



# Islamabad POST

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**Turkiye prioritizes regional peace via vigorous diplomacy**

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## PM urges end of war in Gaza

# 'Afghan soil must not be used to export terrorism'

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said, Pakistan committed to strengthen SCO for peace

NEWS DESK / DNA

ASTANA: At the SCO-Plus summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, Pakistan has urged the international community especially the UN Security Council to uphold its responsibility to ensure an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Addressing the summit this afternoon, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said in line with the spirit of this meeting, we must call for free flow of humanitarian assistance and protection of civilians in the entire Gaza strip. The Prime Minister said this summit is being held amidst unprecedented sufferings of Palestinian people as a result of Israel's ongoing brutal military campaign in Gaza that has led to martyrdom of over 37000 people including thousands of children. He said the United Nations must ensure implementation of its resolution for the peaceful settlement of all longstanding disputes. Mentioning Pakistan's recent election as non-permanent member of UN Security Council for the term 2025-26, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to multilateralism and pursuing just and peaceful resolution of all outstanding disputes. He said Pakistan will continue to oppose resorting to unilateral and illegal use of threat or force and combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan's strong legacy of contributions for maintenance of international peace and security is manifested in its strict adherence to the principles of the UN charter. Referring to other crises across the world, he said incitement to hatred and discrimination based on race and religion particularly Islamophobia has assumed epidemic proportions. Shehbaz Sharif said challenges like climate induced disasters and socio-eco aftershocks of COVID-19 call for unity of thought and action. About climate change,

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## Pakistan to host SCO heads of govts summit in October

Foreign Office says 2024 marks significant juncture as Pakistan assumes rotational Chairmanship of SCO's CHG

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will host the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Heads of Governments meeting in October this year, Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said on Thursday. In the weekly press briefing, the FO spokesperson said that before the October summit, there would be a ministerial meeting and multiple rounds of senior officials meetings to concentrate on fostering cooperation in finance, economics, socio-cultural affairs and humanitarian efforts among SCO member countries. She highlighted that 2024 marks a significant juncture in Pakistan's relationship with the SCO, with Pakistan assuming the rotational Chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG),

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ASTANA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif shares light moments with SCO leaders on the sidelines of the SCO summit in the Kazakh capital Astana. - DNA

## Rs 5.72 per unit increase in electricity tariff

Hike in basic tariff will have additional burden of about Rs600 billion on electricity consumers

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet has taken another decision to implement a major condition of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) - to increase the tariff on electricity. Citing sources, a Pakistani newspaper reported that the federal cabinet has approved an increase in the basic tariff of electricity and approval has been taken through circulation summary. National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) had sent the decision to the federal government to increase the basic tariff of electricity by an average of Rs5.72 per unit.

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## Leaders not allowed to meet Imran PTI leaders dispel rumours about internal rift in party

Sheharyar Afridi and Shandana reject claims of differences within PTI ranks | Shibli says some people were launched with a target of breaking PTI but they will fail

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Opposition leader in National Assembly Omer Ayub has said that PTI leaders were not allowed to enter Adiala Jail and meet PTI founder Imran Khan. Addressing a press conference outside Adiala jail, the opposition leader said that PTI leaders Shibli Faraz, Rauf Hassan, Sheharyar Afridi and Shandana Gulzar were waiting outside the jail from 1pm but they were not allowed to meet Imran Khan. At 5pm jail administration told the leaders that high-ups did not permit them to allow PTI leaders to have a meeting with Khan. Omer Ayub said that PTI leaders were waiting outside the jail amid scorching heat and at 5pm jail check post police guards asked PTI MNAs to quit the mosque. He said their meeting was arranged on court orders but a tout IG police did not allow them to meet Imran Khan.

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## Leghari admits to high electricity rates, promises relief

Federal Minister for Energy stresses industry-centric reforms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy Awaiz Leghari acknowledged on Thursday the current high electricity prices in the country during a session in the upper house of the Senate. Responding to queries, Minister Leghari clarified that recent media reports suggesting a cabinet-led increase in electricity rates were based on regulatory adjustments made annually, particularly noting a significant hike last June.

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## Briefs

**Polish envoy fetes senior journalists**

Says unwanted persons crossing over to Poland from Belarus

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Poland to Pakistan Maciej Pisaszki hosted a dinner reception for the journalists covering the diplomatic beat. The ambassador also spoke on the occasion and shed light on the bilateral relations between Poland and Pakistan. The ambassador also talked about Russian 'aggression' against Ukraine and blamed Moscow for playing havoc in Ukraine. He said Russian 'aggression' must come to an end. The ambassador also spoke about infiltration of unwanted persons from Belarus to Poland.

## PTI's Islamabad president arrested

PTI granted permission to hold public gathering in Islamabad on July 6

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Islamabad chapter president Amir Mughal has been apprehended by police today. PTI's Islamabad president has been arrested outside the DC office Islamabad. PTI counsel Asim Baig has verified the news of Asim Mughal's arrest. The reasons behind the arrest of PTI's Islamabad presidents haven't been disclosed yet. It is pertinent to note that PTI leader Amir Mughal was arrested by Islamabad police in May on the accusation of attack on CDA and police officials.

## Harsh argument between lawyer & CJP SC suspends LHC's verdict, ECP notification

ECP moved apex court against LHC's decision constituting 8 election tribunals for hearing polls cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) Thursday suspended the Lahore High Court's decision forming additional election tribunals as well as the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) April 26 notification. The apex court's decision came as a five-member bench heard the ECP's plea against LHC's last month's verdict constituting eight election tribunals for hearing election petitions regarding national and provincial assembly constituencies. The bench was headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Qazi Faez Isa and comprised Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, and Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi. Today's SC verdict is the latest link in the ongoing row between the ECP and the LHC regarding the appointment of judges in election tribunals regarding the February 8 polls. The electoral body had moved the SC under Article 185(3) of the Constitution contending that under Article 219 read with Article 222(b) of the

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## PTI seeks urgent hearing of plea on 'polls theft'

PTI Spokesperson terms CJP's non-fixation of the petition an attempt to hide elections fraud

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) dubbed the dillydallying tactics by the Chief Justice of Pakistan to fix the party's petition seeking probe into the February 8 polls fraud as a deliberate attempt to cover the elections theft, demanding for urgent hearing of the plea in the light of the Pattan report. PTI Spokesperson said that the Pattan made startling revelations pertaining to elections theft, as the report revealed that Form-45s of 20 provincial

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## 2 terrorists killed in GB and KP

Four scouts and two other persons were injured

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: A terrorist was killed and seven other people were injured in an operation conducted by security forces in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). According to a report, terrorist commander Shah Faisal was killed in an intelligence-based operation in GB's Darel district and his accomplice Zahidullah was injured. Four scouts and two other persons were injured during an exchange of

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# Labour tipped for historic sweep as UK goes to polls

UK's Labour Party poised to secure most substantial majority: Poll

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: The Labour Party in the United Kingdom is heading toward a historic triumph, potentially securing the largest electoral majority ever seen by a single party since 1832, a survey shows, as millions of Britons are casting their votes to choose a new House of Commons and a new government. According to YouGov's final large-scale poll, leader of Labour Sir Keir Starmer is expected to lead his party to a majority of 212 seats, the largest for any single party since 1832, with Labour projected to win 431 seats. The last multilevel regression and post-stratification (MRP) analysis by YouGov, a UK-based international online market research and data analytics firm, also predicted that Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservatives will win only 102. The final YouGov projection, published on Wednesday, also showed that several prominent figures in Conservative politics, including 16 out of 26 remaining cabinet ministers, would lose their seats, among them Chancellor Jeremy Hunt. The list of probable losers also features former Conservative leaders such as Sir Iain Duncan Smith and potential future leadership contenders like Miriam Cates. Under the pollster's margin of error, the Labour Party's

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## France's far right unlikely to secure majority, poll reveals

AGENCIES

PARIS: The latest poll suggests a far-right majority can be blocked in parliament, with the National Rally falling short of the 289 seats needed to control the National Assembly. French centrist and left-wing parties are trying to find a way to block a far-right majority in parliament - and a new poll shows that this is possible. A Harris Interactive survey for Challenges magazine, the first since an anti-National Rally (RN) alliance was formed, indicates that Marine Le Pen's far-right party might not win the 289 seats needed to control the 577-seat National Assembly. According to this poll, efforts by President Emmanuel Macron's centrists and the leftist bloc New Popular Front (NFP) to block the far-right as a so-called Republican Front (or Front Republicain) might be effective. The forecast shows that the

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Invigorating Corporate Retreats

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## Empowering mobility

## Serena Hotels, Chal Foundation partner for Fundraiser events

The event featured the commitment to social responsibility and community support which signifies the resilience and hope of individuals overcoming physical challenges

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, under the initiative of Cultural Diplomacy collaborated with Chal Foundation for a fundraising event titled "Harmonies of Hope." This event, dedicated to the theme "Safar Mein Dhoo To HoGi, Jo Chal Sako To Chalo," aimed to raise funds to provide artificial limbs and mobility devices to those most in need. The proceeds from the event will directly support Chal Foundation's mission to enhance the quality of life for individuals with mobility challenges by offering critical support and resources. The event featured the commitment to social responsibility and community support which signifies the resilience

and hope of individuals overcoming physical challenges. Attendees experienced an evening of inspiring classical dance performance by Fatima Amjed and her talented troupe, and poetry recitation by the illustrious Moazzam Ali Khan. "At Chal Foundation, our mission is to restore mobility and independence to those who need it most. Partnering with Serena Hotels for this fundraising event is a significant step towards achieving our goals. Together, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of countless individuals and communities," said by Mr. Feroze Ahmed, Chairman, Chal Foundation. Chal Foundation is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with physical disabilities by providing prosthetic

limbs, mobility devices, and rehabilitation services. The foundation works tirelessly to ensure that those in need have access to the necessary tools and support to lead independent and fulfilling lives. Junaid Shafiq, General Manager Marketing & Communication said, "Serena Hotels being a leading hospitality brand committed to excellence, sustainability, and community development, actively supports charitable events and initiatives that aim to improve the quality of life for communities in need. By partnering with organizations like Chal Foundation, Serena Hotels demonstrates its dedication to making a positive impact and supporting those who require assistance to lead better lives."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui welcomed a senior delegation led by the Deputy Speaker of New York State Assembly Phil Ramos.—DNA

## DC Larkana visits Tulka Hospital Bakrani

LARKANA: Deputy Commissioner Larkana Dr. Sharjeel Noor Channa along with Assistant Commissioner Bagrani Nizamuddin Jatoi made a surprise visit to Tulka Hospital of Bakariat Arijia at Bakrani on Thursday. On this occasion, he said that the presence of staff and medicines should be ensured so that the patients coming for treatment do not face any problem. He further said that better arrangements should be made for cleanliness inside and outside the Hospital. The DC also checked the attendance of the staff on night duty. On this occasion, he gave instructions and said that the staff should be completely off duty and strict legal action would be taken against the absent staff.

## HEC, UNHCR discuss collaborative initiatives for Afghan refugees

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) called on Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed and discussed issues pertaining to Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Director General HEC Scholarship, Ms. Aayesha Ikram and Project Director Allama Iqbal Scholarships for Afghan Students, Mr. Jehanzeb Khan also attended the meeting. Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed welcomed the UNHCR delegation comprising Ms. Philippa Candler,

Country Representative, UNHCR Pakistan, Ms. Okana Panasenko, Senior Programme Officer, and Ms. Shahida Sultan, Associate Education Officer. He shed light on the HEC's role in the promotion of higher education in Pakistan. He informed the delegates about the HEC's Allama Muhammad Iqbal Scholarships Programme for Afghan Students under which a large number of Afghan students are acquiring higher education in top Pakistani universities. He said the students graduating from Pakistan go back and play their role in the develop-

ment of their country. He said the Afghan students studying under HEC scholarships are provided equal facilities that are available to Pakistani students. He added that the HEC also provides training to Afghan Government officials for their capacity building. Ms. Philippa Candler appreciated HEC for extending scholarship opportunities to Afghan students as it will play a significant role in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. She showed interest in collaborative initiatives between HEC and UNHCR for the Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

## Health advocates call for enhanced cigarette taxes

Murtaza Solangi said that the federal budget 2024-25 missed a critical opportunity to generate substantial revenue through increased cigarette taxes

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Health advocates have expressed deep concern over the government's decision to maintain current cigarette tax rates in the federal budget 2024-25. During a session organized by the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) and the Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC) here Thursday, they highlighted the negative implications for public health and revenue generation. Chief guest Murtaza Solangi, Former Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, stated, the federal budget 2024-25 missed a critical opportunity to generate substantial revenue through increased cigarette taxes. He said this revenue could have been invested in public health, easing the economic burden on our healthcare system. Instead, maintaining current tax rates benefits cigarette manufacturers without additional excise tax contribu-

tions, undermining tobacco control efforts and worsening the public health crisis caused by tobacco use, he expressed. He further added that we must advocate for policies that prioritize public health and urge the government to implement measures that balance revenue generation with health objectives. Managing Director of SPDC, Muhammad Asif Iqbal, said that the government's decision to spare the cigarette industry from any tax hike, despite the need to generate additional revenue to address the fiscal deficit, was of great concern. "The FED revenue target of Rs 324 billion for 2024-25 is unrealistically high without an increase in cigarette taxes, with estimates suggesting a shortfall of over Rs 100 billion. The Finance Act 2024's changes benefit cigarette manufacturers by allowing price increases without additional excise tax revenue. The government should adopt a dual approach of increasing the FED rate and implement-

ing regulations to combat the illegal cigarette trade". Effective tobacco control policies should leverage higher cigarette taxes as a tool to discourage tobacco use and promote public health, he added. Renowned tobacco control activist Malik Imran Ahmed, Country Head Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids added, the increase in the FED price tier thresholds only serves to benefit the cigarette manufacturing firms, allowing them to increase consumer prices without any additional contribution to excise tax revenue. This approach, he said not only undermines our efforts towards tobacco control but also risks exacerbating the public health crisis caused by tobacco consumption. Dr. Khalil Ahmad, Program Manager SPARC said, while the Finance Bill's provision may enhance profitability within the tobacco industry, its implications for public health and fiscal policy are significant and contentious. The debate underscores

the delicate balance governments must strike between economic interests, public health priorities to save Pakistani children and youth from addiction and disease and sustainable fiscal management, he expressed. Mr. Mehboob-ul-Haq, CEO Human Development Foundation (HDF), emphasized that higher cigarette taxes were crucial for discouraging tobacco use and protecting public health. The recent budget decisions highlight the need for continued advocacy to ensure public health priorities are not overshadowed by industry interests. The decision has raised alarms among healthcare advocates and the general public alike, who fear its long-term ramifications on public health and economic stability, he said. As discussions on the Finance Bill progress, stakeholders continue to call for a reconsideration of policies that prioritize short-term industry gains over the broader public interest.

