Rashid Khan(c), Noor Ahmad, Naveen-ul-Haq, Fazalhaq Farooqi.

## Bazid opens up about moving T20 WC matches

LONDON: Former cricketer and commentator Bazid Khan has opened up on the Florida flood alert issue which can result in abandoning the three upcoming matches of the T20 World Cup 2024 scheduled there including today's Ireland vs USA. Talking on a local sports YouTube channel, the commentator opined that "matches scheduled in Florida can't be shifted anywhere else on a whim" "The venues were decided a long while ago and the flood alert was not carried out a year or six months ago, it is a recent warning," stated Bazid Khan further stated that it is logistically impossible to shift matches from here and there in a short period as it is a long process, "and we know it is a hassle to schedule even a match. There are logistics you have to look at including the organisers, the staff and the overall execution of it. Just to say that shift matches from Florida to somewhere else is an easy thing but it is not." He proceeded to give an example of the Olympics to help the viewers understand the long process, "It is almost like in Olympics where a global village is set up and then you ask the Global Village to be taken somewhere where there are no matches scheduled which is practically not possible or right. - Agencies

## Cummins denies Australia manipulating England's WC exit

SYDNEY: Pat Cummins ruled out the prospect of Australia underperforming against Scotland in a bid to oust rivals England from the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, saying it would be against the "spirit of cricket." Bowling spearhead Josh Hazlewood caused controversy this week when he said it would be in Australia's interests for reigning champions England to be out of the competition. Australia have already secured their place in the next round, the Super 8s and he suggested they could ease up in their closing Group B game against Scotland this weekend to engineer their bitter rivals' exit. That scenario now appears less likely after England crushed Oman by eight

wickets on Thursday to move above Scotland on net run rate with a final game to come against Namibia. In this case, if England beat Namibia then Scotland will have to overcome Australia to qualify for the Super Eight. England coach Matthew Mott — an Australian — said he hoped Hazlewood was joking and Australia's Test and one-day skipper Cummins assured him that the bowler was. "When you go out and play you're trying your best every time. And if you're not, it's probably against the spirit of cricket," Pat Cummins told reporters in St Lucia. "I don't think you can go into a game not trying to win — ever. You're playing an international game in the middle of a World Cup.

"You still want to try and have a good game and carry that on into the Super Eights. I've never stepped onto the field without the mindset of being aggressive like the guys have so far." Cummins said he had spoken to Hazlewood and the comments were tongue-in-cheek and "got taken a bit out of context." "We'll go out there and try to play Scotland, who have had a really good tournament so far, so it's going to be tough," he said. "It's something you discuss as one of the quirks of the set-up, but it does it change the way we play? Absolutely not. I've never stepped into the field without the mindset of trying to take the game on and be aggressive like the guys have so far."

## England thrash Oman to reignite T20 WC campaign

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA: England hammered Oman by eight wickets as the reigning champions revived their T20 World Cup campaign with a record-breaking win in Antigua on Thursday. Needing a heavy victory to bolster their net run-rate as they attempt to overhaul Scotland in the race to qualify for the second round, England routed Oman for just 47. England then made 50-2 in a mere 3.1 overs, captain Jos Buttler 24 not out and Jonny Bairstow, who hit the winning boundary, unbeaten on eight. This overwhelming Group B victory meant England recorded the largest win in T20 World Cup history in terms of balls remaining. Oman had no answer to England's attack, leg-spinner Adil Rashid taking 4-11, while express quicks Jofra Archer and Mark Wood both had figures of 3-12 in an innings that ended with nearly seven overs to

spare. Number seven Shoaib Khan (11) was the only Oman batsman to reach double figures after Buttler won the toss. England's net run-rate climbed to 3.081, better than Scotland's 2.16, although they stayed third on three points, behind the Scots' five. But amid speculation arch-rivals Australia, undefeated so far in Group B might ease up in their closing pool game against Scotland to engineer England's exit, Buttler's men now know they will go second if they beat Namibia in their pool finale on Saturday. Even a win, however, would leave England awaiting the outcome of Sunday's match between Australia and Scotland to discover if they have reached the Super Eights. "I thought the tone was set really well by the bowlers, picking up the early wickets," said Buttler as England returned to winning ways after a com-

prehensive 36-run loss to Australia last time out that followed a washout with Scotland. "Job done today, another big game in two days' time." Defeat by Australia added to the pressure on Buttler and coach Matthew Mott, himself a native Australian, that had been growing since late last year when England lost six of their nine games during a woeful defence of their 50-over World Cup title in India. "I've been around long enough to know how things work," said Buttler. "We have confidence. We can only focus on ourselves, we've got a huge game against Namibia." Already-eliminated Oman, who ended the tournament having lost all four of the games, just scraped past the record lowest completed total of 39 at any T20 World Cup, posted by fellow-nation Uganda against co-hosts West Indies in Guyana last week. - Agencies

## Ronaldo makes bold statement about Portugal

*"We have to go step by step, live in the moment, be calm, work as well as we have until now," Cristiano Ronaldo says*

