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Philippines not in business of instigating wars: President Marcos

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Shazia Marri demands relief for masses

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Richardson punches ticket to Paris Olympics

Detailed News On Page-06

Ruckus mars NA session

Mixed reaction over military operation against militancy

Asif says PTI stands with terrorists; Gohar objects, says parliament not taken into confidence on "Azm-e-Istehkam"

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: A turbulent National Assembly session took place on Sunday as the government and opposition remained divided over a new military operation, Azm-e-Istehkam, to root out militancy. The lawmakers from the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) said that they weren't taken into confidence over the operation, while the government assured them that their concerns would be addressed. The lower house session, which is currently discussing the budget but went off track to exchange views over the operation, saw a ruckus ensued from the opposition benches. The PTI staged a walkout from the session for an hour and returned later, following which their leaders addressed the National Assembly, while they also chanted slogans, including "end the operation", and "we want peace". The Shehbaz Sharif-led government had Saturday announced the fresh counter-terrorism operation, pledging to utilise the full strength of the country's resources, including military, diplomatic, and legislative, to turn the heat up on militants. The Central Apex Committee on National Action Plan (NAP) gave the approval for the operation, in which top officials of all provinces were present, including PTI-backed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. The move comes as the country has witnessed a significant surge in terrorist attacks in recent months resulting in scores of both civilian and security forces' casualties. Pakistan has time and again called on Afghanistan's Taliban-led administration to prevent its soil from being used by various terrorist

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Govt green lights deployment of FC in AJK

Six FC platoons, deployed in AJK for a period of three months, will provide security for hydro-power projects

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The federal government Sunday approved the deployment of Frontier Constabulary (FC) in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in response to the state's request aimed at improving the security situation. The development came after AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq met Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Islamabad. During the meeting, the two mulled over the law and order situation as well as the prevailing political landscape along with the AJK government's budget for the next fiscal year.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding law & order and security projects in Islamabad. - DNA

Monsoon rains Punjab on high alert

Punjab to experience rains 35% above normal; PMDA issues warning of urban flooding, hill torrents in southern Punjab

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Punjab Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has issued an alert regarding the upcoming monsoon rains, forecasting an increase of 35% above normal levels. All provincial administrations were notified on Sunday to prepare for the heightened rainfall. According to the PDMA, the monsoon season is set to begin on July 1 in Punjab, with 15 to 50 mm of rain expected in the first week.

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PM Shehbaz warns No tolerance for negligence in maintaining peace

The Prime Minister said any kind of negligence in maintaining law and order and protecting citizens will not be tolerated. He directed to hold inquiry into delay in completion of Islamabad Model Jail

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif says the protection of Pakistani citizens and foreigners in Pakistan is among the top priorities of the state. He was chairing a meeting in Lahore today regarding law and order and security projects in Islamabad. The forum was briefed regarding the current law and order situation in Islamabad and Islamabad Model Jail, Islamabad Safe City, Federal Anti-Terrorism Department and Special Protection Unit. It was also briefed regarding Islamabad National

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PM's recent visit to China highly significant: Ahsan

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal said that the recent visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to China was termed highly

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Briefs

Mushtaq condemns atrocities in Palestine

He also paid tributes to the Gaza March volunteers

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushtaq Ahmed on Sunday condemned the ongoing atrocities in Palestine, stating that over 16,000 children have been martyred, 70,000 children were displaced and \$33 billion property was destroyed in Gaza during the past over eight months. Addressing a press conference here, he emphasized that these atrocities have no parallel in the world. He lamented the UN's failure and the international community's silence over Palestinians genocide.

T20WC: England qualify for semi-final

Jos Buttler cruised his side to victory in 9.4 overs during the chase

SPORTS DESK

KENSINGTON: England became the first team to qualify for the T20 World Cup 2024 semi-final after a 10-wicket win against the United States in their last Super 8 clash which was played at the Kensington Oval, Barbados on Sunday. Jos Buttler and Phil Salt chased down the 116-run target in just 9.4 overs without losing a single as all the USA bowlers were taken to the cleaners by the English duo. Buttler scored 83 off just 38 deliveries with the help of six fours and seven sixes, including five maximums in a row to USA's Harmeet Singh in the ninth over.

Budget passage

PML-N, PPP strike deal on administrative roles

Breakthrough comes after an intense negotiation session attended by key figures from both parties

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led federal government acceded on Sunday to all the demands put forward by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) over governance issues in Punjab and Budget 2024-25. The decision was made during a meeting between the negotiation committees of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and PPP held in Islamabad. The PPP had aired its grievances regarding the distribution of development funds and administrative appointments in Punjab, which the government has now agreed to address. The breakthrough came after an intense negotiation session attended by key figures from both parties. The PPP delegation included Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Ali Haider Gilani, Nadeem Afzal Chan, and Hasan Murtaza, while the PML-N was

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Aseefa calls for unity and relief

PPP MNA slams current economic situation in Pakistan, highlighting record-high inflation and unemployment

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Aseefa Bhutto-Zardari, daughter of President Asif Ali Zardari and sister of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, has criticised the current economic situation in

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Israeli air strike on UNRWA aid centre

The main gate of the compound, facilitating aid distribution and housing the displaced, was hit in the attack

AGENCIES

GAZA: At least four people have been killed in an Israeli air attack near an aid centre that was the main headquarters of the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) in the Gaza Strip. The air strike on Sunday hit the main gate of the organisation's compound in Gaza City in the north of the enclave, injuring multiple Palestinians. The facility is used to distribute

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Iran to designate Canadian army as a terrorist entity

The Iranian legislature further noted that the Canadian government is a staunch supporter of the criminal and child-killing Tel Aviv regime

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iranian lawmakers have roundly denounced the Canadian government's decision to blacklist the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), demanding a countermeasure against the North American country's armed forces. On Sunday, a group of 250 Iranian legislators introduced a motion that requires the administration to designate the Canadian Army and federal police forces as terrorist organizations. They expressed their strong support for the IRGC and hailed its defense of Iran's

national security and territorial integrity in the years following the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The lawmakers also praised the IRGC for its support of oppressed nations in the West Asia region, particularly Palestinians, and its leading role in confronting the criminal Zionist regime. They described the IRGC as a thorn in the side of the Muslim world's enemies, especially Israel and its sponsors. The Iranian legislature further noted that the Canadian government is a staunch supporter of the criminal and child-killing Tel Aviv regime, emphasizing that its blacklisting of the IRGC is in violation of all international law and regulations, and exposes Ottawa's backing for the Zionist entity. The parliamentarians finally called on the Iranian Foreign Ministry to utilize all political and international means to denounce Canada's measure.