## Flood control plan reviewed

FAISALABAD: Commissioner Silwat Saeed has directed the authorities concerned to complete all arrangements to cope with any untoward situation during flood. Presiding over a review meeting about flood control plans here on Thursday, she directed the officers of the Irrigation department to watch water level in river Chenab at the places of Chiniot and Jhang districts. She also directed for transferring population residing in riverine areas to safer places well in time. —APP

## Sukkur Police issues traffic plan for Muharram

SUKKUR: In order to ensure security of the mourning processions during Muharram-ul-Harram, the Sukkur Police on Thursday issued a comprehensive traffic plan. According to the plan, there would be a complete ban on parking of any vehicle or pushcart on the route of the procession. DSPs and inspectors would perform duties on city roads to control the traffic flow during Muharram. While talking to APP, PRO of the SSP office Sukkur, Shahjahan Soomro said that traffic Police had also been directed to take action against vehicles having tinted glasses, revolving lights, unregistered vehicles and motorcycles.—APP

## Balochistan govt provides scholarships to 75000 students

DNA

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has provided scholarships to 75,000 students so far as part of the pro-education policy of the incumbent government to provide quality education to the youth of the province and bring back the alarming number of out-of-school children. The government has increased the allocation for BEEF by Rs 20 billion in the current budget 2024-25 and allocated two billion rupees for out of school children, an official of Balochistan government told APP. The Benazir Bhutto Scholarship Programme had been launched in Balochistan. Under the programme, the youth from

all segments including minorities and transgenders would be provided educational scholarships from primary to higher levels. He added that the PhD students from Balochistan would be given full scholarships to study in the top 200 universities worldwide. In a landmark development, the University of Oxford has agreed to provide scholarships to students from Balochistan, Pakistan, under the Benazir Scholarship Programme. The agreement, in this connection, was signed between the Oxford University and the Government of Balochistan last month. He said the government has determined to provide the best educa-

tional facility to the children of labourers and the students from the down-trodden section of the society would be awarded scholarships every year. The government has already announced to enrol 400 children of labourers from Balochistan in the best higher educational institution across the country in the first phase of the programme. In the next phase, around 1000 children of workers would be provided quality education on a scholarship basis in the best institutions across the country. During the next two years, the Balochistan would provide technical education to over 30,000 youth in various field and sent abroad for employment.

## Historic steps being taken for prosperity of farmers

LAHORE: Punjab Agriculture Minister Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani on Thursday said that historic steps were being taken under Punjab Agriculture Transforming Programme to ensure prosperity of farming community. He said this while addressing a joint press conference along with Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari, here. He said that during first 100 days of Punjab government, exemplary projects had been started in agriculture sector. He further said that for the first time in the history special focus had been paid on agriculture sector in Punjab's 2024-25 budget.—APP

## Five dengue cases surface in Peshawar

PESHAWAR: A dengue outbreak has been reported from the Gulbahar No 2 Jan Colony in Peshawar, setting alarm bells ringing in the health department. Dengue has been detected in five individuals, including four children, residing in the same neighbourhood. All of those affected belong to an Afghan refugee family. So far, 37 suspected dengue cases have been reported from Peshawar. This was revealed in a meeting of the District Dengue Prevention and Response Unit, chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief Peshawar Asghar Surani, in which activities for dengue control in Peshawar were reviewed in depth. The meeting was attended by health department staff and representatives of line departments, who presented performance reports. It was revealed in the meeting that a water shortage in the locality during the scorching heatwave had forced local residents to store water which had subsequently become a breeding ground for dengue larvae. In response, authorities have conducted fogging and indoor residual spraying (IRS) in the area to control the spread of the disease and surveillance is underway to monitor the situation. The Additional Deputy Commissioner was briefed on the five dengue cases reported from Gulbahar, with four cases originating from the same household. He directed that the source of the outbreak be promptly identified and the area made safe by eradicating the larvae. He also urged civil dispensary officials and field staff to intensify anti-dengue operations and take swift action to prevent the further spread of the disease. He was informed that a comprehensive awareness campaign had been conducted in the area, mosquito nets had been distributed among residents, and measures such as mechanical sweeping, fogging and IRS had been implemented. Asghar Surani stressed that no dengue case should go unreported, emphasizing the importance of immediate reporting to identify the source and take prompt preventive measures.

## Punjab Police prioritize employee and family Welfare

IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that in the first six months of this year, 1.38 billion rupees have been spent on the welfare of the force, benefiting thousands of employees' families employee and family Welfare

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Under the direction of Inspector General of Punjab Police Dr. Usman Anwar, revolutionary measures for the best welfare of Punjab Police employees and their families are underway. Police employees are being provided with record welfare in all matters, including children's education, health, legal, and family affairs. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that in the first six months of this year, 1.38 billion rupees have been spent on the welfare of the force, benefiting thousands of employees' families. Spokesman of Punjab Police said that more than 50 crore rupees were released for education scholarships for the

children of police employees. A sum of 14 crore and 60 lakh rupees has been granted for medical assistance to employees facing health issues. The daughters of police employees have received wedding gifts worth 32 crore and 69 lakh rupees. The police employees have been provided with 12.3 million rupees for emergency aid in the category of urgency financial assistance. Families of police personnel have been given 37.9 million rupees for funeral expenses. On the occasion of retirement, farewell grants amounting to 15 crores and 89 lakhs rupees have been disbursed to police employees. An amount of 16 crore and 98 lakh rupees has been provided as maintenance allowance to the families of employees. Families of police

martyrs have been given 15.5 million rupees for house construction. Employees facing legal cases have received legal assistance amounting to 8.7 million rupees. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that the problems of the employees were resolved with the income received from the police welfare fund and the welfare sources of the department. Further measures for the welfare of the police force will remain continue in future as well. Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, met with police officers and their families, listening to the applications presented by police employees and their families and issuing directives for immediate resolution of issues. IG Punjab

emphasized that the welfare of police officers' families is a top priority, instructing all supervisory officers to ensure timely relief through personal oversight. IG Punjab directed the officers that all the officers should maintain close contact with the subordinate officers, solve their problems in time so that they can concentrate on their professional duties. He expressed these views today while meeting the police employees and their families at the Central Police Office. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar directed the AIG Admin to provide relief on the requests of the family of Constable Syed Muhammad (deceased) of Rawalpindi of recruitment of his son as junior clerk

on family claim. Dr. Usman Anwar directed RPO Gujranwala to provide relief on the request of Inspector Zaheeruddin Babar (Retd.). IGP Punjab instructed the AIG Admin to take action on the recruitment requests of sons of two officials including Sargodha police's sub-inspector Muhammad Saeed and Pakpattan constable Syed Maqbool Shah Gelani on the family claim. On the request of citizen Ayesha Bibi, the DIG Intelligence Special Branch was directed to take action after the inquiry. IG Punjab directed AIG Admin to provide relief on recruitment applications of sons of Constable Muhammad Siddique and Head Constable Maqsood Anwar.

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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentina Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

July 30/Morocco National Day

## Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



## Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15  
Bomb Disposal.....15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16  
Emergency Ambulance.1122  
& Rescue Services.4451122  
Motorway Police...9266044  
Motorway Police.9270601-20  
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596  
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



## Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115  
PIA Flight Info.....114  
PIA Cargo.....9280979  
Railway Inquiry.....117  
Railway Exchange 9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi. 5555489  
CAA.....9281092



## Hospitals

CMH.....5611111  
MH.....5611116  
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11  
DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666



## Departments

CDA.....9221334-43  
CDA.....9208301-04  
Met Office.....9250360-6  
RDA.....5555864  
TMA.....5770886  
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Italian Ambassador meets Interior Minister

Mohsin Naqvi told the ambassador that in a meeting with the Italian Minister of the Interior, it was agreed to work together against illegal human trafficking and In this regard, a delegation of the Italian Ministry of Interior will soon visit Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Italian Ambassador to Pakistan Marylina Ermelin on Thursday met with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to discuss issues of mutual interest. Discussing the bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest in the meeting, the interior minister told the ambassador about his recent very successful and effective visit to Italy. Mohsin Naqvi told the ambassador that in a meeting with the Italian Minister of the Interior, it was agreed to work together against illegal human trafficking and In this regard, a delegation of the Italian Ministry of Interior will soon visit Pakistan. The delegation will meet Pakistani authorities and visit the border, Naqvi told the ambassador. He said that In order to prevent drug and human trafficking, the two



countries will have to strengthen mutual cooperation and there will be no compromise on human trafficking and all possible steps are being taken to control it. "If we succeed in stopping human trafficking at the border, it will be beneficial for both the countries" said the minister adding that migration of skilled manpower will also discourage human trafficking. Italy can benefit from the services of skilled people of Pakistan in various fields, he added. On this occasion, the Federal Interior Minister also presented a formal invitation to the Italian Ambassador for his Italian counterpart's visit to Pakistan. The Italian Ambassador thanked the Interior Minister for the cooperation in various fields. Commandant FC Moazzam Jah Ansari, IG Islamabad Ali Nasir Rizvi, senior officials of Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs also attended the meeting.

# Federal government should cancel all contracts with IPPs

Exorbitant electricity prices have led to mass industrial shutdowns and job losses

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that the federal government should cancel all contracts with IPPs and procure electricity from cheaper sources without capacity charges. The recent increase in electricity rates may lead to civil unrest and discontent with the business community. The federal government

should formulate a strategy to deal with IPPs and ensure affordable electricity prices for industries in the national interest, he expressed these views while talking to Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik, Vice President Tariq Jadoon, Vice President Qurat ul Ain, Mian Akram Farid, Coordinator Diplomatic Committee Muhammad Ahmed, Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail Hussain and others. Federation President Atif

Ikram said that Pakistan's energy sector has been trapped in contract issues with IPPs since 1994. Exorbitant electricity prices have led to large-scale industrial shutdowns and job losses. The payment of two trillion to fourty companies is economically crippling. IPPs receive payments even when power is not generated or supplied. Atif Ikram Shaikh said that these agreements led to an increase in revolving credit, which reached Rs 2.64

trillion as of February this year. The initial return on equity for IPPs was set at 18% and was later reduced to 12% but is still high compared to global standards. Research shows that IPPs are enjoying more than 73% returns in dollar terms which is unusually high compared to international standards. Re-evaluation of IPPs contracts and pricing, better monitoring to prevent over-invoicing is required.

# PM's climate aide lauds Qatar's support

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A high-level three-member technical delegation of Qatar, led by Colonel Ahmed Abdullah Al-Abdullah, Thursday called on Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam. During the meeting held here at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, both sides discussed at length the various matters of bilateral interest and collaboration regarding climate risk management, environment conservation, water management, energy, forest and disaster risk management. PM's climate aide Romina Khurshid briefed the Qatari delegation about Prime Minister's various clean and green initiatives being implemented to boost Pakistan's climate resilience and protect lives and livelihoods of the country's vulnerable communities. "The present government led by Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is more focused on engaging with various countries through climate diplomacy to boost global climate action so as to deal with adverse fallout of the global warming and consequent disasters, particularly heatwaves, floods, land erosion and sea-level rise,"



Romina Khurshid apprised the Qatari's official delegation. During the meeting, she also highlighted challenges and impacts of global warming, climate change, heatwaves and devastating floods during monsoon seasons being faced by the country. Romina Khurshid Alam told the delegation that Pakistan is grappling with increasingly severe impacts from climate change, posing significant challenges to its environment, economy, and people. "The

country is continuously experiencing a rise in average temperatures, leading to more frequent and intense floods and heatwaves across the country. These extreme heat events not only threaten public health but also strain energy resources and exacerbate water scarcity issues," the PM's climate aide told the Qatari delegation. She added, "The frequency of extreme weather events such as floods and droughts has been increasing. These

events disrupt agricultural productivity, cause loss of lives and livelihoods and strain already fragile infrastructure." During the meeting she also highlighted that the water stress, exacerbated by the climate change during recent years has emerged to be a critical and added that "Pakistan is heavily relies on its river systems for agriculture and domestic water supply, but climate impacts are altering water availability and quality.