LONDON: Record-breaking football player Cristiano Ronaldo is preparing to be in action as the European Championship or Euro 2024 is set to commence Friday in Munich. The first Group A match of Euro 2024 will be between Germany and Scotland. According to an ESPN, Ronaldo said that Portugal's current generation of footballers deserves to win the continental tournament. "We have to go step by step, live in the moment, be calm, work as well as we have until now, believe that it is possible. We know it's a short competition, but the team is ready," the 39-year-old said. Alongside Ronaldo, Bruno Fernandes of Manchester United, Paris Saint-Germain's (PSG) Vitinha, and Manchester City pair Bernardo Silva and Ruben Dias are among the famous players in the team locking eyes to secure this year's European title. Al Nassr forward Ronaldo further said: "I believe that this generation deserves to win a competition of this magnitude. Semifinals? I hope we can go further." "We have to go step by step, live in the moment, be calm, work as well as we have until now, believe that it is possible. We know it's a short competition, but the team is ready," the five-time Ballon d'Or winner said. Cristiano Ronaldo is all set to participate for the record sixth time in the Euro 2024 alongside two others — Pep and Rui Patrício — who were also in Portugal's Euro 2016 winning squad. "I enjoy football, records are a consequence, not a goal, they appear naturally," he said. "It's my sixth European Championship, it's about enjoying it in the best possible way, playing well and making sure the team can win." - Agencies

## Michael ready for Australia challenge

WASHINGTON: Scotland batter Michael Jones has stated that his side is ready to take on Australia in their last group match in the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024. Jones also welcomed comments made by Australian pacer Josh Hazlewood hinting at the ODI World champions manipulating Scotland's match to knock out arch-rivals England. Australia have already secured their place in the next round, the Super 8s and Hazlewood suggested that they could ease up in the game against Scotland this weekend. However, that scenario now appears less likely after England crushed Oman by eight wickets on Thursday to move above Scotland on net run rate with a final game to come against Namibia. In this case, if England beat Namibia then Scotland will have to overcome Australia to qualify for the Super Eight. Michael Jones found Hazlewood's comments hilarious and joked about wanting to see David Warner opening the bowling for Australia.

## Jones also welcomed comments made by Australian pacer Josh Hazlewood hinting at the ODI World champions manipulating Scotland's match to knock out arch-rivals England

"I was watching it live actually, laughing to myself," said Jones. "The rivalry between England and Australia is massive. If they want to play that way then happy days. We won't be complaining. If they want to let David Warner open the bowling or something like that it would be pretty funny." Jones stated that he thinks that Australia will bring their A-game against Scotland, however, he also mentioned his team's aim to win and qualify for Super 8s, irrespective of the circumstances. "The Australians are renowned for being extremely diligent and extremely professional. I'm absolutely certain they will come out all guns blazing like they do for every game at every tournament. "At the end of the day our team wants the best result we can get, but on a personal level you want to challenge yourself against the best," he said. - Agencies

## Pak crush India, qualify for Squash C'ship semis

Pakistan's Asim Khan secures lead for Greens with impressive 3-0 finish against Rahul Baitha of India

## OUR CORRESPONDENTS

KARACHI: After consecutive triumphs during the Asian Team Squash Championship, Pakistan crushed India Friday 2-1 and qualified for the semi-finals of the tournament in Dalian, China. Pakistan's Asim Khan secured the lead for the Greens with an impressive 3-0 finish against Rahul Baitha of India. But India were brought back by Velavan Senthilkumar in the game with a 3-0 win against Nasir Iqbal. Pakistan's coach Fahim Gul confirmed after the match that Iqbal was suffering from fever due to which he could not perform up to the mark. With the match level at 1-1, Pakistan's Noor Zaman stepped up for his side and delivered a flawless performance to beat Suraj Kumar Chand 3-0 and help his side move on to the next round. Pakistan will face Hong Kong, who defeated Iran, in the semi-final tomorrow. Pakistan coach Gul was elated after the win against India and hoped that the team will do well in the upcoming matches as well. Earlier, Pakistan remained unbeaten in Pool C of the event where they were alongside South Korea, Chinese Taipei and China. Pakistan beat Taipei 3-0 and Korea 2-1 on the opening day to make a good start to the tournament. Meanwhile, they beat China yesterday 3-0 to top their pool.



**Tuesday June 15**  
**South Africa vs Nepal**  
Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (4.30am)  
**New Zealand vs Uganda**  
Tarouba, Trinidad and Tobago (5.30am)  
**India vs Canada**  
Lauderhill, Florida (7.30pm)  
**Namibia vs England**  
North Sound, Antigua (10 pm)

## No point negotiating..

FROM PAGE 01  
Qazi Faez Isa to uphold the rule of law amidst these interferences. Khan praised a judge from Sargodha, six judges from Islamabad High Court, and three judges from the Supreme Court for their integrity. Addressing the budget, Khan highlighted that Pakistan needs to generate Rs13 trillion in revenue, with Rs9.8 trillion allocated to debt interest payments. He predicted a necessity to borrow Rs7.5 trillion to cover the budget deficit, warning that the country is already sinking. "Investment, which hinges on the rule of law, is the only salvation, yet this year saw the lowest investment in 50 years," he stated.