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Chinese concerns about CPEC: some musings

Chinese investments in Pakistan's media, both in cash and kind, seem to have proven counterproductive. Mainstream media houses that are not beneficiaries of these investments often express their frustration through reports that may not always be unfounded but are invariably negative from the Chinese perspective

COMMENT

ANSAR M BHATTI

MINISTER of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC), Liu Jianchao, last week acknowledged the support provided by Pakistan's armed forces in ensuring the security of Chinese nationals and development projects in Pakistan. However, he expressed serious concerns about the ongoing attacks on Chinese nationals, stating that the security situation in Pakistan remains a major issue for Chinese investors. The minister also emphasized the critical need for political stability in Pakistan and underscored the importance of achieving political consensus to help the country navigate its current crises. The minister said, "In a turbulent world of rising uncertainties, stability within the country is essential for development. Faced with complex internal and external challenges, Pakistan is navigating carefully through turbulent rivers." The security of Chinese nationals working on various projects in Pakistan has been a consistent concern for both Chinese authorities and the Pakistani security establishment. Since the launch of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2013, numerous Chinese nationals have been killed,



particularly in Balochistan province, which is the focal point of CPEC activities. Minister Liu's statements about the security situation, made in front of representatives from all major political parties, are highly significant. Such statements are typically not made publicly, suggesting that if a high-level Chinese dignitary chose this prestigious gathering to voice concerns, it indicates that all back-channel options have likely been exhausted. It is now widely known that during the recent visit of Pakistan's Prime Minister and Army Chief to China, similar concerns were expressed emphatically. To improve political stability in Pakistan, it's important to understand that genuine political stability is crucial for addressing security concerns effectively. Political divides provide opportunities for miscreants to carry out subversive acts. China is likely aware of this, which is why their minister has called for political stability. The question, then, is how to achieve this stability. The most viable way to achieve political stability is through free and fair elections, allowing the legitimate winners to govern. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, free and fair elections have often been elusive. Winning parties are frequently prevented from taking charge, damaging the democratic order in the country. The Chinese minister rightly pointed out that China wants to work with all political parties in Pakistan, a rational approach. However, China's apparent preference for the PML-N over the PPP or PTI has been a source of concern for other political parties. Right or wrong, this inclination gives the impression that China feels more comfortable with

PML-N governments, which complicates the political landscape in Pakistan. In 2018, when the Nawaz Sharif-led PML-N government was dislodged to bring in the PTI, spearheaded by Imran Khan, China did not welcome the change, fearing it might impact the well-being of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects. In this context, it took almost a month or more for the Chinese ambassador in Pakistan to call on the then Prime Minister Imran Khan and congratulate him on his election. The delayed Chinese response was not well received within the ranks of the PTI, which had always viewed the CPEC projects with skepticism. During the PTI government, work on all CPEC projects was halted mainly because the government ordered a thorough audit of the projects, suspecting large-scale corruption. Although China did not have a role in the removal of the PTI government, the incoming PDM government was seen as a positive development in terms of reviving the CPEC projects. Minister Liu also mentioned the 'negative' role of certain media outlets, accusing them of spreading 'false' information about the CPEC. While the minister may have grounds for his claim, it is crucial for the Chinese leadership to review and reassess their media policy. Problems arise when a one-sided media approach is adopted in dealing with the Pakistani media. Often, media officers in the embassy are unavailable, or their ranks are too junior to effectively interact with senior Pakistani journalists. This lack of coordination seems to be the primary source of the dissemination of misinformation whatsoever. Most importantly,

Chinese investments in Pakistan's media, both in cash and kind, seem to have proven counterproductive. Mainstream media houses that are not beneficiaries of these investments often express their frustration through reports that may not always be unfounded but are invariably negative from the Chinese perspective. The Chinese government should reconsider its policy of financially assisting media houses directly or indirectly. This approach either needs to be eliminated or rationalized to ensure balanced and unbiased coverage. Apart from media problems, another phenomenon that has adversely affected China's image happens to be the "think-tank syndrome." Since the launch of the CPEC project, there has been a mushroom growth of one-man or one-woman think tanks. Hefty sums are allocated to these think tanks, mostly run by pseudo-intellectuals. China needs to engage with genuine and reputable think tanks, which are abundant in Pakistan. This will certainly help augment efforts to strengthen the CPEC projects. CPEC undoubtedly holds immense benefits and opportunities for both Pakistan and China. It has ushered in an era of significant infrastructural development in Pakistan. The project, therefore, must be protected, supported, and strengthened. A partnership with China can bring about a revolution in Pakistan. Islamabad must address the genuine security concerns expressed by the Chinese minister. Similarly, the Chinese side should reconsider its policies, particularly in the areas mentioned above, to make this collaboration durable, trusted, and mutually beneficial.

- The writer is the newspaper Editor

Briefs

Budget combination of assumptions, contradictions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, said on Friday that the Federal Budget combines assumptions, expectations, and contradictions. He said it would be impossible to achieve the goals set in the budget, and the budget would not lead to economic development, but the economy would shrink further. Dr. Hanif Mughal said that the rich class has been spared, while the poor and middle class have been targeted in the budget, which will further reduce their purchasing power and affect production. He added that the IMF always insists on taxation but does not call for reductions in government spending, which is reprehensible. In a statement issued here, Dr. Hanif Mughal said that the government wants to increase the growth rate to 3.6 percent, but with the steps being taken, it will be impossible to achieve a growth rate of 2 percent. The policymakers are repeating the mistake of considering enhanced taxation on the masses as the resolution of the problem. By increasing the salaried class tax, it is claimed that the government will receive 85 billion rupees more from them, but in reality, they will receive about 150 billion rupees more. Imposing sales tax on goods and medicines, etc., will further reduce the purchasing power of the people, which will result in reduced demand and production. Increasing the federal excise duty on cement will affect construction activities and reduce employment opportunities. He said five percent of federal excise duty has been levied on the sale of property, which is illegal, and the courts will overturn it. Dr. Hanif Mughal said that instead of this unconstitutional decision, it would have been better if the sale and purchase of files in the property sector had been brought under the tax as the imposition of capital gains tax on the non-filers working in the property sector would not help the government improve tax collection. Tax on inherited property has also been increased, which is regrettable. Making cars and stationery more expensive will also affect the middle class and the economy.