# UNHCR delegation calls on Chairman HEC

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) called on Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed and discussed issues pertaining to Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Director General HEC Scholarship Ms. Aayesha Ikram and Project Director Allama Iqbal Scholarships Mr. Jehanzeb Khan also attended the meeting. Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed welcomed the UNHCR delegation comprising Ms. Philippa Candler, Country Representative, UNHCR Pakistan, Ms. Oksana Panasenko, Senior Programme Officer, and Ms. Shahida Sultan, Associate Education Officer. He shed light on the HEC's role in the promotion of higher education in Pakistan. He informed the delegates about the HEC's Allama Muhammad Iqbal Scholarships Programme for Afghan Students under which a large number of Afghan students are acquiring higher education in top Pakistani universities. He said the students graduating from Pakistan go back and play their role in the development of their country. He said the Afghan students studying under HEC scholarships are provided equal facilities that are available to Pakistani students. He added the HEC also provides training to Afghan Government officials for their capacity building. Ms. Philippa Candler appreciated HEC for extending scholarship opportunities to Afghan students as it will play a significant role in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. She showed interest in collaborative initiatives between HEC and UNHCR for the Afghan refugees in Pakistan.—APP

# NPM Committee reveals significant inflation decline

ISLAMABAD: The National Price Monitoring (NPM) Committee meeting on Thursday revealed significant inflation decline from 18.5% to 12.2% over the Past Year. In the National Price Monitoring Committee meeting a significant reduction in inflation over the past year was reported. Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal chaired a meeting of the National Price Monitoring Committee held today in Islamabad, said a press release issued here on. The meeting witnessed the attendance of Member-Support Services, Joint Chief Economist, AC Islamabad, senior officials from the Line Ministries and Planning Ministry, representatives from Provincial Governments, and the Senior General Manager of Utility Stores. The inflation rate decreased from 18.5% in June 2023 to 12.2% in the current year, marking a notable downward trend, despite global inflationary pressures, Pakistan has managed to reduce its inflation rate, although the prices of imported items have seen an increase.—APP

# Commissioner urges Ulema to play role in promoting interfaith harmony

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak here on Thursday urged Ulema to play role in promoting interfaith harmony. The meeting was presided over by Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak and Regional Police Officer (RPO) Babar Sarfraz Alpa. Divisional members Peace Committee, Member National Assembly Malik Abrar, Additional Commissioner Coordination Syed Nidarat, Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema, Additional Deputy Commissioner General, Hassan Tariq participated in the meeting while Deputy Commissioner Jhelum, Chakwal, Attock and Murree attended through video link. The members of the Divisional Peace Committee presented various suggestions to maintain law and order during Muharram.—APP

# IESCO to replace all meters with AMI by 2030: Dr Amjad

ISLAMABAD: Under digitization and up-gradation programme, Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has planned to replace all existing old meters with state of the art advance metering infrastructure (AMI) meters till 2030 across its all six circles aimed at ensuring accurate meter reading, billing, controlling power theft and reducing load-shedding. Briefing the media persons here Thursday, the IESCO Chief Executive Officer Dr Muhammad Amjad said currently the company has around 3.8 million consumers in six circles including Rawalpindi City, Rawalpindi Cantt, Islamabad, Chakwal, Jhelum and Attock and some areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. "All the connections (3.8million) will be replaced with AMI meters by 2030," he said. However, the IESCO chief said that in first phase around 1.2 million connections in Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Rawalpindi City Circle and Taxila were being replaced with AMI meters. The company has already installed over 42,000 meters so far in various areas of Rawalpindi in short spin of time, he added. He said these meters were installed in areas of Gulzar Quaid, Dr Abdul Qadir Road, Gangal and Khana and Westridge. Currently, AMI meters were being installed in PWD, Korag Town and its adjacent areas would also be completed by July and August, he added. Under the plan, in first phase, the company would install around 1.2 million AMI meters, initially in Rawalpindi City Circle, Rawalpindi Cantonment Circle and Taxila (Division), he said. The task would be completed by June 2026 for which initially two contractors have been hired to install around 2000 AMI daily in the said circles, he said. Dr Amjad said the Asian Development Bank has provided \$ 109 million financial assistance to complete the project under second power distribution enhancement investment programme. The contract for the project was signed on September, 3, 2022 while its effectiveness date was January 2023, he added. He said that main data and back data centres which were part of the project had already been set up at the IESCO's head office and Gujjar Khan respectively. The CEO said AMI system would bring about a permanent elimination of power pilferage with systematic control of transmission through round-the-clock monitoring of the electricity meters.—APP

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## Briefs

## CDA seals 60 buildings in Islamabad on violating bylaws

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has sealed 60 buildings in the federal capital during a crackdown against the violations of the bylaws of the authority. During the crackdown against unauthorized constructions, the Building Control Wing, alongside the Enforcement Directorate, sealed 38 buildings in G-9/4 due to non-conforming use, said a press release. In Gulberg Residencia, 22 under-construction buildings were sealed for proceeding without the necessary permissions. The authority has issued notices to the owners of the sealed properties. Prior to this action, the owners were directed to obtain the required permissions from the CDA before beginning construction. The buildings were sealed because the owners failed to comply with these instructions. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa reiterated the authority's commitment to enforcing building bylaws throughout Islamabad, stating that the crackdown on violations will continue consistently.—APP

## Gilani felicitates people, Congress on American Independence Day

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, extended warm felicitations to the people, Congress, and government of the United States of America on the occasion of American Independence Day on Thursday. In his message, he conveyed his best wishes and warm sentiments of goodwill to the political and parliamentary leadership of America on this significant occasion, according to a press release. The Chairman emphasized that Pakistan and America share an enduring friendship founded on mutual respect, trust, cooperation, and a commitment to peace, development, and prosperity. He also acknowledged America's significant contributions to international peace, stability, and development. Yousaf Raza Gilani expressed confidence that the two countries would continue to work together to address global challenges and promote shared values of democracy, equality, and justice.—APP

## Mohsin Naqvi grieved over Haripur car accident

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi, has expressed deep sorrow over the loss of precious lives in a car accident in Haripur. The Interior Minister extended his heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. Mohsin Naqvi said that he shares the grief of the bereaved families and prayed to Allah to grant patience and courage to them. He also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.—APP

## Police carry out search operations in different areas

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police here on Thursday carried out search operations in the jurisdiction of Saddar Baroni, Chonra, Rawat, Race Course, and Cantt police stations. According to a police spokesman, the search operations were 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 operations. Police checked a large 200 houses, 69 shops, 20 tenants, two hotels and 400 individuals during the search operations. The spokesman said that police were fully prepared to shield the lives and property of the public.—APP

## Indonesia holds training for the OIC researchers

The Indonesia-COMSTEC Fellowship Program was initiated by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad during the COVID-19 Pandemic, to seek mutual solution for Islamic Countries amid lack of global vaccines supply

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Within July 2024, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia in collaboration with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTEC) based in Islamabad will hold the 3rd Batch of Indonesia-COMSTEC Fellowship Program for Research and Advanced Training in Virology and Vaccine Technologies, in three Indonesian cities of Jakarta, Bogor, and Bandung. The participating researchers are from Cameroon, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda. The Indonesia-COMSTEC Fellowship Program was initiated by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad during the COVID-19 Pandemic, to seek mutual solution for Islamic Countries amid lack of global vaccines supply. Prior to the Training, the Workshop was also held in hybrid, attended by more than 400 participants including 12 researchers of the Training, Ambassadors, Indonesian high rank officials, and the relevant stakeholders. The Workshop focused on discussion about the future of vaccine cooperation among countries and its potentials to provide equal access and more protection to the glob-



al community. In his opening remarks, the Indonesian Minister of Health, H.E. Mr. Budi G. Sadikin, highlighted how Indonesia seriously learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic that adversely affected Indonesia due to inaccessible vaccines despite having enough financial resources. Referring to Indonesia's experience in overcoming the Pandemic, he invited all of the OIC Member States to support the vaccine manufacture cooperation initiative, while in parallel bolstering their capabilities of research and development for vaccines production. "It is

not (only) scientifically wrong, you presume that you can fix the global pandemic by only fixing your own country, but it is also ethically wrong. So, I strongly support the initiatives to have this vaccines cooperation among Islamic countries," he said in the opening ceremony of the Training (1/7). He further underlined that vaccines, diagnostic tools, and medicines should be readily available and accessible to all countries at a reasonable price. The Indonesia-COMSTEC Fellowship Program is expected to benefit the healthcare person-

nels and early-stage researchers, as well as to provide the most feasible ways in reducing healthcare costs and the pharmacoeconomic burden among OIC States. The participants of the Training are also expected to proactively contribute to their respective countries in manufacturing and producing safe, effective, accessible, as well as affordable vaccines and biotechnology products to tackle any possible pandemic in the future. To advance cooperation in the fields of science and technology, the Embassy of the Republic of

Indonesia in Islamabad has collaborative events and programs with the COMSTEC. Previously in June 2024, both sides jointly hosted the international seminar on "Sustainability of Palm Oil Industry and its Derivative Products", to raise more awareness of the Pakistani public, business communities, and relevant authorities on the scientific benefits of palm oil. Currently, the Indonesian Embassy and COMSTEC are working to co-organize an exhibition on nutraceuticals and cosmetics made with natural and halal ingredients later this year.

## Islamabad Expressway signal-free project to be completed by August 14

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Thursday said that the construction work on the Islamabad Expressway, signal-free project would be completed and inaugurated by August 14 next month. Following the directives of Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Naqvi, Chairman CDA has been assigned to personally oversee the development projects in the federal capital. Chairman CDA conducted a comprehensive visit to the Islamabad Expressway while reviewing the ongoing construction at key locations including Sawan bridge, Japan underpass, Railway

bridge and Bhinder bridge. Muhammad Ali said that under the directives of the Minister for Interior, the construction work on the long-stalled project has advanced at an unprecedented speed by the authority. The concerned officials informed the CDA chief that, for the first time, construction work is being conducted around the clock to meet the deadline. They said that significant progress has been made on the complex and challenging bridges and structures of the project over the past two months. Muhammad Ali appreciated the efforts of the CDA, contractors and consultants for their dedication in accelerating the project towards

completion. "Maintaining such a rapid pace of work on the project, despite the constant 24-hour traffic on the Islamabad Expressway is commendable," he said. Muhammad Ali assured that there would be no compromise on the high quality of construction work on the project. CDA planning to establish state-of-the-art Bus Terminal: Randhawa Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Thursday said that the authority is planning to establish state-of-the-art Bus Terminal in the federal capital. He said this while chairing a meeting here to discuss the establishment of a

state-of-the-art bus terminal in Islamabad which was attended by senior officials from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the CDA. Muhammad Ali directed that a study be conducted to identify three to four potential sites for the new terminal which should be well-connected to all parts of the city. He urged CDA and ADB teams to work together to explore various proposals. The meeting also resulted in the decision to develop an Urban Transport Master Plan for Islamabad. Muhammad Ali said the finalized proposals would be presented to the designated forum for approval.

## Pakistan, China to collaborate promoting a new digitalized CPEC

BEIJING: EuroAsia Pakistan Economy Forum held here to forge a new digitalized CPEC, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday. "In the next stage, the collaboration between Pakistan and China would extend from traditional to new, or to day upgraded economic corridors. For instance, the transportation, circulation and exchange of data," Shaza Fatima Khwaja, Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication of Pakistan, said bluntly, at the EuroAsia Pakistan Digital Economy Forum. "Pakistan's human resources could not be underestimated in the world. 60% of our population is under the age of 35, which is both an opportunity and a challenge. By working closely with China to provide systematic sci-tech training to such a huge talent pool, we are going to maximize the role of our valuable resources in such a digital age." The Minister gave a detailed introduction to the experience gained by Prime Minister Sharif after his recent visit to China with a delegation, repeatedly emphasizing that the Pakistani government has regarded the digital field as a top priority for current governance. Dr. Zhao Baige, recipient of the "Medal of Excellence Crescent" National Honorary Medal of Pakistan, echoed by a series of specific suggestion. "Training of all types and levels badly need to be a top priority. Training at not only the government level, but also non-governmental and corporate levels should be included in the entire system, due to the cross-border connections are the key to the success of the entire digital economy revolution. Moreover, Pakistani partners are very eager to form a CPEC digital economy park, in which Beijing has very rich experience. We hope that through our step-by-step construction, the China-Pakistan Digital Corridor will become an important leader in the global digital economy." Regarding the digitalized CPEC, participants from both countries contributed wonderful ideas. "We are working hard to build our communication network through cables from China to Karachi and other cities in Pakistan under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. In the future, whether it is Xinjiang, Karachi, or Gwadar Port, the digital corridor will make a huge difference," Marouf Ali Shahani, COO of Cyber Network Company, introduced. "In 2023, Beijing's digital economy has achieved an added value of 1.8 trillion yuan, accounting for 42.9% of the region's GDP." —DNA

## RDA rejects approval request of illegal housing scheme 'New Airport Town'

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), on the directives of Director General, Kinza Murtaza, has rejected the approval request of the layout plan of an illegal housing scheme, "New Airport Town". According to a RDA spokesman, "New Airport Town" is an unapproved scheme as the RDA has rejected and returned the file submitted by the scheme's owner, Shahid Mehmood. The RDA's Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE) Directorate has advised the citizens not to invest in an unauthorized scheme located in Mouza Katarian, Tehsil and District Rawalpindi. The RDA spokesman further informed that the DG Kinza Murtaza has warned that strict action in accordance with the law would be taken against the rules violators.—APP

## Pakistan to replicate practices of Chinese agri-science-city

At present, there're 142 Pakistani students studying at Northwest A&F University, one of China's top agricultural universities located in Yangling, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif expressed his willingness to enhance agricultural cooperation with China's Yangling Agricultural Technology Demonstration Base. He stated this in a recent letter to Shi Gaoling, Secretary of the Party Working Committee of the Base. On June 8, the PM arrived in Yangling Agricultural Technology Demonstration Base, Shaanxi province

during his first official visit to China after the new Pakistani government took office. After visiting the Modern Agriculture Exchange Center of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and the 'plant factory' of Yangling Smart Agricultural Demonstration Park, "I was impressed by the cutting edge technology on display which has transformed Yangling into a world-class agricultural marvel of the world," he said in the letter. According to the letter, the PM had asked his team to

study 'Yangling Model' and replicate the best practices so that they can also develop high-quality and high-yield crops in Pakistan. Having learned that the Chinese side is willing to share expertise in that regard, the Pakistani side said they hope to send Pakistani agricultural researchers, scientists and students to work closely with the Chinese counterparts in future. In recent years, there have been increasingly closer cooperation and exchange between

the Pakistani agricultural authorities & institutions and Yanling Agricultural Technology Demonstration Base. Up till now, over 120 Pakistani government officials, experts, private enterprise leaders and farm owners have participated in agricultural technology training in Yangling. At present, there're 142 Pakistani students studying at Northwest A&F University, one of China's top agricultural universities located in Yangling, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday.