## Moody's warns...

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risks" it said, adding that "about 55pc of fiscal year 2025 revenue (Rs9.8 trillion) is earmarked for interest payments on the government's debt". Regarding the increase in expenditure, the rating agency said it reflected "lack of significant cost-containment measures and Pakistan's very high interest payments". It was quick to note that the subsidies increased by 27pc to Rs1.4 trillion, "mainly driven by large increases in subsidies to the power sector" which reflected little progress in energy sector reforms. Overall, the rating agency said that budget reflected "quicker fiscal consolidation, but ability to sustain reforms will be key to easing liquidity risks".

## Taliban govt curbs on...

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girls' access to education and employment, limit their freedom of movement, and curtail their presence in public spaces, effectively entrenching the exclusion of women from public life," Ms. Spokesperson Throssell said. Thursday also marks 1,000 days since the Taliban banned education for girls beyond the sixth grade — a "sad and sobering milestone", according to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). Executive Director Catherine Russell said "For 1.5 million girls, this systematic exclusion is not only a blatant violation of their right to education but also results in dwindling opportunities and deteriorating mental health" in a public statement.

## Pakistan sends 9th...

FROM PAGE 01  
were also present. The shipment is destined to reach Aqba Port Jordan, for further distribution to the People of Gaza. This 9th relief consignment comprises approximately 300 tons of aid including medicines, hygiene kits and food packs as per needs at Gaza. Earlier, NDMA sent 8 relief consignments comprising approximately 1000 tons of aid which included special winterized tents, blankets, surgical supplies, medicines, Female Dignity kits and food packs. Meanwhile, Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan President, Dr. Hafeezur Rehman, embarks on a compassionate mission to Cairo, Egypt, to celebrate Eid with Gaza refugees, bringing the warmth of the festive season to those enduring hardship. Dr. Rehman's visit underscores Alkhidmat Foundation's steadfast commitment to supporting and standing in solidarity with oppressed communities worldwide.



## Briefs

Tesla investors  
back record pay  
deal  
for Musk

DETROIT: Tesla shareholders have voted to restore CEO Elon Musk's record \$44.9 billion pay package that was thrown out by a Delaware judge earlier this year. Vote totals weren't immediately announced at Tesla's annual stockholders' meeting on Thursday, but the company said shareholders voted for Musk's compensation plan, which initially was approved by the board and stockholders six years ago. But the favorable vote doesn't necessarily mean that Musk will get the all-stock compensation anytime soon. The package is likely to remain tied up in the Delaware Chancery Court and Supreme Court for months as Tesla tries to overturn the rejection. Tesla last valued the package at \$44.9 billion in an April regulatory filing. It was once much as \$56 billion but has declined in value along with Tesla's stock, which has dropped about 40 percent in the last 12 months. Chancellor Kathaleen St. Jude McCormick ruled in January in a shareholder's lawsuit that Musk essentially controlled the Tesla board when it ratified the package in 2018, and that it failed to fully inform shareholders who approved it the same year. Tesla has said it would appeal, but asked shareholders to reapprove the package at Thursday's annual meeting. Tesla's new Model 3 sedan is displayed next to Model X SUV at the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) in Beijing, China, on September 2, 2023. —APP

Norway  
continues to  
welcome  
Chinese new  
vehicles

BEIJING: Henning Kristofersen, Commercial Counselor of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beijing and Head of Innovation Norway in China said that his country is willing to continue to embrace Chinese new energy vehicles. High-quality development is a theme that resonates deeply with both China and Norway. We face significant tasks that require international cooperation including our continued efforts to achieve a green transition and climate goals. He said at this year's China (Beijing) - Norway High-Quality Development seminar, an activity of China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) Never-Ends held in China National Convention Center. China-Norway cooperative opportunities in finance, AI, green energy, food trade and health care were discussed. The green transition is an area where we share important common interests, and we are both committed to promoting environmental affection and sustainable development, the ambassador added. This year marks the 70th anniversary of China-Norway diplomatic ties, highlighting cooperation in economy, science, technology and culture. It's reported by UK-based media that as of next month, the European Union will levy additional tariffs of as much as 38.1% on electric vehicles from China. "EV is a very good example of the cooperation between Norway and China. Right now the EU is considering putting extra tax on the Chinese EVs because they fear the competition." —APP



Islamabad: A delegation of an International Consultancy Firm called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.—DNA

## Lost generation

Gaza cease-fire needed to  
save children: UNRWA Chief

Children who have survived Gaza war 'are in deep trauma,' says Philippe Lazzarini

## FOREIGN DESK

GENEVA: The head of the UN agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) warned that without a cease-fire in Gaza, a "lost generation" is imminent. "Children suffer first + suffer most in conflicts & wars. In #Gaza it is no different. Children have gone through what no child anywhere in the world should see or undergo. Far too many were killed, far too many were injured & far too many will be scarred for life. Those who survived are in deep trauma...The war robbed the children of #Gaza of their childhood," UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini wrote on X. He warned that "without a cease-fire, they will become a lost generation." Israel has faced international condemnation amid its continued brutal offensive on Gaza since an Oct. 7, 2023 attack by the Palestinian group Hamas, despite a UN Security Council resolution



demanding an immediate cease-fire. More than 37,200 Palestinians have since been killed in Gaza, most of them women and children, and over 84,900 others injured, according to local health authorities.