HEC signs contract to automate Pak universities with TMC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) via its Higher Education Development Programme in Pakistan (HEDP) held a contract signing ceremony where key personnel and leadership of HEC and Tally Marks Consulting (TMC) were present. The signing ceremony represents a significant milestone for Pakistan's higher education sector, said a press release. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) receiving state-of-the-art Student Lifecycle Systems (SLC) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) will completely digitise their administrative, accounting, operations, and end-to-end student lifecycle processes from admission to degree completion. All the leading universities of the world have already adopted these systems and this activity marks HEC's commitment as well as investment to implement the same in Pakistani HEIs. The systems enhance efficiency, and transparency and promptly provide key higher education data for decision making. At the signing ceremony Chairman HEC Dr Mukhtar Ahmed, Executive Director HEC Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum, MD TMC Abdul Haseeb, and Partner Director SAP Amir Shah were present among other senior officials of HEC, HEDP, TMC and SAP. Speaking at the occasion, Dr Mukhtar Ahmed said, "We are now one team and it's a great collaboration that will increase the quality of education for all in Pakistan. There are 260 plus HEIs in line to be digitized and this signing ceremony is the starting point of a fully digitized education system in Pakistan."



ISLAMABAD: Motorcyclist passing through a huge portrayal at Rawal Chowk in the Federal Capital.—ONLINE

APNS, PBA urge withdrawal of tax amendment on advertising costs

In separate letters sent to the Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aurangzeb, both entities emphasised that members of PBA and APNS are already facing severe hardships due to the contraction of the documented economy, lack of innovation, and overall lacklustre economic growth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) and Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA) urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Saturday to withdraw the proposed amendment regarding the disallowance of sales promotion and advertising costs in the Finance Bill 2024-25. In separate letters sent to the Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aurangzeb, both entities emphasised that members of PBA and APNS are already facing severe hardships due to the contraction of the document-

ed economy, lack of innovation, and overall lacklustre economic growth. They added that due to an amendment in the recent finance bill, sales promotion and advertising expenses, up to 25% of a company's total, will not be available for adjustment in the income tax return. "In other words, the tax liability of the large multinational companies will increase significantly, moreover, the additional tax liability will attract super tax," read the letters. Both entities added: "The effective tax they pay is already the highest in the region and this bar on claiming sales and promotion and advertisement will add fuel to the fire

and make us further less attractive, from a foreign direct investment perspective." They said the APNS and PBA were aware of the challenges being faced by the government and therefore supported it in its efforts to document the economy and highlight the positive steps being taken by all stakeholders. "We are also cognisant that the economic slowdown is unavoidable and requires patience and resilience from every section of society, which includes our members, their staff and workers and we continue to highlight positivity," the letters mentioned. The media and press bodies emphasised that their members were under constant pressure, had

reached a threshold, and could not face a further decline in our business. "The consequence of further decline means unemployment due to closure of small media channels and newspapers and its eventual negative impact on the overall community," read the letter. While both APNS and PBA commit to stand on the frontline with the state and government, despite the challenges they are facing, they expect that rationale will prevail. "The curb on a claim of sales and promotion and advertisement will have a huge impact on our members. Our customers, the multinationals are already walking on thin ice, when compared to the opportunities in other regional

countries and keeping them engaged is the responsibility of all of us. "Those who stayed with us for last many decades should not be punished, for short term gains by increasing their cost of doing business and adopting knee jerk measures to collect revenue, which is not sustainable and in the longer run will impact the documented economy," they said in the letter. The press and media bodies insisted that the proposed change is "also very weak, neither the intent of global best practices were considered, nor the local environment has been evaluated". "Additionally, it will discourage any future Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Pakistan."

Devcom-Pakistan launches 'Mansoor Rahi cubism award'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mansoor Rahi, a celebrated Cubist artist from Pakistan whose recent passing left an indelible mark on the global art landscape, was honored by his disciples of the Generation Rahi at a memorial event held on Saturday. To commemorate his legacy and contributions to the world of art, Devcom-Pakistan announced the launch of the Mansoor Rahi Cubism Award on the occasion. An open competition will be announced soon in collaboration with the Rahi General and other art galleries and organizations. Speaking at the Reference in memory of Mansoor Rahi, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said: Rahi was the only Pakistani artist widely recognized for his significant work in Cubism art, a genre that he not only mastered but also imparted to countless aspiring artists

who became known collectively as the Generation Rahi. His influence extended far beyond Pakistan, influencing the international art community with his unique artistic vision and technique. The memorial event, attended by prominent figures from the art world, served as a tribute to Rahi's life and career, highlighting his impact on contemporary art practices. Devcom-Pakistan, a leading national voluntary organization committed to promoting cultural and artistic endeavors, took the opportunity to announce the establishment of the Mansoor Rahi Cubism Award. This prestigious award aims to recognize and encourage excellence in Cubism in Pakistan, celebrating artists who demonstrate innovation, creativity, and a commitment to pushing artistic boundaries, much like Mansoor Rahi did throughout his illustrious career. Munir Ahmed said the Man-

soor Rahi Cubism Award will be a symbol of honor and inspiration for artists dedicated to the Cubist tradition, fostering a spirit of creativity and innovation in the art community. The award will be another feather in the Devcom-Pakistan cap that is a non-profit voluntary organization dedicated to fostering cultural, social, environmental, and economic development through various initiatives in Pakistan. Through partnerships and collaborative efforts, Devcom-Pakistan aims to promote sustainable development and cultural diversity in the region. Hajra Mansoor appreciated the Generation Rahi for organizing the reference in memory of his late legendary artist husband, and also appreciated the announcement of the Mansoor Rahi Cubism Award by Devcom-Pakistan. Hajra Mansoor said: "I am deeply touched and grateful to Devcom-Pakistan for honoring my late husband,

Mansoor Rahi, with the establishment of the Mansoor Rahi Cubism Award. This award will not only celebrate his artistic legacy but also inspire future generations of artists. The launch of the Mansoor Rahi Cubism Award is a fitting tribute to Mansoor's lifelong dedication to the art of Cubism. It is heartwarming to see his influence continuing to shape the artistic landscape, both in Pakistan and beyond." "As Mansoor Rahi's wife and lifelong supporter of his artistic journey, I am moved by the recognition bestowed upon him through this prestigious award. I believe it will encourage artists to explore and innovate within the Cubist tradition, just as Mansoor did. This award embodies Mansoor Rahi's passion for artistic exploration and innovation. I am optimistic that it will encourage emerging artists to push boundaries and contribute meaningfully to the evolution of Cubism."