## Police arrest three thieves with Rs 61,500

RAWALPINDI: Cantt police have arrested three thieves and recovered cash Rs 61,500 from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that the accused namely Sadiq, Javed and Zahid were rounded up for stealing cash and valuables from the customers, busy shopping in congested markets. Raids were being conducted to arrest the accomplice of the arrested accused, he informed. Superintendent of Police, Potohar Nasir Nawaz said that the arrested accused would be challaned with concrete evidence. Actions against the criminals would continue without any discrimination, he added. Those who deprive the citizens of their valuable assets, would be punished in accordance with the law, the SP said.—APP

## Support of victims of sexual violence in IIOJK

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Youth Forum for Kashmir (YFK) in collaboration with Radio Pakistan organized a special session dedicated to raising awareness and support for the victims of sexual violence in Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir (IIOJK). The event featured a panel of experts, including APHCJIK Convener, Ghulam Muhammad Safi, Dr. Farooq Adil Writer, Ms. Afshan Tehseen, Barrister Sundas Malik, Saeed Ahmed Sheikh DG Radio Pakistan, and Zaman Bajwa of YFK, said a press release received here from APHC office. The session aimed to amplify the voices of the victims and shed light on the atrocities faced by them. The session facilitated a profound discussion on the pressing issue of sexual violence in IIOJK, with a focus on the imperative of its elimination. The speakers shared heart-wrenching accounts of rape victims, ranging from a young 8-year-old to a 60-year-old woman, highlighting the appalling scope of this human rights violation going on in IIOJK. The panelists emphasized that these heinous acts are perpetuated unabated by the Indian armed forces in IIOJK, underscoring the urgency of the situation. The event drew a sizable audience, demonstrating the community's unwavering commitment to addressing human rights abuses in IIOJK. This session served as a poignant reminder of the ongoing struggles faced by women in IIOJK galvanizing the resolve to combat this injustice.

## Services exports increase by 1.80% to \$7.129 bln in 11 months

ISLAMABAD: The exports of services during the first eleven months of the fiscal year (2023-24) increased by 1.80 percent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of the last year. During July-May 2023-24, exports of services were recorded at \$7.129 billion as against the exports of \$7.004 billion during the same period of last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). During the period under review, the services imports into the country grew by 16.93 percent and it was registered at \$9.229 billion as compared to the import of \$7.892 billion in the same period last year. On a year-on-year basis, the services exports from the country grew by 7.90 percent in May 2024 as compared to the exports of the same month of last year. In May 2024, services valued at \$687.91 million were exported as compared to exports of \$637.54 million in the same month of last year. The imports of services into the country however, decreased by 10.11 percent during the period under review as it was recorded at \$881.04 million against \$980.17. On month on month basis, the services exports increased by 6.48 percent and imports by 5.76 percent respectively in May 2024 as compared to April 2024. During May 2024, the services exports were recorded at \$687.91 million as compared to the exports of \$646.03 million of the previous month, whereas imports were registered at \$881.04 million as compared to the imports of \$833.06 billion of last month.—DNA

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## Multipolarity and America

The gradual crumbling that left unaltered the face of the whole," writes the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel in his Phenomenology of Spirit, "is cut short by a sunburst which, in one flash, illuminates the features of the new world." What he has described are the nodal points where, after the contradictions within totalities intensify, conditions are created for great ruptures for qualitative leaps into new worlds. This is what multipolarity signifies. It is a geopolitical revolution, a qualitative leap into a radically new world. It is premised on the intensification of the contradictions inherent in the Western imperialist system, especially the unipolar form it took since 1991 when it had free reign to dominate the world after the fall of the Eastern socialist bloc. That was a time when the West proclaimed, laughably, that we had arrived at the "end of history." The subject for this proclamation, of course, was Francis Fukuyama – but he spoke on behalf of the arrogance and hubris of the Western world as a whole. The West's short-lived fantasy of the end of history has itself come to an end. As Vladimir Putin said in a seminal speech of September 2022, "The world has entered a period of a fundamental, revolutionary transformation." In proclaiming the end of history, the West showed an ignorance of the best insights its thinkers have provided to the world. How absurd is it that the civilization that gave birth to Heraclitus and Goethe and Hegel and Marx could come to naively accept such a static and historical position? It was Heraclitus who taught us that "everything flows and nothing abides" and that "everything gives way and nothing stays fixed." It was Goethe, speaking through Mephistopheles in Faust, the greatest work in the history of German literature, who wrote that "all that comes to be deserves to perish wretchedly." The unipolar world, dominated by the US and its NATO junior partners, came to be in the last decade of the 20th century. But, as Mephistopheles might have predicted, three decades later, we are seeing it perish wretchedly. We are in a period of transition where the drive, as Pepe Escobar has written, "towards a multipolar, multinodal, polycentric world" is evident. Putin, in his speech at the recent St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF), called it a "harmonic multipolar world." Here too, Putin is developing insights that should not be foreign to the West. "The world's virtue," wrote the great Pythagoras, "is harmony." It is one that contains within it a relational complementarity between the many. It is a world, as Mexican economist Oscar Rojas has written, where nations and civilizations can function as Free Associated Producers – sovereign, unhindered by external powers seeking to unilaterally impose their will on the world. The expansion of multipolar institutions such as BRICS+, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, and others are beginning to build the skeleton for the new world. The proposals for a new BRICS+ payment infrastructure and an "apolitical, transactional form of cross-border payments," called The Unit, which is "anchored in gold (40%) and BRICS+ currencies (60%)," signifies significant steps toward de-dollarization – an integral component of breaking US global dominance and building a multipolar world. As an American, I inhabit a world that is crumbling wretchedly.



## Israeli lies about Gaza hospitals

After seven months of arbitrary detention, the release of Dr. Mohammed Abu Salmiya, Director of Al-Shifa Medical Complex, by Israeli occupation forces without any charges shatters the mountain of lies that Israeli propaganda has long promoted about him and hospitals in Gaza. Dr. Abu Salmiya was released alongside 50 other detainees from Gaza on Monday via the Kissufim crossing east of Deir al-Balah in central Gaza. This release brings back to light the crimes committed by occupation forces in Al-Shifa Medical Complex. These forces had previously claimed the hospital was a key center for Hamas, destroying most of its buildings through repeated incursions and committing horrific massacres inside before withdrawing, without ever providing any serious evidence to support their claims. As videos of Dr. Abu Salmiya's release alongside his comrades spread, questions arose among observers and activists: Why did Israel detain Abu Salmiya and his colleagues? Why did it burn down Al-Shifa Medical Complex and kill patients there? Mads Gilbert, former head of the Norwegian medical team to Gaza, said, "We salute the resilience of the detained doctors, including Abu Salmiya and the others who should not have been detained in the first place amid the larger number of detainees from Gaza." Speaking to Al Araby TV from Oslo, he added, "Despite the torture Abu Salmiya faced, he promised to rebuild Al-Shifa Medical Complex and Gaza's health system." Gilbert confirmed that after Abu Salmiya's release without charges, "the majority of Norwegians now see through the Israeli lies and want to boycott Israel and impose sanctions on it. Every week, there are widespread demonstrations, especially from medical workers, against the violations faced by medical teams in Gaza." He continued, "What we see today is further division in Israel, with Netanyahu's government losing strength, which is significant. Additionally, the release of Abu Salmiya once again confirms that there is no evidence that hospitals in Gaza were used as military centers, showing the Israeli narrative about hospitals to be a huge lie." Bloggers noted that the biggest proof of Israeli lies and brutality towards medical staff and facilities is the release of Dr. Mohammed Abu Salmiya and his colleagues after more than seven months of detention, during which they could not prove any of their claims despite all the psychological and physical torture exerted. Others added that this means Israel destroyed the hospital and committed horrific massacres, turning it into mass graves without any justification. Therefore, Israel must be held accountable for its crimes and added to its record of offenses against the healthcare sector in Gaza. In his first statements after his release, Dr. Mohammed Abu Salmiya confirmed that the occupation did not present any charges against him, indicating that his detention was political. He mentioned that he was detained on November 22, 2023, while passing through the Netzarim corridor, which the occupation claimed to be a safe passage after the army had stayed for 13 days in Al-Shifa Medical Complex. He added, "During that time, I was in contact with the coordinator and officers. Afterwards, we left in a UN convoy under their eyes to transport patients."

## American exceptionalism and ethical dilemma

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Policymakers must reconcile the nation's influence and interests with the rights and sovereignty of other nations. This often involves complex decision-making processes where the potential benefits of intervention must be weighed against the risks and ethical concerns. For example humanitarian interventions aimed at preventing atrocities may be morally justified but could also lead to prolonged conflicts or entanglements that undermine regional stability. The promotion of American values on the global stage can lead to significant clashes when

American exceptionalism is the idea that the United States has a moral duty to lead by example and to promote its values globally. This faith is rooted in the country's founding principles and reinforced by historical events such as the American Revolution and the subsequent development of a democratic republic. However, this self-assigned role as a global leader comes with significant moral challenges especially when it involves intervention in the affairs of other nations. Legislators and policymakers often deal with the ethical implications of interfering in other countries' domestic matters. On one hand, there is the desire to support and spread democratic ideals, which are seen as universally beneficial. On the other hand, there is a need to respect the sovereignty and self-determination of other nations, recognizing that each country has its own unique cultural, political and social context. The balance between promoting American values and respecting international sovereignty is delicate and fraught with tension. For instance, efforts to support democracy in authoritarian regimes or conflict-ridden regions can lead to accusations of imperialism or neocolonialism. Such interventions, even if well intentioned, can be perceived as overreach and may provoke backlash both domestically and internationally. The use of military power, in particular, raises questions about the appropriate limits of force and the potential for unintended consequences, such as civilian casualties or long-term instability. Policymakers must reconcile the nation's influence and interests with the rights and sovereignty of other nations. This often involves complex decision-making processes where the potential benefits of intervention must be weighed against the risks and ethical concerns. For example humanitarian interventions aimed at preventing atrocities may be morally justified but could also lead to prolonged conflicts or entanglements that undermine regional stability. The promotion of American values on the global stage can lead to significant clashes when these values are perceived as conflicting with existing international norms or the interests of other powerful states. The global political environment is inherently competitive, with various actors pursuing their own agendas and priorities. As such, the United States often finds itself in situations where its advocacy for democracy and human rights meet with resistance or hostility. These clashes can complicate diplomatic relations and create obstacles to achieving broader foreign policy goals. As the nature of international relations evolves, new layers of complexity emerge, including ethical concerns and the need to redefine approaches and policies. The rise of new global powers, technological advancements and changing geopolitical dynamics all contribute to the increasing intricacy of foreign policy decision-making. In this context, American legislators face the ongoing challenge of adapting to these changes while upholding democratic norms and respecting diverse global perspectives. One of the key challenges to the policymakers in maintaining a balance between American influence and interests and recognizing the sovereignty of other nations is the need for a consistent and coherent foreign policy.