Eight months into the Israeli war, vast tracts of Gaza lay in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water and medicine. Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice, whose latest ruling ordered it to immediately halt its military

operation in the city of Rafah, where over a million Palestinians had sought refuge from the war before it was invaded on May 6. Meanwhile, The UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) on Friday dismissed as "unrealistic" the claims made against it in Israeli advertisements appearing on Google. UNRWA spokesman Jonathan Fowler confirmed to Anadolu on Thursday that allegations of Hamas's infiltration of the UN agency are unfounded. The Israeli government's claims appear as "sponsored links" at the top of Google search results for UNRWA, according to Anadolu. These links on the Tel Aviv administration's website include unsubstantiated allegations, such as UNRWA employees' involvement in the Oct. 7, 2023 attack and assertions that the UN agency has been infiltrated by Hamas and other groups. Fowler stated that they conducted repeated investigations and took corrective action when allegations of neutrality

violations arose, both during and before the war in Gaza. He pointed out that there is no evidence of the involvement of any of the agency's employees in the Oct. 7 attack on settlements adjacent to the Gaza Strip. He added that investigations are ongoing into the allegations against about a dozen employees, emphasizing that these remain allegations regardless of how they are portrayed. In another investigation conducted by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services on April 26, one of the 19 UNRWA employees accused by Israel of involvement in the Oct. 7 attack was cleared of charges. The office suspended investigations into four employees due to insufficient evidence provided by Israel. Independent investigations are ongoing for the remaining 14 employees, and thus far, no evidence of misconduct has been uncovered. Meanwhile, Google did not respond to Anadolu's inquiry about whether the ads targeting UNR-

WA were restricted to searches within the United States. Google simply stated that it reviewed the advertisements and found no violations of its advertising policies. Israel has faced international condemnation amid its continued brutal offensive on Gaza since an Oct. 7 despite a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate cease-fire. More than 37,200 Palestinians have since been killed in Gaza, most of them women and children, and over 85,000 others injured, according to local health authorities. Eight months into the Israeli war, vast tracts of Gaza lay in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water and medicine. Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice, whose latest ruling ordered Tel Aviv to immediately halt its operation in the southern city of Rafah, where over a million Palestinians had sought refuge from the war before it was invaded on May 6.

Microsoft faces heat  
from US Congress  
over cyber security

WASHINGTON: Members of US Congress on Thursday pressed Microsoft to explain a "cascade of avoidable errors" that allowed a Chinese hacking group to breach emails of senior US officials. Microsoft President Brad Smith spent more than three hours answering questions from members of the House Committee on Homeland Security in Washington, assuring them cybersecurity is being woven more deeply into the technology company's culture. "Microsoft accepts responsibility for each and every one of the issues cited" in a scathing US government report about the breach "without equivocation or hesitation," Smith told the committee. The Cyber Safety Review Board (CSRB), led by the US Department of Homeland Security, conducted a seven-month investigation into the incident last year that involved the China-affiliated cyberespionage actor Storm-0558. "Microsoft has an enormous footprint in both government and critical infrastructure networks," US congressman and committee member Bennie Thompson said to Smith as the hearing opened. "It is our shared interest that the security issues raised by the (report) be addressed quickly." The operation, which was first discovered by the US State Department in June 2023, included hacks on the official and personal mailboxes of Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and US Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns. Microsoft's core business is to provide cloud computing services, such as Azure or Office360, that host sensitive data and power business and government operations across major sectors of the economy. The report criticized a Microsoft corporate culture that was "at odds with... the level of trust customers place in the company." The review identified a series of operational and strategic decisions by Microsoft that opened the door to the breach, including the failure to identify a new employee's compromised laptop following a corporate acquisition in 2021. It also found that Microsoft fell short of safety standards seen at competing cloud companies, including Google, Amazon and Oracle. "The Board finds that this intrusion was preventable and should never have occurred," the review said, pinpointing "the cascade of Microsoft's avoidable errors that allowed this intrusion to succeed." —APP

## Ramaphosa set for re-election as DA gives backing

The governing ANC is depending on former foes to give Cyril Ramaphosa a second term and extend its three-decade hold on power