Budget measures are in line with IMF guidelines

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Saturday that some conditions of the IMF have yet to be fulfilled in the recent budget. He said that in contrast, most of the budget proposals are as per the instructions of the IMF. He said that honouring commitments with the IMF will help Pakistan secure new loans to keep the country afloat.

Mian Zahid Hussain said allocating 1400 billion rupees for developmental projects in these difficult circumstances is a miracle. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that electricity could be made cheaper by Rs10 per unit for the industrial sector by a 200 billion rupees cut in development projects. The affordable electricity will increase exports by five billion dollars, increase employment, and provide relief to people, but it seems difficult. The business leader said that last year, 950 billion rupees were earmarked for development projects, of which only 379 billion rupees could be

spent till May. The budget is too focused on indirect taxes, which will increase poverty while reducing government expenditure, which should be addressed. There has yet to be a concrete plan to eliminate the losses of 1200 billion rupees per year from the power sector. Besides, the privatization of 80 government institutions, which incur losses of 1200 billion rupees annually, must be done immediately. In both terms, 2400 billion rupees can be saved annually, which makes it possible to save seven and a half billion dollars in government expenses. He said that in the total budget of 18 thousand billion rupees, a deficit of 9

thousand billion rupees has been shown, which is half of the total budget. This deficit will be covered by taking more loans from various sources. Nine thousand billion rupees interest will have to be paid on government loans this year and 10 thousand billion rupees next year. To avoid this situation, there is no alternative but privatization and an increased tax base. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the industries of former Fata, Pata and other parts of the country are being given incentives of more than 200 billion rupees. At the same time, there are several incentives, that violate the promises made to the IMF.

IMF not satisfied with budget measures

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Sunday that many conditions of the IMF have not been fulfilled in the recent budget, due to which the acquisition of new loans may be in danger. He said that allocating 1400 billion rupees to the developmental schemes is tantamount to cruelty to the people. Relief could have been given to the people by cutting unnecessary development projects, but this will not be done due to political reasons. Talking to the business community Shahid Rasheed Butt said that last year, 950 billion rupees were earmarked for development projects, of which not even half could be spent. Still, Rs 1400 billion has been allocated this year to reward the favourite politicians, businessmen, and bureaucrats. Direct taxes have been given excessive importance, which will increase poverty and misery, while the reduction in government expenditure has been neglected, and expenditure has been increased massively. Politically motivated development projects will reduce government revenue, which will not be acceptable to the IMF, he observed. Several hundreds of billions of rupees of concessions have been given to industries, which clearly violates the commitments made to the IMF. New mini-budgets will have to be brought in, increasing the pressure on the people. Big infrastructure projects have always damaged the country's economy, but this remains the weakness of many leading politicians. Politicians should delay spending money on unnecessary projects for two years to improve the country's economic condition, he demanded. Despite the huge inflation increase, keeping those with income up to six lakhs in tax net is excessive. In the current situation, those who earn at least twelve lakh rupees should be exempted from paying taxes.

Major Renovation at Islamabad Model College for Boys I-8/3

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Federal education & Professional Training has initiated a major renovation and development project at the Islamabad Model College for Boys I-8/3. The college staff have expressed their gratitude for these essential improvements, which began at the start of the summer vacation. The project's objective is to enhance the learning environment and overall infrastructure of the college. The renovation includes repainting all classrooms and improving the college's appearance. New rooms are being constructed, and the college auditorium is undergoing extensive refurbishment. Upgrades to the washroom facilities involve new sanitary installations and tiles. A filtration plant is also being installed to provide clean drinking water for both students and staff. A state-of-the-art computer lab with forty advanced computers is being established, along with the creation of seven smart classrooms. Science labs are being outfitted with modern equipment, ensuring students have access to the latest technology and resources. The ministry is also focusing on student health and fitness by adding an infirmary and an open gym. The college library is being transformed into a state-of-the-art facility, offering a comprehensive range of resources for academic needs.—DNA



Talks only way to prevent trade war

Although Vice-Chancellor of Germany and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action Robert Habeck does not represent the European Commission, his three-day visit to China has helped to ease tensions between China and the European Union over the issue to a certain degree. In his packed itinerary that consisted of stops in Beijing, Shanghai and Hangzhou, Habeck not only met with business leaders of both China and Germany, he also had face-to-face meetings with Chinese Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao and Minister of the National Development and Reform Commission Zheng Shanjie in Beijing on Saturday. Habeck's respective meetings with the Chinese commerce chief and head of the country's economic policymaking body have served to reinforce the two sides' consensus on the need to avoid a damaging trade war and produced some concrete bilateral cooperation agreements and projects on trade facilitation, the green economy and energy. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Germany. Both have been beneficiaries of economic globalization, and the two countries' economic interests are deeply intertwined. Both Beijing and Berlin know clearly that cooperation poses no risk, but that decoupling does. Habeck's hosts reaffirmed that China is willing to work with Germany to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation between the two sides' enterprises, create an open and fair competition environment, and inject more positive energy into the healthy and stable development of China-Germany and China-EU economic and trade relations. The productive exchanges during Habeck's visit clearly convey the common pro-free trade stance of the EU's largest economy and the world's second-largest economy, as well as their joint concerns over the dire implications of the European Commission's planned punitive tariffs on Chinese EVs. If implemented, the tariffs will unavoidably plunge the EU and China into a damaging trade war that will actually harm the EU's green transition and consumers' interests, as Habeck said. Beijing's announcement that it is launching an anti-dumping probe into imports of EU pork products indicates that China will resolutely defend its legitimate rights and interests. The EU launched its anti-subsidy investigation on Chinese EVs in October, without any application from member states or the industry. And the details that have been disclosed regarding the investigation clearly indicate that the probe and the resulting planned punitive tariffs violate World Trade Organization rules. By adopting such protectionist measures, the EU aims to suppress the development of Chinese companies, which is doomed to failure, and will not help boost the global competitiveness of the EU's EV companies either. As both China and Germany urge, Brussels should try and resolve its differences with Beijing through dialogue and consultation in good faith. In that sense, it is good to hear that after a video conference between the Chinese commerce chief and Executive Vice-President of European Commission Valdis Dombrovskis on Saturday, the two sides have agreed to launch consultations on the EU's anti-subsidy investigations into Chinese EVs.