Inconsistent or contradictory actions can undermine the credibility of American exceptionalism and lead to accusations of hypocrisy. For example, supporting democratic movements in one country while maintaining alliances with authoritarian regimes in another can create a perception of double standards and erode trust in American leadership. Furthermore, the domestic political landscape also plays a crucial role in shaping foreign policy decisions. Public opinion, interest groups and political parties all influence how policymakers approach the concept of American exceptionalism and its application in international relations. Debates over the appropriate role of the United States in the world, the use of military power, and the prioritization of certain values or interests are common and often contentious. These debates reflect the broader tensions within American society regarding the country's identity and purpose on the global stage. The Puritans who settled in New England in the 17th century believed they were establishing a "city upon a hill," a model society that would exemplify moral righteousness and divine favor. The American Revolution reinforced this idea and the creation of a new nation based on principles of liberty, democracy and individual rights. The notion that America was a unique experiment in self-government and freedom became a central part of the national identity. Throughout the 19th century, this belief in American exceptionalism was bolstered by the country's rapid expansion and economic growth. Manifest Destiny, the idea that the United States was destined to expand across the continent, was both a reflection and a driver of this exceptionalism mindset. The belief in a special American mission also underpinned efforts to spread democracy and capitalism abroad, from the Monroe Doctrine to interventions in Latin America and beyond. American exceptionalism has profoundly influenced the country's foreign policy. Policymakers often view the United States as a moral leader with a duty to promote democracy and human rights worldwide. This has led to numerous interventions, both military and diplomatic, aimed at shaping global affairs in line with American values. One notable example is the United States' involvement in World War II and the subsequent establishment of the United Nations. The U.S. positioned itself as a defender of democracy against totalitarianism, leading the effort to create a new world order based on collective security and international cooperation. Similarly, during the Cold War, American exceptionalism justified a global struggle against communism, with the U.S. supporting democratic movements and regimes, sometimes at the expense of ethical considerations. In more recent times, the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq were framed as efforts to spread democracy and combat terrorism. These actions were justified by the belief that the U.S. had a unique responsibility to lead and protect the free world. However, these interventions also highlighted the ethical and moral dilemmas inherent in American exceptionalism, as they led to significant loss of life, regional instability and questions about the true motives behind U.S. actions. While American exceptionalism has been a driving force behind many of the United States' international policies, it

has also led to significant ethical and moral dilemmas. The belief in a unique American mission can create a sense of moral superiority, which sometimes leads to the justification of actions that might otherwise be considered unethical. One such dilemma is the tension between promoting democracy and respecting national sovereignty. The U.S. has often supported regime change in countries where it perceives the government to be oppressive or undemocratic. While these actions are framed as efforts to liberate oppressed populations, they can also be seen as violations of national sovereignty and self-determination. The interventions in Iraq and Libya, for example, have been criticized for creating power vacuums and instability, raising questions about the long-term consequences of such actions. Another ethical issue is the use of covert operations and support for authoritarian regimes when it suits American interests. During the Cold War, the U.S. supported dictators and repressive regimes that were seen as allies against communism. This included backing military coups and providing support to regimes with poor human rights records. Such actions were often justified by the larger goal of containing communism, but they also contradicted the professed American commitment to democracy and human rights. Despite its rhetoric of promoting global democracy and human rights, American foreign policy has often prioritized national interests. This can be seen in the U.S. approach to international trade, military alliances, and geopolitical strategy. While the promotion of American values is a stated goal, actions on the ground often reflect a more pragmatic focus on maintaining economic and strategic advantages. For instance, the U.S. has been known to negotiate trade deals that favor American businesses and protect domestic industries, sometimes at the expense of partner countries. Similarly, military alliances such as NATO are designed to protect American and allied interests, but they can also be seen as mechanisms to project U.S. power globally. The balance between idealism and pragmatism is a constant feature of American foreign policy, reflecting the complex interplay between the nation's values and its interests. The perception of the United States as a global force for good is a key element of American exceptionalism. However, this perception is not universally shared. Many countries view U.S. actions with doubt, seeing them as driven more by self-interest than by a genuine commitment to democracy and human rights. This gap between perception and reality can undermine the effectiveness of American foreign policy and lead to accusations of hypocrisy. American exceptionalism is a deeply ingrained ideology that has significantly shaped the United States' approach to international affairs. While it has inspired efforts to promote democracy and human rights, it has also led to ethical and moral dilemmas and a prioritization of national interests. The gap between the perception of the U.S. as a global force for good and the reality of its actions continues to influence its relationships with other nations. Understanding this complex dynamic is crucial for analyzing and predicting American foreign policy in the future.

## US arms to Baltics: An aggressive move against Russia

Hamzah Rifaat

Russia's decision to opt for hybrid warfare instead of military confrontation with the United States and its allies is based on the fact that a direct approach would be unwinnable and only result in greater international isolation. The latest violations of Lithuanian airspace by a Russian civilian aircraft headed to the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, a city sandwiched between Lithuania and Poland, has once again raised alarm bells in Vilnius

Ideally, in times of crisis, efforts at de-escalation should replace alarmist narratives. That is precisely what is needed in the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia as the US continues to arm them, provoking Russia from its western sphere of influence. The US has urged NATO to increase its support to Baltic member states through speedy reinforcements as mentioned at the recently concluded NATO Washington Summit. However, the threat perception is misguided. America's justification for propping up the region as a potential front should the Ukraine war spread is only plausible if there is an impending military attack from Russia. That is not the case. Tensions have escalated between the Baltic states and the Kremlin since the start of the Ukraine war due to the former's unequivocal support for Ukraine. Moscow has also made allegations that Soviet-era memorials were removed in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania amid an intensification of the Ukraine war. A pair of US Air Force B-1B Lancer long-range missile carriers flew over the Baltic region today and took off from the British Fairford Air Force Base. The group was moving towards the Russian state border, and the Su-27 fighter jet was deployed to intercept it. Unequivocal support from the Baltic countries – which are also NATO member states – for the Zelenskyy government in Kiev has irked the Putin administration and prompted his regime to undertake retaliatory measures, including placing senior officials such as Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas on a "wanted list" over the removal of Soviet-era memorials. The souring ties are concomitant with the US Air Force's B-52 bombers flying over Baltic airspace to tackle possible airspace violations by Russian fighter jets. This includes flying close to the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, which is sandwiched between Poland and Lithuania. However, the presence of American aerial combat operations has not resulted in direct confrontation by Moscow. Instead, Russia has opted for hybrid tactics such as jamming GPS signals of commercial flights and satellite signals, as was the case with Russia jamming signals of a Royal Air Force

aircraft in March 2024. Russia's decision to opt for hybrid warfare instead of military confrontation with the United States and its allies is based on the fact that a direct approach would be unwinnable and only result in greater international isolation. The latest violations of Lithuanian airspace by a Russian civilian aircraft headed to the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, a city sandwiched between Lithuania and Poland, has once again raised alarm bells in Vilnius. EU has imposed a blanket flight ban on all Russian planes; a press ban with RT and Sputnik news being banned; crippling sanctions against Russia and yet Russia is an "aggressor"? As a consequence of the Ukraine war, Russian flights are banned from crossing through EU airspace, yet Moscow has ignored these restrictions. It is important to note that the EU ban differs from a proposed NATO ban, which the military alliance has rejected because a full-scale direct confrontation is possible. Hence, there is no justification for America to increase its footprint in the Baltics over airspace violations. Also, Russia's reported plans to declare part of the Baltic Sea as internal maritime waters have alarmed the Baltic states, which have called for securing their shores with defence shields. However, internal divisions and fissures in the EU exist on how to tackle the Russian threat. Member states such as Germany are adopting a dualistic and hypocritical approach. On one hand, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock called out Russia for carrying out hybrid attacks on Baltic states. But Berlin has also refused to supply Kiev with cruise missiles and termed the Nord Stream 2 pipeline as a private economic project rather than a Russian one after Moscow recognised two breakaway regions in Ukraine. This is evidence of a duplicitous approach towards Russia which will not change in the Balkans. Countries such as Estonia will continue to provide significant military aid to Ukraine, while Latvia will express support, as it did when French President Emmanuel Macron adopted a hawkish stance towards Moscow in March 2024. However, a full-scale Russian attack which justifies increased American troop pres-

ence in the Baltics remains questionable. Firstly, there is already a significant presence of American, French and German troops in the Baltics, such as at training bases in Estonia. Lithuania has also been hosting a German-led 1500-strong multinational battalion since 2017. The presence of these troops has not resulted in Russia attacking the Baltics. And neither would boosting America's military presence in the region change Russia's tactics of violating airspace or engaging in cyber-attacks. The cost of direct confrontation is way too high. Biden in 1997 saying that the only thing that could provoke a "vigorous and hostile" Russian response would be if NATO expanded as far as the Baltic states. Secondly, Lithuania's call for having a US military battalion stationed indefinitely has so far only coincided with skirmishes in Baltic airspace, cyber-attacks, diplomatic castigation, and jamming of satellite signals, which is the standard modus operandi of the Putin regime. While there is no indication that Russia seeks to attack the Baltics, an increase in American troop presence could antagonize Moscow and heighten tensions in the region. Thirdly, Russia is currently bogged down by its war in Ukraine, which has been acknowledged by Estonia's own annual state report of security threats of 2024. While the findings indicate that Russia seeks to double the number of troops stationed along its borders, it also renders the possibility of a direct military attack on the West from Putin as "unlikely." Russia is pressed by logistical problems in Ukraine and is sensitive to greater international isolation, which could further damage its economy. These factors are part of Putin's strategic calculus, which the United States has not accounted for while justifying strengthening of defenses in the region. Based on the factors mentioned above, it is clear that the Ukraine conflict will be kept within Ukraine as Russia opts for hybrid warfare to tackle seemingly "hostile" neighboring states such as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. For the US, there is no justification to boost its military presence in the Baltics.

## Briefs

**'Afghan soil must not be used to export terrorism'**

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The Prime Minister emphasized financial and technical assistance to climate vulnerable countries enabling them to tackle the threat. He underlined the need for fundamental reforms of international financial architecture to make it more effective, inclusive and equitable. He also called for implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. On SCO, Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed Pakistan's determination to advance the SCO agenda in partnership with membership states to strengthen multilateral institutions and enhance global cooperation.

**Pakistan to host SCO heads..**

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The organisation's second most critical decision-making body. She told the media that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and senior cabinet members are currently visiting Kazakhstan for the SCO Council of Heads of State and SCO Plus Summits. Earlier, they also went to Tajikistan for a bilateral visit. During the SCO Summit in Astana, the prime minister also participated in the inaugural Pakistan-Azerbaijan-Turkey Trilateral Summit. In Dushanbe, the focus of his meetings was enhancing comprehensive cooperation between Pakistan and Tajikistan on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

**Labour tipped for historic...**

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potential seat count could vary between 391 and 466, while the Conservatives could range from 78 to 129 seats. The pollster conducted interviews with 47,758 voters across Great Britain from June 19 to July 2 to compile the data. The new survey paints a grim national outlook for the Tories, positioning them primarily as a party focused on the South East, South West, and East of England. They would likely face near wipe out in the North East, North West, and Wales, regions where Boris Johnson previously enjoyed stronger support.

**France's far right unlikely...**

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RN and its allies are likely to obtain between 190 and 220 seats. Meanwhile, the centre-right Republicans (LR) — who have allied with Le Pen — were projected to win between 30 and 50 seats. This outcome would likely prevent the possibility of a far-right minority government supported by part of the LR parliamentary group. The poll followed the withdrawal of more than 200 candidates from various political parties who came in third in their constituencies in the first round, aiming to support the strongest candidate against the RN in the second round of voting on Sunday.

**SC suspends LHC's verdict, ECP...**

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Constitution the power to appoint election tribunals was vested in the electoral body which could not be exercised by the high court. The ECP had further contended that Article 219 of the constitution did not expressly require consultation by the chief justice of the high court concerned for appointing election tribunals or for allocating territorial jurisdiction to such election tribunals.

# Ex-players to decide Babar Azam's captaincy: Naqvi

Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Mohsin Naqvi said that there is, however, no decision taken so far related to Babar Azam

## SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: The chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board, Mohsin Naqvi, stated on Thursday that former cricketers will decide the future of Babar Azam as the white-ball captain of the national side. However, Naqvi didn't specify who those former cricketers would be. "There is, however, no decision taken so far related to Babar Azam," the top cricket official, who also serves as the country's interior minister, told reporters in Lahore. "I'm only speaking to those former cricketers who are interested in the betterment of Pakistan cricket," he added. Naqvi also said that one former cricketer, without revealing the name, has already shared a detailed report on Pakistan cricket's shortcomings. Pakistan had failed to qualify for the Super 8 round of the recently-concluded T20 World



Cup 2024 after humiliating losses against India and the United States. "People are asking about

surgery but one should not take any decision while you are angry. Hasty decisions can prove to be harmful more often than not," Naqvi responded when asked about his earlier remarks about a major surgery in Pakistan cricket. Naqvi also didn't seem too impressed with the decision making of the selection committee. "Whoever made wrong decisions in the selections committee will also be held accountable," he said. The PCB chief also said that he has called head coach Gary Kirsten and assistant coach Azhar Mahmood for a discussion on the Pakistan team's performance. "Kirsten has also submitted a detailed report on Pakistan team's performance in the T20 World Cup," Naqvi added. Naqvi admitted that he is also looking into "grouping and politics" in the Pakistan team. He also reiterated that players' inclusion in the national side will be directly linked to performance in domestic cricket.