## FOREIGN DESK

PRETORIA: Cyril Ramaphosa is set for re-election as South Africa's president after the country's second biggest party said it would back the African National Congress (ANC) leader following a government coalition deal. The ANC lost its majority for the first time in last month's election and has spent two weeks locked in intensive behind-the-scenes talks with other parties. As the newly elected parliament convened on Friday, Democratic Alliance (DA) leader John Steenhuisen said his main opposition party had formally signed a coalition agreement with the ANC, and part of the agreement was Ramaphosa would be president. Lawmakers are due to elect a president later in the day and the ANC

and DA together have a majority of lawmakers that would see the 71-year-old return for a second term. In the May 29 polls, the ANC gathered 40 percent of the vote, followed by the DA with 21 percent. Two smaller parties, the socially conservative Inkatha Freedom Party and the right-wing Patriotic Alliance, will also take part in the coalition government, they said. Ramaphosa could have a smooth passage to a second term if he is the only candidate nominated, in which case he would be elected automatically. But if other candidates are nominated by other parties, a vote follows. The deal marks the start of a new chapter in South African politics, which has been utterly dominated by the ANC since it swept to power in the 1994 elections following the end of apartheid. "Today marks the beginning of a new era where we put our differ-

ences aside and unite for the betterment of all South Africans," Sihle Zikalala, a member of the ANC's governing body, said in a post on X. The ANC was also facing a deadline to pull together a coalition agreement of some sort given parliament must sit for the first time and vote for the president within 14 days of the election results being declared. The deadline is Sunday. Friday's sitting is expected to take hours, with the 400-member parliament first electing a speaker and deputy speaker before the vote for president. At least one party, the MK Party of former ANC leader and South African President Jacob Zuma, has said it will boycott the first sitting and its 58 lawmakers will not take their seats. That is not expected to affect the voting procedure as South Africa's constitution says

NATO defense  
ministers  
discuss  
helping  
Ukraine

WASHINGTON: NATO defense ministers on Friday continued to discuss the agenda for an upcoming summit in Washington, DC, including a plan for security assistance to Ukraine. In opening remarks on the second and final day of the defense ministers' meeting in Brussels, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said they are focusing on alliance deterrence and a defense agenda as they prepare for next month's summit in the US capital. The defense ministers will also discuss progress on ensuring that NATO defense plans are "solid and ready to be executed." "This morning we'll also finalize the plan for NATO security assistance and training for Ukraine," he added. On Thursday, NATO defense ministers approved the first-ever elevation cooperation roadmap, outlining a new security aid and training support plan for Ukraine. The roadmap coincided with news that the G7 nations are loaning Ukraine \$50 billion for weapons and reconstruction, using money from the interest on seized Russian assets. After extending his term at the NATO helm, Stoltenberg is set to step down this fall. His successor has not yet been named.—APP

UN demands  
end  
to Sudan's  
city siege

LONDON: The UN Security Council has demanded that Sudanese paramilitary forces call off their eight-week siege of el-Fasher, a city in the Darfur region where fighting has sparked fears of a possible genocide. Sudan's army has been fighting the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) for more than a year, in a civil war that has killed thousands and forced millions from their homes. El-Fasher is the last major urban centre in Darfur that remains in the hands of Sudan's army. The security council has called for "an immediate halt to the fighting" and withdrawal of all troops from the city. What is going on in Sudan? A simple guide Evidence of Iran and UAE drones used in Sudan war Key Sudanese city could fall to rebels imminently - US The 15-member council on Thursday adopted a British-drafted resolution, with 14 votes in favour, while Russia abstained. It expressed "grave concern" at the spreading violence and credible reports that the RSF are carrying out "ethnically motivated violence" in el-Fasher. In a statement, the council called on the rival forces to "seek an immediate cessation of hostilities, leading to a sustainable resolution to the conflict, through dialogue". The resolution called on all parties to allow civilians who wish to leave el-Fasher to do so and remove obstacles to humanitarian access. Britain's UN envoy Barbara Woodward told the council that "an attack on the city would be catastrophic for the 1.5 million people sheltering in the city". "This council has sent a strong signal to the parties to the conflict today. This brutal and unjust conflict needs to end," she added.—APP

## Masood urges greater US investment to boost ties

## WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, has called for greater American investment in Pakistan and more trade between the two countries in an effort to further strengthen their relations. Speaking at the World Affairs Council in Philadelphia, he urged US businesses to increase their investment portfolios, especially in tech-startups, renewable energy, agriculture and extractive industries. "Pakistan is a big market for American manufacturers," the ambassador told a gathering of scholars, policy-makers, legislators, entrepreneurs, business leaders and professionals. "If you manufacture state-of-the-art products, you have 240 million consumers in Pakistan," he said. In his remarks, Ambassador Masood Khan dealt with Pak-US relations, war on terror, re-calibration of their bilateral ties in the post-withdrawal period, Pakistan-India relations and the issues of regional stability. In this regard, he focused on the existing