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New Delhi must reevaluate direct China flights

Direct passenger flights between China and India have been suspended for four years and have not yet been restored. A media report on Thursday said that several times over the past year or so, China's government and airlines have asked India's civil aviation authorities to re-establish direct air links, but India has shunned the call. The report cited a senior Indian official as saying that "unless there is peace and tranquility on the border, the rest of the relationship cannot move forward." The Times of India reported that India remains hesitant due to ongoing tensions over a border dispute. As the two most populous countries in the world as well as neighbors, not having direct flights is obviously extremely abnormal. At present, India still imposes strict visa restrictions on Chinese citizens. Chinese people applying for business visas are faced with all kinds of difficulties. Most Chinese students admitted to Indian universities fail to obtain Indian visas. Chinese journalists in India have also encountered discriminatory treatment such as rejection of visa renewal applications and forced departure within a time limit. There are no permanent journalists between the two countries and media exchanges have been thwarted. In addition, since India tightened restrictions on investment from China in 2020, about 200 investment applications from Chinese companies are still waiting for approval by the Indian government. The reason why India does this is related to its current complicated mindset toward China. First of all, some Indian politicians insist that "as long as border differences are not resolved, bilateral relations will not return to normal" when handling many specific bilateral affairs, and "border problems" seem to have become a convenient excuse for India to avoid carefully considering the pros and cons of its own interests in specific affairs. Second, some people in India are still obsessed with the idea of "decoupling" from China and have adopted "decoupling" policies in a number of fields. They believe that the more they rid themselves of dependence on and reduce exchanges with China, the better, as if India can develop faster that way. In fact, seeking decoupling from the Chinese economy is neither economical nor realistic, and even less possible. In recent years, China-India trade has grown against this trend, reflecting the genuine needs of both countries. According to Indian statistics, bilateral trade reached \$118.4 billion in the fiscal year 2023-24. A survey report by India's "Business Today" in December last year showed that over half of Indians purchased "Made in China" products during that year. Some Indian scholars admit that bilateral trade is destined to increase. BBC also quoted Indian experts as saying that India's efforts to reduce import dependence on China have failed. There were approximately 1.0674 million trips between the two countries in 2019, and approximately 869,600 Indian citizens entered the Chinese mainland. Whether viewed from an economic perspective or in terms of personnel exchanges, resuming direct flights benefits China, but even more so India.

The complex reality of American exceptionalism

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



This ideology suggests that the U.S. has a mission to spread its values, such as democracy and human rights, around the world. However, this belief often leads to complex ethical and moral dilemmas for U.S. policymakers when they are dealing with global issues

American exceptionalism is a deeply rooted belief that has significantly influenced the way the United States engages with the world. This belief, held by many Americans, posits that the United States has a unique and special role in history and occupies a distinctive position in the global order. This sense of exceptionalism has historically guided U.S. policymakers in their approach to international affairs. American exceptionalism is based on the idea that the United States is fundamentally different from other countries. This ideology suggests that the U.S. has a mission to spread its values, such as democracy and human rights, around the world. However, this belief often leads to complex ethical and moral dilemmas for U.S. policymakers when they are dealing with global issues. One of the main consequences of American exceptionalism is that it sometimes results in actions that prioritize U.S. interests, even when these actions are presented as efforts to promote democracy and human rights. For example, when the United States intervenes in other countries, it often justifies its actions by claiming to support democratic principles. Yet, in reality, these interventions frequently aim to maintain or enhance America's own status and power on the global stage. This contradiction between the stated ideals and the actual actions of the United States can lead to negative perceptions. While the U.S. portrays itself as a global force for good, striv-

ing to uphold and spread democratic values, other countries and international observers often see American actions as self-serving. They perceive the U.S. as more interested in preserving its own influence and status quo rather than genuinely promoting democracy and human rights. This dual nature of American exceptionalism has profound implications for U.S. foreign policy. On one hand, it drives the United States to take active roles in international conflicts and global governance, advocating for democratic values and human rights. On the other hand, it leads to criticism and skepticism about the true motives behind U.S. actions. For instance, when the U.S. engages in military interventions or imposes economic sanctions, it often claims to be acting in the interest of global stability and justice. However, critics argue that such actions are more about securing American geopolitical and economic interests than about altruistic concerns. The idea of American exceptionalism involves a continuous balancing act between how the nation views itself, moral issues, and ethical dilemmas. This concept means that the United States often sees itself as unique or special compared to other countries. However, this self-view brings a lot of responsibilities and challenges, especially for lawmakers. One major challenge is balancing respect for other countries' independence while also promoting democratic values. This is a tough mor-

tal issue because it involves deciding when or if it is right to get involved in other nations' affairs. Lawmakers often struggle with whether it's justified to interfere in other countries and how far they should go in using military power. They must figure out how to reconcile America's global influence and interests with the sovereignty of other nations. When America tries to promote its values worldwide, it can sometimes lead to conflicts. Other countries might see these efforts as a threat to their own political systems and sovereignty. As international relations change and become more complex, new ethical concerns arise. Lawmakers need to constantly rethink their strategies and policies to adapt to these changes. Adapting to the evolving nature of global politics is a continuous challenge for lawmakers. They need to uphold democratic norms while also considering and respecting the diverse perspectives of other countries. Maintaining a balance between exerting American influence and recognizing the independence of other nations is a difficult task in a world that is always changing. American exceptionalism is about how the U.S. views itself and its role in the world. It involves many moral and ethical challenges, especially for those who make the laws. They must carefully navigate the delicate balance between promoting American values and respecting other nations' sovereignty. This task is made even harder by the constantly changing nature of international relations.