## Arshad departs for diamond league ahead of PO

LAHORE: Pakistan's premier javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem departed for Paris late Wednesday night to take part in the Diamond League which will be held in France's capital on July 7. It will be a testing event for Arshad to know his fitness and form before the Paris Olympics which will begin from July 26. Arshad recently missed an event in Finland due to calf muscle strain which he developed just before flying for Finland. His management and federation decided to skip the event keeping in view the approaching Olympics in Paris where Arshad will be Pakistan's sole med-

al-winning hope. Arshad's England-based doctor Dr Ali Sher Bajwa also has come to Pakistan and has checked his fitness and is happy with the way Arshad has achieved fitness. Bajwa was also scheduled to accompany Arshad to Paris for Diamond League. Dr Bajwa will also accompany Arshad during the Paris Olympics. He has been associated with him for the last few years and was also with him during the World Championship in the US in 2022. Recently a laser surgery on Arshad's right knee was conducted in England. Arshad's coach Salman Butt is optimistic about Arshad's fitness and form. "Yes, he

is in good nick now. He is fit. We have done our job and let's see how it goes," Butt told The News. Arshad also did training at the Punjab Stadium on Wednesday morning in the scorching heat. Arshad, Butt and Dr Bajwa were scheduled to fly out of here for Paris at 3am for the Diamond League. It is an invitational event in which the world's best athletes compete. It carries decent prize money. It will be after one year that Arshad will compete in any event. After claiming silver medal in the World Championship in Hungary last year, Arshad had to miss a few events also including the Hangzhou

Asian Games due to knee injury. He struggled all the way for achieving fitness and eventually underwent surgery in England which helped him recover. After featuring in the Diamond League, Arshad will return home on July 8 and will undergo a few days training at Lahore before flying back to Paris on July 24 to take part in the Olympics. Arshad will get around 12 days to acclimatise before his August 6 meet in Olympics. Arshad's personal best throw is 90.18m which he managed at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. He finished fifth in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.—APP

## WCL2024 : England outclass SA by nine wickets

LONDON : England outclassed South Africa by nine wickets in the third match of the World Championship of Legends 2024 in Birmingham. The home side chased down the target in the 11th over with Phil Mustard dominating the run chase. Skipper Kevin Pieteresen brought the flair to the chase, smashing 11-ball 28. Mustard remained unbeaten on 35-ball 84 which included six fours and nine sixes. Ian Bell contributed 18 on 20 balls. Earlier, South Africa only managed 137 after being asked to bat first. The start was not great with captain Jacques Kallis getting dismissed by RJ Sidebottom after scoring 13 runs off 30 balls. His partner, Herschelle Gibbs put up a quick 26 runs off 19 balls, maintaining an impressive strike rate of 136.84 before being bowled out by Owais Shah. Ajmal Shahzad and Owais Shah kept the pressure in the middle overs by taking wickets at regular intervals. At the back-end, wicketkeeper Dane Vilas provided some stability with 16 runs off 17 balls. Ryan McLaren contributed a valuable 22 runs off 24 balls. Vernon Philander remained not out, scoring 14 runs off 12 balls. The innings concluded with Rory Kleinveldt scoring a quick 21 runs off 15 balls. Bopara was the pick of the bowler, picking three wickets in eight balls while Owais Shah took 3/23.—APP

## ICC reveals nominees for Player of the Month

DUBAI : The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Thursday announced the shortlists of nominees for the ICC Player of the Month awards for June. Two stars, Jasprit Bumrah and Rohit Sharma, of India's sensational T20 World Cup win in the USA and West Indies, along with Afghanistan's Rahmanullah Gurbaz, are part of the shortlists for the ICC Men's Player of the Month. "India's frontline pacer Jasprit Bumrah swept the ICC Player of the Month award after scintillating displays of fast bowling throughout June, earning his third nomination for the Player of the Month awards," the ICC said in a press release. "His compatriot Rohit Sharma skipped India to their first ICC silverware in 13 years and is shortlisted having topped his side's runscore charts. "Completing the lineup is Afghanistan's electric opening batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz, who lit up the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, ending as the tournament's top run-getter." The ICC Women's Player of the Month shortlist contains England batter Maia Bouchier, who will be keen to win her second Women's Player of the Month. Sri Lanka's Vishmi Gunaratne, who stole the limelight in their home ODI series against West Indies after winning the Player of the Series award, is also part of the shortlists. The final nominee is India's Smriti Mandhana, seeking to win her first ICC Women's Player of the Month courtesy superb showing with the bat against South Africa.—APP

## Wimbledon craves Murray magic, Djokovic in action

LONDON: Andy Murray launches his Wimbledon farewell alongside his brother Jamie in the men's doubles on Thursday as Novak Djokovic and Iga Swiatek target the third round. Murray, the champion in 2013 and 2016, was desperate for one last crack at the singles but ran out of time after recent surgery to remove a spinal cyst. The British former world number one still has a chance to wave goodbye to his adoring fans in both the men's doubles and mixed doubles as he treats the turf for a final time, 19 years after his Wimbledon debut. "I'm hoping maybe for a bit of closure. I just want the opportunity to play one more time out there, hopefully on Centre Court, and feel that buzz," the 37-year-old said before the tournament started. Murray is a three-time Grand Slam singles champion but has form in the doubles — teaming up with Jamie to help Britain win the 2015 Davis Cup. Andy Murray gets fans' vote as Brits take centre stage at Wimbledon. The Murrays will face Australian pair Rinky Hijikata and John Peers on Thursday, with the decibel count expected to soar. Andy Murray is also scheduled to play mixed doubles with British compatriot and former US Open champion Emma Raducanu. Seven-time champion Novak Djokovic is back in action against British rookie Jacob Fearnley on day four of the tournament. The Serb's injury at the French Open — forcing him to pull out before his quarter-final against Casper Ruud — raised doubts over whether he would be fit for Wimbledon. But just weeks after he had a knee operation, it was business as usual for the 37-year-old in the first round. He dropped just five games against Czech qualifier Vit Kopriwa in an emphatic display of his ageless power. The world number two is seeking to equal Roger Federer's record of eight Wimbledon men's titles and is aiming for a record 25th Grand Slam title. Djokovic was pretty relaxed about the prospect of facing Fearnley, who can boast wins over defending Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz and world number one Jannik Sinner in his junior days. "I haven't seen him hit," he said. "I don't know really anything about him so I'll have to do my homework. "Obviously him being British, he's going to have the crowd. You never like to play the British at Wimbledon. But, you know, I'm looking forward." Women's world number one Swiatek, who has never been beyond the quarter-finals at the All England Club, is on a winning streak of 20 matches after a comfortable straight-sets victory over Sofia Kenin. The top-seeded Pole, chasing a sixth Grand Slam title, faces Croatia's Petra Martic on Centre Court after Djokovic starts the programme. British players dominate the early action on Court No. 1, with the country's women's number one, Katie Boulter, taking on compatriot Harriet Dart. They will be followed by Jack Draper, Britain's leading man, who plays Cameron Norrie, a semi-finalist at his home Grand Slam in 2022. French Open runner-up Alexander Zverev, the Wimbledon fourth seed, is last on the list on Court One, taking on US player Marcos Giron, ranked 46th. Elena Rybakina, the 2022 women's champion, plays Germany's Laura Siegemund while two-time finalist Ons Jabeur takes on US qualifier Robin Montgomery.—DNA

## T20 WC Indian champions meet PM Modi

The team was treated with shouts of 'India, India' after it touched down at Delhi airport

## OUR CORRESPONDENTS

NEW DELHI : India's T20 World Cup winners met Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the Rohit Sharma-led unit returned home to a heroes' welcome Thursday in New Delhi. The team was treated with shouts of "India, India" after it touched down at Delhi airport from the Caribbean, having been delayed for days by Hurricane Beryl. The team waved to the crowds and danced to drums and live music at their hotel before heading off to meet Modi at his residence. Rohit and his team wore Indian jerseys emblazoned with "Champions", as broadcasters showed images of them meeting the premier. Modi posed for a photograph with the team before sitting down for a chat with the players. The team then left for Mumbai for an open-topped bus victory parade in the heart of India's financial capital later in the day, which will end at Wankhede Stadium. Earlier in the morning, whistles and wild cheers greeted the players as they walked out from the arrivals area with gold medals around their necks, some giving a thumbs-up to their fans. "This is surreal, watching my team with the World Cup," emotional fan Rohit Khanna told AFP. "I saw the 2011 triumph, but this is a moment I will never forget." Despite monsoon rain, crowds gathered outside New Delhi's air-

port long before dawn, waiting for a glimpse of their idols, who had beaten South Africa on Saturday in a thrilling final in Barbados. It was vice-captain Hardik Pandya who emerged first, wearing a Caribbean hat, and the crowd erupted when captain Rohit came out carrying the glittering trophy, which he hoisted into the air.

Star batsman Virat Kohli, whose hometown is Delhi, was given some of the loudest cheers as he waved to hundreds of fans. "It's a dream for me to witness India return home from a World Cup," said a shirtless fan with a Kohli tattoo on his chest. Last weekend's win ended an 11-year global cricket trophy drought for India following their 2013 Cham-

pions Trophy win. Their last World Cup victory was at home in the 2011 50-over edition under the captaincy of Mahendra Singh Dhoni. One fan held up a poster of coach Rahul Dravid. "Thank you, Mr Dependable," it read. The final was the last match in charge for Dravid, 51, who was bounced in the air by the team during the post-match

celebrations. Rohit, Kohli and allrounder Ravindra Jadeja all announced their retirement from T20 international cricket after the final. Plane tracking website, Flightradar24, said the special Air India charter had been the "most tracked flight for much of the last 15 hours", as excited fans followed the team's journey back from the Caribbean.



## PTI seeks urgent hearing...

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constituencies and one national assembly constituency were missing from the ECP website and all these constituencies fall in Lahore. He stated that it disclosed that the ECP had uploaded Form-46s as substitute of Form-45s to cover the void. PTI Spokesperson declared that the worst rigged, controversial and non-transparent general elections were held in the history of the country on February 8, which was evident from the voices being raised against the polls fraud at national and internal level. He went on to say that Liaquat Chatta, Commissioner Rawalpindi, during a press conference on February 17, exposed the central characters and protagonists of the rigged elections. PTI Spokesperson contended that a systematic conspiracy was hatched to keep PTI out of the electoral process and political arena for two years, from April 9, 2022, to February 8, 2024 to get favourable polls results fraudulently.

## PTI leaders dispel rumours...

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He said some elements wanted to pressurize PTI lawmakers but PTI MNAs wanted to make it clear that all MNAs were united and will remain part of Imran Khan's team. On the occasion, Shibli Faraz said that, "We are all elected people, we are being humiliated. We came to meet our leader which was our right as Imran Khan is the former Prime Minister of the country." He said the PTI wanted to seek permission from DC Islamabad for a rally in Islamabad but the local administration didn't allow them and also arrested PTI leader Amir Mughal. He said, "We have come to the assemblies after fighting elections". Shibli said: "Nowadays, some people were launched and they want to break the party". He said, "we all agree with allegiance to our leader Imran Khan. We have no differences as on February 8, the masses had voted for Imran Khan".

## Leghari admits to high...

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Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's directive, emphasised Minister Leghari, aims to mitigate the impact on consumers, highlighting the government's absorption of a substantial burden amounting to 440 billion rupees, translating to 5.76 rupees per unit. "In my three months in office, we've prioritized strategies to alleviate electricity costs," Leghari assured, adding that the goal is to achieve substantial reductions within in eighteen months.

## Rs 5.72 per unit increase...

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According to the government sources, the decision of the federal cabinet will be sent to Nepra for uniform tariff. Following the approval of Nepra, the federal government will issue a notification to increase the basic tariff of electricity. According to the sources, under the IMF conditions, the federal government will have to increase the basic electricity tariff by July 10. As per the decision of Nepra, the increase in the basic tariff of electricity will have an additional burden of about Rs600 billion on the electricity consumers.

## 2 terrorists killed in...

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fire between the law enforcers and suspects. The slain suspect masterminded a bus attack in Chilas in December last year, which led to several casualties. On Wednesday, security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Bajaur district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and killed a terrorist commander during an intense exchange of fire.

## Briefs

**Pro-Palestinian group scales Australia's parliament**

SYDNEY : Protesters scaled Australia's national parliament on Thursday, unfurling banners reading "Palestine will be free", and accusing Prime Minister Anthony Albanese of complicity in the Gaza war. The small protest follows recent divisions within the Labor government, which suspended a Muslim senator who crossed the floor to vote in favour of Australia recognising a Palestinian state. Senator Fatima Payman said she had been "exiled" after supporting the parliamentary motion - put forward by the Greens party - in defiance of government policy. Like many of its Western allies, Australia does not recognise a Palestinian state. Canberra has expressed its support for an eventual two-state solution. Protest group Renegade Activists told Australian media they would "not forget" and "not forgive" Albanese, accusing him of complicity in the Gaza Strip's bloodiest-ever war. Clad in black and wearing traditional Palestinian keffiyeh scarves, the small group of protesters climbed the facade at the entrance to Australia's parliament before rolling out several large black-and-white banners. Opposition senator James Paterson said it was a "serious breach of the parliament's security". -APP

**Armed group attacks Mali wedding**

BAMAKO : The assault that claimed at least 21 lives, believed to be carried out by extremists, exposes the vulnerability of civilians and the ongoing battle against extremist violence in the region. An armed group attacked a wedding ceremony in central Mali and killed at least 21 people, residents said Wednesday, as the West African nation's military rulers struggle to combat growing violence by militants. The assailants rode on motorcycles into Djiuguibombo village in the town of Bandiagara on Monday evening as residents celebrated the couple, according to Bakary Guindo, president of the local youth group. "Most of the victims had their throats slit," Guindo said. Resident Hamidou Saye said the attackers surrounded the large number of attendees. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but it follows the pattern of ones by the al Qaeda-linked JNIM terror group which often targets the region. Communities across central and northern Mali have been in the grip of such violence since 2012. Militants were forced from power in northern cities the following year, with the help of recently expelled French troops. The militants have regrouped and launched attacks on remote villages and security forces. -APP

**Colombian dens of iniquity recycled to serve victims**

MEDELLIN : In a mansion with golden faucets and an oyster-shaped bathtub, Colombian paramilitary fighters and drug lords once planned the most horrific crimes. Now, the opulent property will be put to the service of their victims. In Medellin, the luxury Montecassino estate was a venue for planning the assassinations of presidential candidates and massacres of rural people accused of supporting leftist guerrillas, according to the testimony of former hitmen. It was owned by brothers Carlos, Vicente and Fidel Castano - heads of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), a US-designated "terrorist" organization set up to fight the FARC guerrilla group and known for human rights abuses. Murderous drug kingpin Pablo Escobar attended meetings and parties hosted at the house in El Poblado, Medellin's most exclusive neighborhood. With its marble floors and immense gardens, the house was seized by the state in 2010 after the brothers' demise. -APP

**Lukashenko suggests adopting Belarus-Pak coop roadmap**

*During the conversation, Aleksandr Lukashenko mentioned his friendly relations with Nawaz Sharif, the brother of the incumbent Pakistani prime minister, who also headed up the government several years ago*

DNA

ASTANA: Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko met with Prime Minister of Pakistan She-

hbaz Sharif during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Astana on 4 July, BelTA has learned. The Belarusian head of state suggested finalizing and approving a bilateral cooperation roadmap. Shehbaz Sharif renewed his invitation to the Belarusian head of state to visit Pakistan. Aleksandr Lukashenko thanked him for the meeting and significant help to fast-track Belarus' accession to the SCO as a full member. "Thank you for the cordial and friendly atmosphere of all our meetings at various international forums, including this one," said the Belarusian leader. Aleksandr Lukashenko congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on his recent election as Pakistan's Prime Minister. "I will try my best to visit Pakistan by the end of the year," said the Belarusian leader. "There will be a number of bilateral events this year. The joint intergovernmental commission is to convene in September. Our prime minister is set



to attend the meeting of the SCO heads of government in Pakistan in October. I will really appreciate if you find time to meet with him. At this meeting we could finalize our action plan going forward. And you and I could approve this plan - the road map - during my visit to Pakistan before the end of this year," the president said. "Probably, we are past the period when we were closely studying each other trying to figure out in what areas we could cooperate. It's time for us to move on to establishing the closest ties between our countries," the Belarusian leader added. During the conversation, Aleksandr Lukashenko mentioned his friendly relations with Nawaz Sharif, the brother of the incumbent Pakistani prime minister, who also headed up the government several years ago. The president hopes that Nawaz Sharif will also be in Islamabad during his visit.