investment and trade opportunities between the two countries that provided new sinews to the relationship. Tracing the roots of Pak-US relations, especially the US support during the initial days of Pakistan and the robust partnership of the two countries both in times of war and peace, the Ambassador presented a holistic view of the ties spanning over seven decades, saying the two countries are now investing in people-centric diplomacy. "We have a big human capital and it is growing. Pakistan is digitally connected with the rest of the world and it is tech savvy, with hundreds of institutions which are investing in future technologies," he said. On counter-terrorism cooperation, Masood Khan said, "We collaborated and together we broke the back of terrorist organizations. Al-Qaeda is not where it was in 2001-02. There is awareness all around the world about the asymmetric threat of terrorism to international civilization and how to tackle it," he said. In late 2021 and early 2022, he said, the leadership of Pakistan and the United States reset their relationship, deciding that "while we will continue our

cooperation in countering terrorism, promoting regional stability, maintaining a dialogue, we would like to secure the region from any nuclear instability and so on." "At the same time, he said they began working to strengthen their economic partnership. "And we have been succeeding in the areas of trade and investment, renewable energy, green technologies, combating climate change, health care, education and others." When I came here in 2022, the number of Pakistani students in American universities was 7,000. Now it is more than 10,000," he said. In this regard, he also referred to the renewal of the agreement between the two countries for cooperation in science and technology. About Pakistan's relations with China, the Ambassador reiterated that its relations with China were not at the expense of its ties with the United States. Referring to the historic role played by Pakistan in bringing China and US closer to each other in the early 70s, he said that Pakistan was willing to play the role of an economic bridge between the two countries.

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**Briefs**

**US SC lifts ban on gun bump stocks**

WASHINGTON: The US Supreme Court has lifted a ban on gun bump stocks, the rapid-fire gun accessory used in America's deadliest mass shooting. In a decision on Friday, the court said the government did not have the right to ban the accessories. The Trump administration banned bump stocks after they were used in a shooting that killed almost 60 people at a concert in Las Vegas in 2017.

But a Texas gun shop owner who challenged the ban said the government went too far in defining the accessories as machine guns, which are illegal under federal law, and took his fight all the way to America's highest court. The court said a semi-automatic rifle with an attachment does not qualify as a machine gun under federal law.

The Supreme Court's opinion, written by conservative Justice Clarence Thomas, said the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms had "exceeded" its authority.

The court, quoting part of the legal definition of machine guns, said rifles with a bump stock "cannot fire more than one shot 'by a single function of the trigger', and even if they could, they would not do so 'automatically'". The split decision saw three of the nine justices dissent - they were Justices Ketanji Brown Jackson, Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor. Justice Sotomayor said: "Today, the Court puts bump stocks back in civilian hands." - Agencies

**Anchorperson Imran Riaz released**

COURT REPORTER

LAHORE: YouTuber and anchorperson Imran Riaz has been released following a court order that discharged him from charges of interference in official duties. Imran Riaz's lawyer, Mian Ali Ashfaq, confirmed the news on his official X (formerly Twitter) account. Media reports indicate that on May 29, Chief Justice of Islamabad High Court, Justice Aamer Farooq, allowed Imran Riaz to perform Hajj. However, despite the court's permission, he was barred from travelling to Saudi Arabia for Hajj on June 3 and had to return home, stating his intent to seek court intervention again.

On June 12, the Islamabad High Court once more permitted Imran Riaz to proceed with Hajj. Yet, on the same day, he was arrested at Lahore Airport, clad in ihram, just as he was about to depart. A case under Section 406 for breach of trust was filed against him, but the Model Town Court in Lahore dismissed these charges on June 13. Nonetheless, he was rearrested in connection with another case. This time, Imran Riaz was accused in a case registered at Sarwar Road Police Station in Lahore for allegedly interfering with official duties by forcibly driving his vehicle through an airport checkpoint, damaging a barrier.

**Sudan's army killed RSF commander**

KHARTOUM: Sudan's army said on Friday it had killed Ali Yagoub Gibril, a senior commander for the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) who was under US sanctions, during a battle in the besieged north Darfur city of Al-Fashir. There was no immediate comment from the RSF. Gibril was a leading commander for the RSF in Al-Fashir, the last major city in the Darfur region of Sudan that the paramilitary force does not control. The army said in a statement Yagoub was killed as an RSF attack was thwarted early on Friday by its troops and allied "joint forces" fighting alongside it - a reference to non-Arab former rebel groups from Darfur that are aligned with the army. The RSF has been besieging Al-Fashir, a city of 1.8 million people, for weeks and top UN officials have warned that the worsening conflict there could trigger widespread intercommunal violence. - Agencies

**ASEAN movie night at the Indonesian embassy**

Creative Economy as Means for Managing Diversity



DINA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, in collaboration with the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI) organized an ASEAN Movie Night event featuring the award-winning Indonesian film "Ngeri-NgeriSedap" (Missing Home,

red), directed by the Indonesian Producer Bene Dion Rajagukguk. The event was a delightful fusion of cinema and cuisine, celebrating the rich cultural ties and immense similarities between Indonesia and Pakistan. On this occasion, the Indonesia Chargé d' Affaires (CDA) Mr. RahmatHindiarta in his welcoming remarks apprised the distinguished guests from diplomatic and Pakistani community

that the ASEAN Movie Night reflects the spirit of continuously bolstering friendship among ASEAN family members. "Moreover, I also wish to transfer the spirit of friendship among us to our brothers and sisters in Pakistan and beyond," he said. The Indonesian CDA also called Pakistani film makers to 'Look East' for further exploring potentials of creative economy in Indonesia and ASEAN region.