Uzbekistan: a focus on promoting reading

Ramzidin Nuridinov

The source of this invincible power is books and libraries – the great invention of mankind". At the present stage, education has become one of the most important areas of state policy. The government of the Republic of Uzbekistan pays special attention to the development of this sphere, recognizing its key role in the prosperity of the country. In recent years, the republic has achieved significant success in the educational domain. These achievements are aimed at modernizing the system, improving the quality of education and training, and expanding access to education for all citizens of the country. At the same time, special attention is paid to the promotion of reading and the fostering of the reading culture of the population. And in the Presidential Decree

Libraries play a key role in education, culture, and community development, providing an invaluable resource for accessing knowledge, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting intellectual growth. In the modern information society, they remain an important institution that promotes the education and self-development of people of all ages. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized during the opening ceremony of the People's Library under the President of the Republic of Turkey in Ankara: "Intellectual potential, high morale is what makes a nation strong. The source of this invincible power is books and libraries – the great invention of mankind". At the present stage, education has become one of the most important areas of state policy. The government of the Republic of Uzbekistan pays special attention to the development of this sphere, recognizing its key role in the prosperity of the country. In recent years, the republic has achieved significant success in the educational domain. These achievements are aimed at modernizing the system, improving the quality of education and training, and expanding access to education for all citizens of the country. At the same time, special attention is paid to the promotion of reading and the fostering of the reading culture of the population. And in the Presidential Decree adopted on September 13, 2017, "On the program of comprehensive measures to develop the system of publishing and distributing book products, improving the culture of reading", clear goals are outlined for the creation of an effective system of information and library services to the population, which served to move this area to a new stage of development and contributed to raising the level of social and information culture and the role of libraries, made it possible to develop and implement modern innovative and educational technologies that increase the competitiveness of Uzbekistan in the world market. In addition, the Presidential Decree "On further improvement of information and library services for the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan" was adopted on June 7, 2019. The main goals of the decree are: • improving the regulatory framework in order to ensure high-quality social guarantees to the population for information and library services; • development of information and library institutions taking into account modern requirements; • promoting the sustainable development of information and library services for the population in the regions; • strengthening the material and technical base of information and library institutions; • development of public-private partnerships in the library sector, a network of private and electronic libraries; • expanding cooperation with Internet resources that specialize in distributing electronic books to improve the efficiency of libraries and the efficiency of servicing (including paid) users; • ensuring the safety of information and library collections as part of the national and world cultural heritage; • formation and enhance-

ment of the information culture of society, sustainable interest in national history and culture, enhancement and promotion of a reading culture; • staffing information and library institutions with qualified specialists. The adoption of this decree expands the range of services in the country, including access to electronic resources and holding cultural and educational events, as well as improving staff qualifications and introducing modern methods of user service. In addition, these changes not only contribute to the development of the information society and economic growth by attracting investment in education and culture, but also promote the formation of a literate and informed society, which is an important step in the development of the country. The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers dated December 14, 2020 approved the National Program for the Development and Support of a Reading Culture for 2020-2025, which includes the publication of quality books that meet the spiritual, educational, artistic and aesthetic needs of the population; supporting the activities of publishers and artists, publishing children's literature; translation of the best examples of national and world literature; simplification of the organization of book sales; improving the delivery system for newly published books and distribution of information sources; expansion of international cooperation in the field of online ordering of foreign work, their delivery and distribution. In turn, it should be noted that within the framework of the "Uzbekistan - 2030" Strategy, special attention is paid to the popularization of masterpieces of Uzbek and world literature. The country's leadership strives to instill in citizens a love of reading and ensure access to libraries and information services for everyone. The Strategy "Uzbekistan - 2030" puts forward such main goals as increasing the number of young book lovers to five million, the annual creation of 100 works of art and 50 books for children and adolescents, the publication of the multi-volume book "Uzbek adabiyoti khazinasidan" ("From the Treasury of Uzbek Literature"), the 100-volume book "Jakhon Bolalar Adabiyoti Durdonalari" ("Pearls of World Children's Literature") in Uzbek, as well as the digitalization of a book fund of almost 40 million books. On November 28, 2023, there was signed the Presidential Decree "On measures to implement the project "A Thousand Books for Youth", aimed at creating a system for translating books popular in the world into Uzbek, that contribute to increasing the intellectual and scientific potential of the younger generation. At the same time, within the framework of the "Olympiad of Five Initiatives", the following 5 projects in the field of reading and intellectual games are annually implemented: "Young Reading Family", "Poetry Competition", "Young Reader", the intellectual game "Zakovat" and the project "Example of Foreign Languages". These projects increase the interest of young people in reading books and help expand logical thinking and knowledge through intellectual games. The "Young Reader" and "Young Reading Family" competitions are important events held to promote reading, the spiritual enrichment

of youth, and increase their intellectual potential. This competition serves to increase interest in books among young people and expand their knowledge and horizons. Also, within the framework of the project "A Thousand Books for Youth", the Agency for Youth Affairs will have to work on acquiring rights to use works from authors, translating them into Uzbek, and preparing for printing and publishing books on the basis of a state order and at the expense of the State budget (with the exception of books, published for state higher educational institutions). Two stages have been established for translation into Uzbek and the publication of popular books in the world. First: a preliminary list of books is formed annually by the Expert Council. Second: the preliminary list is posted in the information systems of the Agency for Youth Affairs for selection by the population by voting, and thus the final list is formed. The list of books published annually must include at least 20 percent of popular science works. The rights to the works prepared for publication will belong to the Agency for Youth Affairs, which will provide them free of charge to publishing houses. It is also planned to create and ensure the continuous operation of a special mobile application that accumulates literature in the Uzbek language and provides the population with free access to a wide range of information. On the recommendation of the Expert Council, the works will be distributed to information and library institutions (including libraries of public administration authorities), and electronic versions will be donated free of charge to the Alisher Navoi National Library of Uzbekistan and the relevant institutions of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan for wide use by readers. The necessary spiritual, legal, material, and technical basis has been created in the Republic to develop children's literature and improve the quality of textbooks and teaching aids. The country's publishing houses have increased the publication of works by authors of world and Uzbek children's literature. In accordance with a number of documents adopted to promote book reading, systematic measures are being taken in all regions to popularise literature among children and adolescents. Over the past four years, a number of presidential decrees and government resolutions have been adopted to guide the country's publishing, printing, and bibliographical information institutions. Thus, bibliographical information services play a critical role in ensuring public well-being by providing citizens with easy access to information, knowledge, and culture. In addition, the development of digital services, collaboration with communities, and the use of new technologies strengthen the role of libraries as centres of learning, information, and communication. This helps to enhance the capabilities of people and stimulates their desire for education. The development of the potential of information and library services contributes to lifelong learning, self-improvement, cultural and spiritual enrichment of the population. This is of crucial importance for modern society. Ramzidin Nuridinov Expert of the Development Strategy Center.

