



Islamabad POST

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NATO risks committing suicide unless changes war agenda: Hungary PM

Detailed News On Page-08

Faisal Kundi for CPEC railway expansion

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Jason Gillespie prioritizes Pak team's fitness

Detailed News On Page-06

To boost regional trade

PM directs enhancing seaports' efficiency to tap full potential

Pakistan offered the most suitable sea trade route for the Central Asian states

NAZIR SIYAL / DNA

KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday directed the relevant authorities to take special initiatives to tap the full potential of maritime trade and to spur economic growth. The prime minister chaired a meeting here regarding Karachi Port Trust, Port Qasim Authority, and Pakistan National Shipping Corporation. The prime minister directed to minimise the Customs clearance time by installing modern equipment and machinery at Port Qasim and Karachi Port Trust. He also instructed to ensure the installation of state-of-the-art scanning machinery at the ports besides taking steps on priority to fully benefit from the ports' potential. To ensure uninterrupted delivery of goods to and from Karachi Port Trust, the prime minister directed the relevant authorities to keep open the Lyari Expressway for cargo traffic for 24 hours a day. The Malir Expressway should be connected to the port to further improve the delivery of goods, he added. He further directed to increase the capacity of supply of goods to and from Karachi Port through railway. "Fees for LNG ships at Port Qasim should be reduced and fixed according to prevailing rates at the international level," the prime minister said adding that a comprehensive action plan for the regulation of shipping lines should be prepared and presented on priority. He directed the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation to formulate and present a comprehensive plan to reduce its cost and make its operations effective. The prime minister said that he held meetings with the Russian President Vladimir Putin and the leaders of the Central Asian countries during his recent visit to Kazakhstan. Pakistan, he said, offered the most suitable sea trade route for the Central Asian states. Central Asian states have expressed deep interest in using Pakistan's ports for trade, the prime minister said adding that Pakistan could earn

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Naqvi orders strict action to control sale, purchase of drugs

Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Mohsin Naqvi, visits ANF Headquarters

MEHTAB PIRZADA

LAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Mohsin Naqvi visited the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Headquarters, where he was welcomed by Director General ANF, Major General Abdul Mueed on his arrival. The Interior Minister laid floral wreath at the Martyrs' Memorial, offered Fateha, and paid tribute to the great sacrifices of the martyrs. While chairing an important meeting at the ANF Headquarters, Federal Minister for Interior and Anti Narcotics appreciated the performance of ANF against drug traffickers across the country, despite limited resources. He directed to launch a comprehensive crackdown against drug mafia to save the future generations from the scourge of drugs and sought a comprehensive plan in this regard. It was also decided to ensure a robust action against the sale and purchase of drugs, especially ice, in educational institutions,

Continued on Page 06



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif receives briefing about Hutchison Ports Pakistan Terminal at Karachi Port. - DNA

6 Kashmiri freedom fighters martyred in IIOJK

This is the latest incident in an uptick of attacks in the disputed territory

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Six Kashmiri freedom fighters were martyred while two Indian soldiers killed in two separate gun battles in Indian-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday. Kashmir police inspector general Vidhi Kumar Birdi told AFP that authorities in the disputed territory had "carried out two different operations" in villages in the Kulgam district. Birdi said two members of the security forces had been killed, with clashes continuing in Madergram and Frisal Chinnigam villages.

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Israeli terrorism continues across Gaza

Waiting for Israeli response on ceasefire proposal, says Hamas

Hamas, which controls Gaza, has dropped a key demand that Israel first commit to a permanent ceasefire before signing an agreement

NEWS DESK

GAZA: Hamas is waiting for a response from Israel on its ceasefire proposal, two officials from the Palestinian group said on Sunday, five days after it accepted a key part of a US plan aimed at ending the nine-month war in Gaza. "We have left our response with the mediators and are waiting to hear the occupation's response," one of the two Hamas officials told Reuters, asking not to be named. The three-phase plan was put forward at the end of May by US President Joe Biden and is being mediated by Qatar and Egypt. It aims to end the war and free around 120 Israeli hostages being held by Hamas. Another Palestinian official, with knowledge of the ongoing ceasefire deliberations, said Israel was in talks with the Qataris. "They have discussed with them Hamas' response and they promised to give them Israel's response within days," the official, who asked not to be named, told Reuters on Sunday.

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Turkiye to invite Assad 'at any moment': Erdogan

FOREIGN DESK

ISTANBUL: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Sunday said he might invite his Syrian counterpart Bashar Assad to Türkiye "at any moment," in a sign of reconciliation after the 2011 war broke ties between Ankara and Damascus. "We may send an invitation (to Assad) at any moment," Erdogan told journalists aboard a plane from Berlin where he watched Euro 2024, the official Anadolu news agency and other media reported. Türkiye originally aimed to topple Assad's regime when the Syrian conflict erupted with the violent suppression of peaceful protesters in 2011.