Elaborating the huge economic potential of Indonesian creative industry he said, "The film industry is currently the fastest-growing sub-sector of Indonesia's creative economy. The number of moviegoers in the country were more than 55 million in 2023. And in 2023, the local film industry in Indonesia set a new record with 20 movies, attracting over 1 million viewers each. In recent years, the film and entertainment industry in ASEAN countries, have experienced robust growth."

The event commenced by screening the video on ASEAN Summit 2023 held in the enchanting paradise of Labuan Bajo as one of Indonesian ten new Balis followed by the screening of Indonesian movie that provided a cinematic treat showcasing Indonesia's perfect blend of humor, mutual respect, ideal parenting, local wisdom and morality, cultural richness, and beauty of the natural landscape.

Released in 2022, "Ngeri-NgeriSedap" is a comedy film that tells the story of an elderly couple from the Batak tribal family in Toba Lake, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Known for their rich customs and social structure, the Batak community places a strong emphasis on patriarchal hierarchy and respect for elders. The film portrays the couple's three sons who have left home to pursue their careers far away from their village. In a humorous twist, the parents pretend to divorce to compel their sons to return home. The movie is picturized in the breathtaking backdrop of Lake Toba—the largest volcanic lake in the world, recognized as a UNESCO Global Geopark since 2020. The audience also savoured a variety of mouth-watering Indonesian dishes, including bakso (meatball soup), chicken satay (sweet saucy BBQ), onde-onde (glutinous rice balls dessert), and much more on this occasion. After the movie, all the guests received goodie bags from Indomie, the world's largest instant noodle brand, which manufactures in Faisalabad with the flavors tailored to the Pakistani market.

**Hamas demands end to Gaza siege in peace deal**

Israel committed 3,300 massacres in Gaza since Oct

NEWS DESK

DOHA: Hamas has demanded the lifting of Israeli siege of Gaza and a full withdrawal of its troops from the territory as apart of the initial stage of a ceasefire proposal, a report says. The amendments submitted by Hamas to Egyptian and Qatari mediators earlier this week includes an end to the crippling blockade imposed on Gaza since 2007, London-based Middle East Eye said. Hamas also demanded that Israeli troops fully withdraw from the entire Gaza Strip in the first phase of the ceasefire, including the Rafah crossing and the 14 km-long corridor along the territory's border with Egypt, known as the

Philadelphia Corridor by the Israeli military. The movement further omitted a clause that would allow Israel to dictate which prisoners could be released, and removed restrictions that Palestinians serving over 15 years could be freed as part of the deal, the report said.

In addition, Hamas asked that Russia, China and Turkey would serve as guarantors of the deal. The initial proposal backed by Israel and the US listed Egypt, Qatar and the US as guarantors. On Thursday, a top Hamas official said the movement demanded that it also be allowed to select a list of 100 Palestinian captives with long-term sentences that would be released from Israeli jails. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Wednesday considered some of the amendments proposed by Hamas as unworkable. Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7 after the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas mounted the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying entity in response to the Israeli regime's decades-long campaign of bloodletting and devastation against Palestinians. Since the start of the offensive, the Tel Aviv regime has killed about 37,300 Palestinians. The three-phase deal proposed by the US calls for an initial six-week truce in Gaza that will be followed by negotiations on a permanent ceasefire. But Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders have said that they do not intend to stop the war until Hamas has been destroyed.

**French left forms 'popular front' to fight far right**

WEB DESK

PARIS: France's left-wing political parties say they have united to form a "new popular front" to go head to head with the far right in snap parliamentary elections at the end of this month. President Emmanuel Macron called the two-round vote after the anti-immigration National Rally (RN) of Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella won a resounding victory in European elections last Sunday. The latest opinion poll puts RN on 32% of the vote in the first round on 30 June and the left-wing alliance on 25%, squeezing Mr Macron's Renew into third with 19%. That has prompted each to claim it will form a "block" to prevent the others winning power in the National Assembly. With little more than two weeks left before French voters go to the polls, the pace of campaigning has been frenetic and the main three groups have launched direct attacks on their rivals. France's fragmented political landscape and two-round system encourage alliances, which is why the Socialists have agreed to join forces with the Greens, Communists

*France's fragmented political landscape and two-round system encourage alliances*

and France Unbowed, the far-left party of Jean-Luc Mélenchon. The former presidential candidate has alienated many voters on the left by focusing on criticising Israel over the war in Gaza, and his party trailed the Socialists under Raphaël Glucksmann in last Sunday's elections. However Mr Glucksmann decided the risk of letting down his centre-left voters was worth taking. "The only thing that matters to me is that the National Rally doesn't win the elections and won't govern the country," he told France Inter radio, adding that Jean-Luc Mélenchon would not lead a left-wing movement. "We can't leave France to the Le Pen family," he said. While Marine Le Pen leads the parliamentary party, she now has the backing of her niece Marion Maréchal who has been thrown out of a rival far-right party for calling on voters to vote for National Rally.