Briefs

Marri demands relief for masses in budget

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) MNA Shazia Marri demanded relief for the masses in the budget. "Don't facilitate the PPP but give some relief to the people," Marri said, while speaking in National Assembly on Sunday during the ongoing budget session. She said there were earlier hopes that the people would be provided relief in the budget. "We were not taken on-board in the budget-making process," she said. The provinces were doing good and they should be allowed to discharge their duties, she added, saying issues would never be resolved if everyone would be saying that all was good. She said that the opposition was silent on the tragic incidents of Sargodha and Swat which was worrisome. Marri stated the PPP had reservations on budget, especially on developmental projects. The MNA stated that the finance minister should be corrected as this budget wasn't made with the input of Bilawal Bhutto. "The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) should go after the non-taxpayers. Increasing petroleum levy is tantamount to increase burden on the masses," Marri concluded.

K-P set to impose new road user tax

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: While the imposition of a new tax policy might be just another fiscal decision made by legislators sitting comfortably in an air-conditioned office, its jolts are felt worst by those low-income citizens, who were barely an inch away from sinking into inescapable poverty. Recently, in an apparent attempt to boost revenue generation, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) government announced its plans to impose the "Road User Tax", which will allegedly be levied against all new vehicles operating on roads in the province holding registration numbers from Punjab, Sindh, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) and Balochistan. Opposing this new policy were locals like Shahid Khan, a fruit dealer, who felt that this would only add to the financial woes of the common household. "We are already overburdened by electricity, gas, water bills and property taxes on our houses. During the past three years, bills and inflation have crushed citizens, leaving them in a miserable state. Now, the government is expecting us to pay a new tax just for driving on the roads. This move will force people to leave the province," protested Shahid.

Karachiites protest against inflated bills

NAZIR SYAL

KARACHI: Protests against loadshedding and overbilling erupted at 22 locations across the city, with the central protest taking place near the Kalapull following a call by Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi, Munim Zafar Khan, addressed the main protest rally, highlighting the ongoing issues faced by Karachi's residents due to K-Electric's operations. Munim Zafar Khan criticized the power distribution company, stating that despite promises of affordable electricity during privatization, the company has failed to deliver. He pointed out that while the number of consumers has increased, K-E's production has decreased. He highlighted that the citizens of Karachi are lack of electricity, gas, and water and questioned the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) recent stance against K-Electric, asking why they were silent before.



ISLAMABAD: After heavy rain and hail in the federal capital, the roads are looking like ponds. A serious problem of water drainage, the rains controverts the CDA's tall claims. —ONLINE

Swat lynching: Police move 23 suspects to 'unknown' location

Police say efforts underway to apprehend others after mob lynches man to death over blasphemy allegations

DNA

SWAT: Police have arrested 23 suspects for their alleged involvement in the lynching and killing of a person along with the torching of Madyan Police Station in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Swat, police. The arrested individuals, the police said, have been shifted to an unknown location while efforts are underway to arrest others who were allegedly involved in the incident. The development comes after a violent mob had beaten a local tourist to death on Thursday night after accusing him of desecrating the Holy Quran, and later set his body as well as the Madyan

Police Station ablaze. A day earlier, a report by a federal agency had revealed that the hotel management had asked the deceased, accused of blasphemy, to open the door. The accused, the report added, had then opened the door and denied the allegations of blasphemy, after which the police took him to the police station — a move criticised in the report which termed it as a "grave" mistake. The report further says that neither the station house officer (SHO) of the said police station took guidance from the higher-ups on the matter nor shifted the suspect to a "safe" spot. Also, the absence of high police officials or

political leaders during the mob violence also contributed to the loss, it added. Furthermore, the report mentions that the accused was in police custody for around 40 minutes during which he denied the blasphemy allegations hurled against him. The report said that an exchange of fire also took place between the mob and police during which 11 people and five cops sustained injuries. The mob set on fire the building of the police station, a police van, five other vehicles and two motorcycles. The News reported on Sunday. However, Swat's district police officer has expressed

ignorance about any such report, saying the investigation in the case was still ongoing and its report will be sent to the IGP as well as the government. Meanwhile, a joint investigation team (JIT) including Additional Inspector General Special Branch Kashif Alam and Additional IGP Investigation Alam Shinwari visited the place of the incident and collected evidence from the room of a local hotel where the deceased Sulaiman, a resident of Sialkot, was staying. The News reported on Sunday. The JIT, established under Superintendent of Police In-

vestigation Badshah Hazrat, will also have members from Intelligence Bureau, Special Branch and other departments. Earlier, the DPO had said that members of the mob had been identified and "efforts for their arrest are underway". He said that two first information reports (FIR) had also been registered under the charges of blasphemy and damaging state property, respectively. The official further said that the suspect was reportedly a drug addict and had been booked in a case of domestic violence on the complaint of his mother.