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Briefs

First Pak scientist to receive Saudi citizenship

In line with a royal decree, Saudi Arabia has announced citizenship for scientists, medical experts

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: In an unprecedented move, Pakistani scientist Dr Mehmood Khan will be granted Saudi citizenship, according to a list published by financial news portal Argaam. Dr Khan joins an elite group of doctors, researchers, and entrepreneurs from around the world who will be offered Saudi citizenship. According to Arab media, Saudi Arabia opened its citizenship to highly skilled professionals as part of its Vision 2030, aiming to attract and retain exceptional global talent to enhance the kingdom's economic and social development.

Jl to hold sit-in on July 12

Jl to hold sit-in on July 12 in Islamabad against rising power bills

DNA

ISLAMABAD: MULTAN: In what appears to be a strong censure of the incumbent government over the skyrocketing price of electricity bills and fuel, Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said on Sunday the party would hold a historical sit-in on July 12 in Islamabad. He said the people have been forced to sell their precious savings to pay the ever-increasing power bills. He added the southern Punjab has not been awarded its deserving status of a separate electorate as successive governments have ignored the demands of the people.

'Struggle will continue'

Punjab Police raid house of NA Opposition Leader

A Mianwali police contingent raided PTI leader's residence in F-10 here in the federal capital

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly (NA) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Omar Ayub Khan's house has been raided by the police of Mianwali in collaboration with Islamabad police. The raid was conducted on Sunday in Islamabad, however, it did not result in an arrest of the PTI leader as he was not present at his residence. The police targeted Omar Ayub's F-10 residence in Islamabad as part of an ongoing investigation. Ayub is wanted in connection with an anti-terrorism case, an anti-terrorism court in Sargodha has issued warrants for his arrest. The police continue their search for the opposition leader, who is sought for his alleged involvement in activities classified under anti-terrorism laws. Ayub confirmed the raid, stating, "Islamabad and Mianwali police have raided my house. The ATC Sargodha has issued bailable arrest warrants against me." "The federal and provincial government agencies, under the guise of Form 47 production, are attempting to arrest the

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Punjab govt to boost polio eradication efforts

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab government has decided to establish specialised polio vaccination counters at the entry and exit points of the province to reinforce polio eradication efforts. The directives issued by the Minister and Chief Secretary of Punjab aimed to ensure inclusive vaccination coverage across the province. Dedicated polio vaccination counters would be strategically positioned at all entry and exit points throughout Punjab, facilitating streamlined vaccination processes. Chief Secretary instructed health authorities and local administrators to identify and resolve any

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Floods, glacier bursts likely in 11 districts of KP

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has issued a monsoon alert, warning of potential floods and glacier bursts in eleven districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The PDMA has instructed all district administrations in the province to remain vigilant, reported a private news channel. According to the PDMA alert, thunderstorms and heavy rains are expected in the mountainous areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. There was also a possibility of dusty winds and floods in low-lying areas.

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Flight cancellations; fragile ecology eclipsing beauty of Gilgit-Baltistan

Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Neil Hawkins called for the development of budget-friendly accommodations in the area

ANSAR M BHATTI



ISLAMABAD: Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins speaking on the occasion of book launching ceremony at Islamabad Serena Hotel. - DNA

ISLAMABAD: Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Neil Hawkins highlighted that uninterrupted flights to Gilgit-Baltistan could significantly boost tourism in the region. He noted that Gilgit-Baltistan is blessed with natural beauty, making it a must-visit destination for both local and international tourists. Hawkins made these remarks during the launch event of "Reverie of Highlands" by Gaynor Shaw at the Islamabad Serena Hotel. Gaynor Shaw, wife of former Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Geoffrey Shaw, traveled from Australia to attend the event. The High Commissioner emphasized the importance of fostering understanding and appreciation between nations. He also urged the government of Pakistan to address the frequent cancellations of flights to Gilgit, which force tourists to travel by road—a challenging option, especially for older visitors. Hawkins acknowledged the fragile ecology of the region, noting that while tourism brings economic benefits, it also comes with environmental costs. He called for the development of budget-friendly accommodations, as not everyone can afford to stay in five-star hotels.