**Poll shows Qalibaf ahead in Iranian election race**

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: As the countdown begins for the June 28 snap presidential election, voters in the Islamic Republic of Iran are weighing their options to exercise their franchise in favor of the most competent candidate. According to the latest "poll of polls," Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, the speaker of the Iranian parliament and a veteran politician, is significantly ahead of other contenders in the race. Released on Thursday, the opinion poll, an interview-based pre-election field survey conducted by independent agencies, shows Qalibaf holding an edge over other hopefuls. Saeed Jalili, the former nuclear negotiator and head of the country's top security body, trails behind in second place. The survey, conducted on June 11, 12, and 13, included participants from Tehran, various other provinces, provincial capitals, and selected villages. All respondents were over the age of 18. In the first survey, among those who said they would definitely cast their ballots on June 28, 22

percent indicated they would vote for Qalibaf. Jalili is the second favorite, with 19.2 percent respondents saying they would vote for him. Masoud Pezeshkian, a senior lawmaker and former health minister, is next on the list, with 9.8 percent backing the parliamentarian from northwestern Iran. Amir-Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi, the former lawmaker and current head of the foundation for martyrs, followed with 3.1 percent respondents inclined to vote for him. Alireza Zakani, the Mayor of Tehran and former lawmaker, and Mostafa Pourmohammadi, the former minister of interior affairs, both received support from 1.1 percent respondents of the survey. A total of 41.7 percent of respondents were still undecided about their choice. In another survey among those who said they would definitely or probably vote on June 28, Qalibaf again emerged as a clear favorite, with 20.5 percent support. Jalili followed with 15.4 percent, and Pezeshkian was third with 12.1 percent. Hashemi's support remained unchanged at 3.1 percent. Zakani and Pourmohammadi received 1.9 percent and 1.1 percent, respectively.

**G7 agrees \$50bn loan for Ukraine from Russian assets**

FOREIGN DESK

ROME: The G7 has agreed to use frozen Russian assets to raise \$50bn (£39bn) for Ukraine to help it fight invading Russian forces. US President Joe Biden said it was another reminder to Russia "that we're not backing down", but in Moscow President Vladimir Putin said the move was "theft" which would "not go unpunished". Also at the G7 summit in Italy, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Mr Biden signed a 10-year bilateral security deal between Ukraine and the US, hailed by Kyiv as "historic". The agreement envisages US military and training aid to Ukraine - but it does not commit Washington to send troops to fight for its ally. According to the White House, the security deal means Washington and Kyiv will work to build and maintain Ukraine's defence and deterrence capability, bolster the country's defence industrial base, and support economic recovery and energy security. The security deal also means that in the event of a future Russian armed attack against Ukraine, there will be consultation "at the highest levels to determine appropriate and necessary measures to support Ukraine and impose costs on Russia", the statement added. Separately, some \$325bn worth of assets were frozen by the G7, alongside the EU, following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The pot of assets is generating about \$3bn a year in interest. Under the G7 plan, that \$3bn will be used to pay off the annual interest on the \$50bn loan for the Ukrainians, taken out on the international markets. The money is not expected to arrive until the end of the year but is seen as a longer-term solution to support Ukraine's war effort and economy.

**Putin lays out his terms for ceasefire in Ukraine**

MOSCOW: Vladimir Putin has said Ukraine would need to fully withdraw troops from territories Russia claims to have annexed before a ceasefire could begin - a proposal Ukraine immediately called "offensive to common sense". Its President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, has long said Ukraine will not negotiate with Moscow until Russian forces leave all Ukrainian territory, including Crimea. The Russian president also said Ukraine would have to give up on joining Nato before peace talks could start. Mr Putin's statement setting out his ceasefire conditions comes as leaders from 90 countries prepare to meet in Switzerland on Saturday to discuss paths towards peace in Ukraine - a summit Russia has not been invited to. Speaking to a meeting of Russian ambassadors in Moscow on Friday, Mr Putin called on the Ukrainian government to withdraw from four regions partially occupied by Russia - Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia. He also said Ukraine would need to officially give up in its efforts to join the Nato military alliance for the Russian advance to be halted. Mr Putin said: "As soon as Kyiv declares that it is ready for such a decision... an order to cease fire and begin negotiations will immediately follow from our side, literally at the same minute." Ukrainian presidential advisor Mykhailo Podolyak called the proposal a "complete sham" and "offensive to common sense". - Agencies

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