**Turkiye prioritizes regional peace via vigorous diplomacy: Erdogan**

Despite many hurdles, Türkiye working to build effective, inclusive international system to ensure global peace, says Recep Tayyip Erdogan

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: Türkiye aims to ensure peace in its region and beyond through vigorous diplomacy based on people and human values, the country's president said on Thursday. "Despite all hurdles, we are working to build an effective, and inclusive international system to ensure peace, security, stability, and prosperity," Recep Tayyip Erdogan said at a Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Kazakhstan's capital, Astana. Erdogan added that the ruins covering the Gaza Strip, under which the bodies of over 16,000

innocent children lie, the victims of a nearly nine-month-old Israeli offensive, are also the wreckage of the international system which has lost its legitimacy as it failed to stop the slaughter. Israel has to be stopped, and forced to accept a permanent cease-fire in Gaza, he said, urging countries to increase pressure on the Israeli administration. Israel, flouting a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate cease-fire, has faced international condemnation amid its continued brutal offensive on Gaza since an Oct. 7, 2023 attack by Palestinian group Hamas. More than 38,000 Palestinians have since been killed, mostly women and children, and over 87,400 others injured, according to local health authorities. Nearly nine months into the Israeli war, vast tracts of Gaza lie 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 southern city of Rafah, where over a million Palestinians had sought refuge from the war before it was invaded on May 6.

**Chemical leak at Kuala Lumpur airport affects 20**

Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur : Around 20 people at Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur international airport were sent for medical treatment on Thursday after a gas leak at an aircraft engineering facility, though there were no disruptions to airport operations, the fire department said. The Selangor state fire department said it received an emergency call regarding a chemical leak at the Southern Support Zone Sepang Aircraft Engineering facility at 11.23 am (0323 GMT) and dispatched its personnel along with a hazardous materials team. The chemical was later identified as methyl mercaptan, a flammable colourless gas with a putrid smell sometimes used in the production of jet fuel. The 20 people affected, all of whom were airport personnel, had complained of dizziness, the department said. There was no wider risk to public safety, a spokesperson from the fire department said. -APP

**25 people drown in Sudan fleeing fighting**

PORT SUDAN : Around 25 people have drowned in Sudan's southeast while trying to flee fighting between the Sudanese army and paramilitary forces, a pro-democracy activists' committee said Thursday. "Around 25 citizens, most of them women and children, have died in a boat sinking" while crossing the Blue Nile River in the southeastern state of Sennar, the local resistance committee said in a statement. The committee is one of hundreds across Sudan that used to organize pro-democracy protests and have coordinated frontline aid since the war between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) began last year. "Entire families perished" in the accident, they said, while fleeing the RSF's recent advance through Sennar. On Saturday, the RSF announced they had captured the military base in Sinja, the capital of Sennar state, where over half a million people had sought shelter from the war. Witnesses also reported the RSF sweeping through neighboring villages, pushing residents to flee in small wooden boats across the Nile. At least 55,000 people fled Sinja alone within a three day period, the United Nations said Monday. Local authorities in neighboring Gedaref state estimated on Thursday that some 120,000 displaced people had arrived this week. The state's health minister Ahmed Al-Amin Adam said 90,000 had been officially registered. Over 10 million people are currently displaced across Sudan, in what the UN calls the world's worst displacement crisis. Sudan has been gripped by war since April 2023, when fighting erupted between forces loyal to army chief Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and the RSF led by his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Dagalou. The conflict in the country of 48 million has killed tens of thousands, with some estimates putting the death toll as high as 150,000, according to the United States envoy to Sudan, Tom Perriello. -DNA

**Air pollution causes 7.2% deaths in Indian cities**

NEW DELHI : Some 7.2% of deaths reported in 10 major Indian cities are caused by air pollution, a new study said on Thursday. The study by The Lancet Planetary Health claimed significant associations between short-term exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and daily mortality rates across multiple cities in India, which last year surpassed China as the world's most populous nation. Done by an international team of researchers, this study is the first of its kind to analyze the acute effects of air pollution on mortality. The research, from 2008 to 2019, encompassed over 3.6 million deaths. Delhi, India's capital, saw the highest impact, with 12,000 deaths due to air pollution annually, or 11.5% of the total. The country's current recommendation of 60 micrograms of PM2.5 per cubic meter (35.3 cubic feet) is four times higher than the guidelines from the UN's World Health Organization (WHO). Even cities with lower pollution levels, like Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai, had high death rates. The study found a significant increase in mortality risk, suggesting that there is no safe threshold for PM2.5 exposure. This is particularly concerning given that air pollution levels in many Indian cities frequently exceed both Indian and WHO guidelines. Some 7.2% of all daily deaths in the cities studied could be attributed to PM2.5 concentrations exceeding the WHO's 24-hour guideline of 15 micrograms per cubic meter. -APP

**Japan records 500 deaths due to dementia**

TOKYO : Japan records 19,000 missing people, 500 deaths due to dementia. The country's National Police Agency recorded that 19,039 people went missing, which is up 330 from 2022. It is the largest since the police began compiling data in 2012, the public broadcaster NHK reported. Of all missing persons, police found 18,175 people alive, while 502 were confirmed dead. Some 250 were still missing at the end of last year. The central Hyogo province reported the highest number of such cases at 2,094, while the Osaka province recorded 2,016 and Saitama 1,912. -APP

**Tokyo shares close at new all-time high**

TOKYO : Tokyo shares surged to a new record close on Thursday, as bullish global investors drive up US tech stocks. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index climbed 0.82 percent, or 332.89 points, to 40,913.65, while the broader Topix index added 0.92 percent, or 26.29 points, to 2,898.47. The Nikkei marked five straight winning sessions - lifted by the continued strength of US tech shares on the back of falling US bond yields, as well as the yen's weakness and rising commodity prices. "The risk-on mood continued," Iwai Cosmo Securities said. Tokyo and other major global shares have steadily gained since last year, with the Nikkei surpassing the 40,000 mark for the first time in March. The month before, the Nikkei finally broke through a record high set just before an asset bubble in Japan catastrophically burst in the early 1990s.

**Bitcoin drops below \$59,000**

LONDON : The price of Bitcoin decreased below \$59,000 by dropping around 4% in value within the last 24-hour period. The current price of Bitcoin is at around \$58,200, as of 0750GMT, and its market cap dropped to \$1.15 trillion. Bitcoin's transaction volume in the last 24-hour period was around \$35 billion. Last week, Bitcoin saw over \$63,000 level and over \$70,000 in June. Ethereum's value also dropped by 5% to \$3,180 during the last 24 hours. The crypto money market's size, including Bitcoin, narrowed by 4.3% to \$2.16 trillion, according to data by Coingecko, a digital asset price-tracking website. -APP

**Chinese premier calls for int'l AI cooperation**

SHANGHAI: Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Thursday called for global cooperation and a more open mindset in artificial intelligence, as a rivalry between Beijing and Washington heats up in the nascent tech field. China has raced to catch up with US tech companies in generative AI in particular, with the UN saying on Wednesday that Beijing was the top filer of generative AI patents globally. The US and other countries have reacted with alarm to Chinese technology that they claim can be used for espionage operations, with Washington revoking licenses for some chip exports in April after China's Huawei unveiled a computer powered by Intel AI technology. Chinese Premier Li on Thursday urged countries to adopt "more open mindsets" and promote international cooperation on AI. "Each country has its own advantages in its AI technology, data and market, so we should engage in mutual cooperation and join forces," Li said in a speech at the opening of the World AI Conference (WAIC) in Shanghai. Chinese tech companies are expected to unveil multiple new AI products at the multi-day international convention. AI governance in financial institutions and Pakistan's conservative approach Li in his speech urged countries to promote "movement of data across borders, free trade of equipment and connectivity of infrastructure". He warned that risks brought about by rapidly developing AI technology would also require concerted international attention. -APP

**DRC court sentences 25 soldiers to death**

FOREIGN DESK

Twenty-five soldiers accused of fleeing fighting against M23 rebels in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have been sentenced to death. The Butembo military court in North Kivu province handed the sentences down on Wednesday, deeming them guilty of fleeing the enemy, dissipation of war munitions and violation of orders. "I find them guilty and sentence each of them to death," said Colonel Kabeya Ya Hanu, president of the military court.

The tribunal was set up close to the scene of recent clashes between the Congolese army and M23 fighters with the aim of discouraging soldiers from fleeing the front line. A total of 31 defendants, including 27 soldiers and four of their civilian wives, appeared before the military court during the one-day trial, said Jules Muvweke, one of the defence lawyers. The four women were acquitted while one soldier was sentenced to 10 years' jail for robbery. The verdict for the last soldier was unclear. In early May, eight Congolese soldiers, including five officers, were sentenced

to death in Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu, for "cowardice" and "fleeing the enemy". Moise Hangi, a human rights activist, noted DRC's government only recently lifted a moratorium on the death penalty that was in place since 2003. "We are in danger of reaching the point where many military personnel are going to be candidates for this decision, rather than improving our security apparatus. This kind of decision will increasingly weaken our military and give more fear to those on all the front lines," Hangi said. Last week, M23 - the March 23 movement,

which the United Nations claims is backed by Rwanda - seized several towns on the northern front of the conflict. Rwanda denies any involvement. Faced with the combined might of the Rwandan army and M23, Congolese troops have repeatedly retreated without a fight, news reports say. "Many units have less than half the number of soldiers they are supposed to have due to desertions and casualties," said Jason Stearns, a former UN investigator who now runs the Congo Research Group at New York University. "Above all, there is a lack of accountability and morale."

**Engineer M Ali Mirza's "religious revolution"**

The rise of Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza has put traditional religious scholars on the defensive position

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



In the contemporary Islamic world, Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza stands as a beacon of change and enlightenment, having initiated a religious revolution that is unprecedented in many centuries. His impact is especially profound among Muslim youths, who had long been disillusioned by the divisive and often misleading rhetoric propagated by various Muslim sects. For centuries, Islamic scholarship has been dominated by sectarian interpretations and narratives that often served the interests of religious authorities rather than the pursuit of truth. Many reli-

gious scholars from various sects have been accused of selectively quoting the Quran and Hadiths-Islam's foundational texts-to support their doctrinal positions. These scholars frequently told fictitious stories aimed at reinforcing their authority and securing financial gain, creating a culture of dependency among their followers. They discouraged independent study of the Quran and Hadiths, promoting the idea that their interpretations should be accepted without question. Against this backdrop, Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza emerged as a revolutionary figure. Unlike traditional scholars, he advocates for a direct and unfiltered engagement with Islamic texts. His approach is characterized by a meticulous and transparent use of references from the Quran and Hadiths. By providing verse and hadith numbers, he empowers his audience to verify his claims independently, thereby fostering a culture of critical thinking and personal study. Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza's emphasis on authentic sources and his rejection of fabricated stories have resonated deeply with the educated youth. As education

levels rise among Muslims, more individuals are equipped to engage with religious texts. This shift has created a significant challenge for tradition-



al scholars, whose authority is increasingly questioned by a generation that values evidence over blind faith. One of the most notable aspects of Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza's work is his challenge to sectarianism. By focusing on the core teachings of Islam as found in the Quran and Hadiths, he transcends the divisions that have long plagued the Muslim world. His message emphasizes the shared beliefs and values that unite Muslims, rather than the differences that divide them. This inclusive approach has made him a unifying

figure, attracting followers from diverse sectarian backgrounds. The rise of Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza has put traditional religious authorities on the defensive. Accustomed to a position of unquestioned authority, these scholars now face a growing demand for transparency and accountability. Many have attempted to discredit him through personal attacks and fatwas, but such efforts have largely backfired. Instead of diminishing his influence, these actions have often highlighted the reluctance of traditional scholars to engage in open and honest debate. The revolution sparked by Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza represents a broader shift in Islamic scholarship. The increasing accessibility of education and information technology has democratized religious knowledge, breaking the monopoly once held by traditional scholars. Muslims, especially the youth, are now more capable and willing to study religious texts independently, leading to a more informed and engaged community. This new era of scholarship is characterized by a return to primary sources and a commitment to intellectu-

al honesty. It encourages Muslims to seek knowledge directly from the Quran and Hadiths, guided by reason and evidence rather than sectarian bias. This approach not only enhances individual understanding but also fosters a more cohesive and harmonious Muslim community. Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza has initiated a religious revolution that is reshaping the landscape of Islamic scholarship. His emphasis on authentic sources, critical thinking, and unity has resonated with a generation of Muslims eager for truth and transparency. As traditional religious authorities grapple with this new reality, the Muslim world stands on the brink of a new era-one where truth is guided by evidence, and unity is built on shared principles. This transformation is not without its challenges, but it holds the promise of a more enlightened and harmonious future for Muslims worldwide. Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza's legacy will likely be remembered as a turning point in the history of Islamic thought, marking the beginning of a movement towards a more authentic and inclusive understanding of Islam.