Hezbollah drone strike hits Israeli military base

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement has conducted a drone strike on an Israeli military base, leaving casualties among the occupation forces. In a statement released on Sunday, Hezbollah said that its fighters had targeted the command headquarters of the "Sahel" brigade in the "Beit Hillel" barracks north of the occupied territories using an attack drone. It added that the raid had killed and wounded an unspecified number of Israeli officers and soldiers. Hezbollah also emphasized that the strike came in support of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and their resistance, as well as in response to an Israeli assassination operation in Lebanon. On Saturday, an Israeli drone strike targeted a car in the town of Khiaara in the Western Bekaa area and killed its driver, who was later identified as Ayman Hashem Ghattma, a leader of the Islamic Group political party in Lebanon. In a statement, the Islamic Group called the targeted killing "a new crime" committed by the Zionist regime against the Lebanese and Palestinian people. The party further noted that Ghattma's assassination will not deter it from carrying out its duty in defending the Lebanese in the country's south and the Palestinians in the occupied lands. Hezbollah and Israel have been exchanging deadly fire since early October, shortly after the regime launched a genocidal war on Gaza following a surprise operation by the Palestinian Hamas resistance group. Hezbollah has vowed to keep up its retaliatory attacks as long as the Tel Aviv regime continues its Gaza onslaught, which has so far killed at least 37,551 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 85,911 others.—APP

Shandana alleges coercion in fiery NA speech

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: In a fiery speech at the National Assembly Sunday, PTT's Shandana Gulzar made startling allegations about her treatment and the state of the country under the current government. Gulzar claimed she was kidnapped on August 9 last year by masked individuals who demanded she join either Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's party or Maryam Nawaz's party. "I was told to join either 'Bilawal's or Maryam's'," she stated, revealing the coercion she faced. The lawmaker also spoke out about the treatment of women within her party, citing the arrest and mistreatment of female members. "Our women were arrested. Tayyaba Raja was dragged by the hair," Gulzar recounted, highlighting the rough handling of PTI women. Gulzar criticized the recent budget, calling it a tool to ruin the people, and questioned the economic decisions made by the current coalition government. "This budget was made to ruin people," she said. "Why did PDM sink the ship of the country?" She accused the government of indebting the nation further with \$21 billion in loans, expressing her dismay at the current economic conditions.

Gaza: EU foreign policy chief dismayed over UN reports

DNA

BRUSSELS: EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has said that he is dismayed by the reports of the United Nations World Food Programme and the World Health Organisation Gaza, adding that there was "no improvement on humanitarian access and delivery". In a post on X, Borrell said that the UN Human Rights documented "disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks". "The Red Cross premises have been damaged by shelling. We urge all parties once again to stop this cycle of suffering and destruction," he said. He also said that an economic collapse in the West Bank was "looming".



United Kingdom election betting scandal widens

LONDON: The chief data officer of Britain's Conservative Party has taken a leave of absence, British media reported Sunday, following growing allegations that the governing party's members used inside information to bet on the date of Britain's July 4 national election before it was announced. The Sunday Times and others reported that Nick Mason is the fourth Conservative official to be investigated by the UK's Gambling Commission for allegedly betting on the timing of the election. The Times alleged that dozens of bets had been placed with potential winnings worth thousands of pounds. The reports came after revelations in recent days that two Conservative election candidates, Laura Saunders and Craig Williams, are under investigation by the gambling watchdog. Saunders' husband Tony Lee, the Conservative director of campaigning, has also taken a leave of absence following allegations he was also investigated over alleged betting. Police said one of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's police bodyguards was arrested Monday on suspicion of misconduct in public office. The arrest came after the gambling regulator confirmed it was investigating "the possibility of offenses concerning the date of the election." The growing scandal, just two weeks ahead of the national election, has dealt a fresh blow to Sunak's Conservative Party, which is widely expected to lose to the opposition Labour Party after 14 years in power.—Agencies

Russia, Ukraine conduct air attacks as war intensifies

Russia says four killed in attacks by Kyiv, while Russian strikes on Ukraine cause injuries and damage to buildings

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russia and Ukraine traded attacks which resulted in casualties overnight and into Sunday, officials from both sides say. One person was killed and ten others wounded by Russian strikes on Ukraine's eastern city of Kharkiv, regional governor Oleh Synehubov said. "The occupiers have conducted strikes on the civilian infrastructure of Kharkiv," Synehubov wrote on Telegram, adding that the strikes appeared to have been conducted with glide bombs. The governor said there were casualties at two separate strike sites in the city, two teenage children among them. Two of the wounded victims were in a "severe condition", he added. Moreover, two people were injured and dozens of residential and other buildings damaged in a Russian missile attack on Kyiv overnight, according to the head of the regional administration. Of the three missiles launched by Russia, Ukraine's air defence systems destroyed two over

the Kyiv region, Ukrainian Air Force Commander Mykola Oleshchuk said on the Telegram messaging app. Falling debris injured two people who did not require hospitalisation, Ruslan Kravchenko, head of the Kyiv region's administration, said on Telegram. He added that six multistorey residential buildings, more than 20 private houses, as well as a gas station and a pharmacy were damaged. Meanwhile, Ukrainian forces destroyed aerial drone facilities in the southern Russian region of Krasnodar, its navy reported on Telegram. Satellite images confirmed the destruction of storage depots, training facilities and control points for drones in the region, which lies to the east of the Crimean Peninsula, it said, publishing photos to provide evidence. On Sunday, Russian authorities said people were killed in Ukrainian attacks. Three people, including two children, were killed in a Ukrainian missile attack on the Russian-controlled Sevastopol, Russian-installed officials said, adding that about 100 people suffered shrapnel wounds of varying severity.

Russia's defence ministry said Washington and Kyiv bore "responsibility for a deliberate missile strike on peaceful residents", which it said used US-supplied ATACMS missiles. The ministry said four of the five ATACMS missiles used in the attack were shot down by air defence systems and the ammunition of a fifth detonated in mid-air. It added that "all flight missions for US ATACMS are entered by US specialists based on the US's own satellite reconnaissance data". "Such actions will not be left without a response," the ministry warned. In the Belgorod region, Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said on Telegram, that one person was killed and three wounded after Ukrainian drones hit the Russian town of Graivoron. At least 30 drones were destroyed over Russia's western region of Bryansk, which borders Ukraine, Governor Alexander Bogomaz said on Telegram. No damage was reported. Russia's air defence systems also destroyed drones over the Smolensk region, Vasily Anokhin, governor of the region in Russia's west, said on Telegram.—Agencies



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