The views expressed in the article are writer's own.

## Briefs

### NDMA predicts rains, floods across country

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: NDMA's National Emergency Operation Centre (Neoc) predicted rains and floods in many areas of the country. According to the Neoc, rains are expected in Northeast Punjab, Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Potohar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and South Sindh. According to the report, in case of possible release of water from India, the flow of water in the rivers is likely to rise further.

According to Neoc, there is a possibility of flood in urban areas, and landslides in hilly areas of GB, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Kashmir. The NDMA also issued a warning to the public to avoid crossing flooded areas, while tourists and travelers have been advised to avoid travel during emergency days.

### EU hits Chinese EVs with new tariffs

BRUSSELS: The European Union has raised tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, as Brussels takes action to protect the bloc's motor industry. The new tariffs on individual manufacturers range from 17.4% to 37.6%, which is on top of a 10% duty that was already in place for all electric cars imported from China. This could raise the price of EVs across the EU, making them less affordable for European consumers. The move is also a major blow for Beijing, which is already in a trade war with Washington. The EU is the largest overseas market for China's EV industry and the country is counting on high-tech products to help revive its flagging economy. EU officials say this rise in imports was boosted by "unfair subsidisation", which allowed China-made EVs to be sold at much lower prices than ones produced in the bloc. - Agencies

### 'People vote PPP for outstanding performance'

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah stated that the people voted for PPP because it has been the best-performing party in the province. He announced the Thar Coal Project, a major energy initiative set to produce 7.8 million tons of coal annually. Speaking at the Vision Sindh Programme in Karachi, Shah said the project is a game changer for Pakistan's energy landscape. He said this project has a total cost of \$1.17 billion. The Sindh CM explained that the project is expected to generate 1,320 MW of electricity from Thar Block-1, with an additional 100 MW to be provided to Karachi from the Nauraabad Power Plant. The project will benefit 15 districts in Sindh, and the Sindh government has planned to plant over 0.7 million trees in Thar to support the initiative, he said.

ЗАСЕДАНИЕ СОВЕТА ГЛАВ ГОСУДАРСТВ-ЧЛЕНОВ ШАНХАЙСКОЙ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА

4 июля 2024 года



ASTANA-2024

ШАНХАЙ ҒЫНТЫМАҚТАСТЫҚ ҰЙЫМЫНА МҮШЕ МЕМЛЕКЕТТЕРДІҢ БАСШЫЛАРЫ КЕҢЕСІНІҢ ОТЫРЫСЫ

2024 жылғы 4 шілдә

上海合作组织成员国元首理事会会议

2024年7月4日



ASTANA: Group Photo of heads of Member States of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. - DNA

# Gaza ceasefire talks again show signs of life

## Hamas has presented mediators Egypt and Qatar with new 'ideas' on how to end fighting, which Israeli officials are evaluating

NEWS DESK

DOHA: A renewed push is under way to end the bloodshed in Gaza as both Israel and Hamas speak to mediators about a long-stalled ceasefire plan. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will convene a meeting of his security cabinet on Thursday to discuss the latest proposal from Hamas, an unnamed source in his office told Reuters news agency. Hamas on Wednesday said it presented new "ideas" to Qatari, Egyptian and Turkish mediators on how to reach a ceasefire and captive-exchange deal. Israel confirmed it is "evaluating" Hamas's "comments", which it did not detail. The development comes as Israel hammers southern Khan Younis - Gaza's second-largest city - from where it ordered an estimated 250,000 Palestinians to flee, killing at least seven people in an air strike near its main hospital. With Gaza's death toll near 38,000 and conditions worsening daily for its inhabitants, both Israel and Hamas are under increased international pressure to reach a truce - most recently based on a United Nations-backed plan outlined by United States President Joe Biden in May. However, competing interpretations of that deal, which break down the cessation of hostilities and exchange of captives into three stages, have brought negotiations to a standstill. While the US insists Israel backs the deal, Prime Minister Netanyahu has repeatedly called it into question, promising not to end the war until Hamas is "eradicated". Hamas, which has agreed to the framework of the deal, wants a commitment it

## North of 'Israel' under Hezbollah Fire

### 200+ rockets, swarm of drones: Hezbollah avenges commander assassination

FOREIGN DESK

BEIRUT: The Islamic Resistance continued on Thursday its response to the Israeli enemy's crime of assassinating the military commander Mohammad Neameh Nasser, aka Hajj Abu Neameh, a day earlier, launching missiles and explosive drones at numerous Zionist bases. Hezbollah military media detailed the attacks in consecutive statements, as follows: The first statement mentioned that, in response to the "Israeli" enemy's attacks on the resilient southern villages and peaceful homes, especially the town of Shebaa where a civilian woman was injured, the Islamic Resistance fighters targeted a newly established position of "Israeli" soldiers in the Kfar Blum settlement with a volley of Katyusha rockets on Thursday, 04-07-2024. The second statement maintained that, in response to the attack and assassination carried out by the enemy in the Housh area of the city of Tyre, the Islamic Resistance fighters bombarded on Thursday, 04-07-2024, with more than 200 rockets of various types, the command headquarters of the newly established 91st Brigade at Ayelet Barracks, the command headquarters of the 7th Armored Brigade at Katsavia Barracks, the command headquarters of the Armored Battalion of the 7th Brigade at Gamla Barracks, the command headquarters of Brigade 210 (Golan Brigade) at Nafah Base, and the artillery battalion headquarters of Brigade 210 at Yarden Barracks. The third statement affirmed, "In continuation of our response to the attack and assassination carried out by the enemy in the Housh area of the city of Tyre, the Islamic Resistance conducted an aerial operation on Thursday, 04-07-2024. This operation involved a swarm of assault drones targeting the command headquarters of the newly established 91st Brigade at Ayelet Barracks, the command headquarters of the 7th Armored Brigade at Katsavia Barracks, the command headquarters of the Northern Region at Dado Base, the Northern Region Intelligence Base Mishar, the command headquarters of the Hermon Brigade 810 at Ma'alehGolani Barracks, the main permanent base of the 146th Ilania Brigade, and the Golan Brigade Headquarters and Egoz Unit at Shraga Barracks."

will end the war for good. Little headway in negotiations has occurred since June 11 when Hamas said it is ready to "deal positively" with the proposal, but made several "amendments" it described as minor. In a sign talks are gaining new momentum, Hamas said it is again communicating with officials from Qatar, Egypt and Turkey with "the aim of reaching an agreement". "We exchanged some ideas with the mediator brothers with the aim of stopping the aggression against our Palestinian people," a Hamas statement said. Netanyahu's office and the Mossad intelligence service confirmed the new approach almost straight away. "The hostages deal mediators have conveyed to the negotiating team Hamas's remarks on the outline... Israel is evaluating the remarks and will convey its reply to the mediators," said an Israeli statement. One source with knowledge of the talks, quoted by AFP news agency, said Qatari and American efforts to "bridge the remaining gaps" between Israel and Hamas have gone on in the background for weeks. Rami Khouri, a fellow at the American University of Beirut, told Al Jazeera news of the revived talks is hopeful but key sticking points remain - including whether the agreement will end the war "completely" and how many Palestinian prisoners will go free in exchange for Israeli captives. Political analyst Omar Baddar said there is "serious division" between Israel's military and political establishment over how to proceed. Military leaders, he told Al Jazeera, realise there is "no path to a better future for Israel out of this entire mess, and that it is time to simply end this war".

## CM Maryam Nawaz advocates Punjab Defamation Act

### Says initiative mandatory to check the practice of levelling unfounded allegations

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Thursday described the recently-introduced defamation law as a need of the hour and wondered how one could oppose the initiative amid an unchecked trend of levelling baseless accusations against others. She promised not to allow anyone to take law into their own hands, as she expressed serious concerns over a recent mob lynching in Swat and other similar incidents in the country. Citing the trend of mob justice where people within minutes assemble and don't hesitate killing the others without checking the facts, the

chief minister warned that the practice would endanger the lives of everyone and said there was an urgent need to stop the practice. Maryam, who was addressing an Ittehad Bain ulMuslimeen Conference, cited the misuse of mainstream and social media as the reason for introducing the Punjab Defamation Act. The chief minister said she was unable to understand those opposing the legislation, meaning that they were against the law but won't stop defaming others. She said no one should experience politically-motivated character assassination and added that the issue would be settled in case of providing a proof to substantiate an allegation. One would be punished if the purpose of hurling accusation is just to blame the other, the chief minister said, urging to provide evidence if any allegation is made. The chief minister listed the practice as a disease which, she said, spread due to a complete absence of accountability. Maryam cited the situation faced by the Sharif family for settling political score in 2018 as an example and narrated how a political party - as she avoided naming the PTI - used some individuals for the purpose. With hate speech and extremism in mind, she justified action against the social media accounts promoting sectarianism as a prerequisite for curbing the alarming developments. Issuing a fatwa indiscriminately is itself a crime which must be controlled, Maryam said and mentioned two examples to prove her point. She said a person was arrested for sexual assault on a child staying at a madrassa, but she had been facing an ending series of fatwas since that day.

## Govt to 'convene APC over military operation'

### "Premier to hold consultations to finalise APC's date after returning to Pakistan tonight," say sources

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has decided to organise an all-parties conference (APC) "to gain political parties' confidence in newly launched Operation Azm-e-Istehkam" aiming to root out the menace of terrorism from the country. The premier, who is currently in Kazakhstan's capital Astana to represent Pakistan in global summits of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), will return home tonight - likely at 2am - after concluding his official foreign visit, citing sources a private news channel reported. PM Shehbaz will hold consultations to decide on the date of the APC centric on the reinvigorated and re-energised national counter-terrorism drive following a spike in terrorist attacks, the sources said, adding that the date would be announced afterwards. The federal cabinet last week approved the launching of the counter-terrorism operation following the National Action Plan's Central Apex Committee's recommendations to turn up the heat on militants targeting Pakistan. The Prime Minister Office (PMO) had said that the new counter-terrorism push was approved with the consensus of all stakeholders including provinces, Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). However, opposition parties including the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam Fazl (JUIF), Awami National Party (ANP), and others have voiced concerns over the military operation, demanding that parliament must be taken into confidence before taking any such decision.

In response to the criticism, the PMO had clarified that that "no large-scale military operation is being launched" in the country. "The recently announced vision for enduring stability named Azm-e-Istehkam is being erroneously misunderstood and compared with earlier launched kinetic operations like Zarb-e-Azab, Rah-e-Najatec," read a statement issued by the PMO on June 24. It had said the previous kinetic operations were conducted to physically dislodge terrorists from their known locations which had become no-go areas and compromised the writ of the state. "These operations required mass displacement of the local population and systematic clearance of affected areas." The federal government had further stated that there are no such no-go areas in the country since the ability of terrorist entities to carry out large-scale organised operations inside Pakistan was decisively degraded by earlier kinetic operations. The operation is being launched at a time as the country's overall fatalities in terrorist attacks and counter-terror operations reached a six-year high with nearly 1,000 deaths, a newspaper reported in January quoting the Centre for Research and Security Studies's (CRSS) Annual Security Report. Pakistan has witnessed a significant surge in attacks on security forces in recent months with the militants using advanced weaponry and equipment. Islamabad has time again called on the interim Afghanistan government to prevent its land from being used by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militant organisations for carrying out attacks against Pakistan. Meanwhile, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, in an interview with the Voice of America (VoA), said that Pakistan could target terrorist hideouts across the border in Afghanistan under the new anti-terrorism operation. He also promised that any political parties' concerns about the operation would be addressed, and the government would bring the matter to the assembly to answer questions and build trust among members.

## Marwat launches fresh attack on Fawad Ch

LONDON: Pakistani leader Sher Afzal Marwat has launched a fresh attack against former party member Fawad Chaudhry, claiming that PTI founder Imran Khan had informed him of Chaudhry's "shady" involvement in the regime change operation. Marwat asserted that Khan had described Chaudhry's role as "suspicious," alleging that he collaborated with then-army chief General QamarJavedBajwa. Marwat's comments follow Chaudhry's criticism of the current PTI leadership, accusing them of hindering the release of Khan and other leaders from jail due to poor political strategy. The internal turmoil within PTI has led to public disputes among its leaders. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and senior leader AsadQaiser have urged Chaudhry to refrain from criticising the party leadership. Imran Khan has acknowledged the factionalism within PTI and is scheduled to meet both factions in Adiala Jail. Earlier this week, PTI Information Secretary Raof Hasan stated in an interview on a local news channel that Chaudhry had been expelled from PTI after joining another party, thus forfeiting his right to comment on PTI matters. - Agencies

## Naqvi vows to better capital

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has said the designing of flyovers in Islamabad has been completed and the work will start very soon. "Islamabad will see a clear difference in the coming months" he said while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Complain Management System, Vehicle Tracking System, e-Office and Selfie with Tree, and HR Management System for Digitalization of Employee Records. He also greeted the CDA staff. Sanitation workers also deserve kudos for doing a great job on Eid, he said. The federal minister said the work on the Serena Chowk underpass will begin soon, while the work of connecting the Margala Expressway with the Motorway is being started and it will reduce the travel time from the Motorway to Awan-e-Sadr to 15 minutes.

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