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Kundi emphasizes CPEC railway expansion to Uzbekistan

Governor Faisal Kundi addressed the issues related to Kohat division, including delayed project of Kohat University campus in Parachinar

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR : Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday highlighted the plans to extend railway connectivity to Uzbekistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He said this during discussions with Sajid Hussain Turi, former federal minister and provincial vice president of Pakistan Peoples Party at the Governor House. The proposed expansion aims to lay tracks from Rawalpindi to Kohat and from Kohat to Parachinar, ultimately connecting to Uzbekistan. The Governor expressed optimism that this initia-

tive would significantly benefit both regions, enhancing economic ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Regarding local concerns, Governor Faisal Kundi addressed the issues related to Kohat division, including delayed project of Kohat University campus in Parachinar. He assured of resolving these issues promptly, promising to engage with the Higher Education Commission's officials for necessary actions. Governor Kundi affirmed his commitment to elevate regional matters to the federal level for expeditious resolution. He announced plans to meet with the Prime Minister soon to discuss comprehensive solutions to these

issues. Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, emphasized the acquisition of provincial rights, promotion of peace and playing a role in the economic advancement of youth and women in the province. He said this during a meeting with a delegation led by former PPP leader MNA Usman Khan Tarakai including Jalal Khan Tarakai and Baland Khan Tarakai. The Governor KP assured that the legal fraternity of Swabi would play its role on every forum to alleviate the deprivation of the province's people. He also accepted the invitation by the delegations to visit Parachinar and meet with the Swabi Action Committee at their earliest convenience.



ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of clean and green capital city after the heavy rain, in the Federal Capital.—ONLINE PHOTO

Sri Lankan envoy calls for economic integration

He emphasized the necessity for Pakistan to formulate long-term policies that prioritize youth development, agricultural sustainability, and enhanced water security to sustain economic growth effectively

ISLAMABAD: In the evolving landscape of South Asian diplomacy, Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Admiral (R) Ravindra C Wijegunaratne has stressed for collaborative efforts to address regional challenges and foster economic integration. The envoy offering a compelling vision for the future of Sri Lanka-Pakistan relations, underscored a partnership poised to shape the strategic dynamics of the region. As both nations navigate shared interests in trade, defense, and cultural exchange, their mutual commitment to sustainable development and mutual prosperity stands as a testament to enduring diplomatic camaraderie. Highlighting Pakistan's pivotal economic developments linked to CPEC and the operationalization of Gwadar Port, he expressed his country's commitment to furthering diplomatic, economic and cultural ties with Pakistan. He also stressed the importance of long-term policies focusing

on youth development, agriculture, and water security for sustained growth. He emphasized the necessity for Pakistan to formulate long-term policies that prioritize youth development, agricultural sustainability, and enhanced water security to sustain economic growth effectively. Regarding bilateral ties, the envoy reiterated Sri Lanka's commitment to strengthening relations with Pakistan across multiple fronts, including trade, tourism, and defense. He pointed out Sri Lanka's pivotal role as an international transshipment hub, particularly for mega-container ships like the Triple E-Class, which cannot dock at all ports due to their size. He anticipated that the full operationalization of Gwadar Port would provide Pakistan with significant revenue opportunities, particularly for transit trade to Central Asian Republics (CARs). Reflecting on the historical camaraderie between the two nations, Admiral Wijegunaratne recalled Sri Lanka's steady

fast support for Pakistan during critical junctures, including providing crucial logistical support during the 1971 war. He praised Pakistan's assistance in combating insurgency in Sri Lanka, highlighting the provision of military hardware that helped in defeating the Tamil Tigers. Economically, he noted the bilateral trade volume of approximately one billion dollars annually, with prospects to exceed this mark, emphasizing Pakistan's exports to Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka's potential to expand its exports to Pakistan. He also discussed Sri Lanka's interest in boosting tourism between the two countries, noting challenges in air connectivity that hinder potential growth in this sector. On educational and cultural exchanges, Admiral Wijegunaratne highlighted initiatives such as the Allama Iqbal Scholarship, which supports Sri Lankan students studying in Pakistan. He mentioned Sri Lanka's eagerness to collaborate with Pakistan

in religious education and praised Pakistan's hosting of the Gandhara Culture Symposium, emphasizing the cultural ties that could enhance tourism and mutual understanding. Looking ahead, Wijegunaratne discussed Sri Lanka's recovery from economic challenges exacerbated by COVID-19, focusing on revitalizing tourism and improving agricultural productivity. He suggested Pakistan negotiate debt restructuring with international lenders and leverage its diaspora to bolster foreign exchange reserves. Addressing regional challenges, he highlighted climate change as a potent threat to South Asia, stressing the need for collective action. He praised Pakistan's efforts in addressing water security issues and emphasized the importance of environmental sustainability. In conclusion, Admiral Wijegunaratne expressed optimism about the future of Pakistan-Sri Lanka relations, envisioning deeper economic integration and enhanced cooperation in regional and global forums.—DNA

APNS urgently tackles unpaid dues crisis in KP Newspapers

PESHAWAR : The All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) KP Chapter convened a pivotal meeting at the Daily Wahdat office, chaired by APNS (KP) Chairman Pir Haroon Shah. The gathering provided a platform to tackle significant challenges faced by newspaper publishers across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During the session, particular emphasis was placed on discussing critical issues affecting the industry, notably the outstanding dues owed by newspapers to the Information Department. Chairman Pir Haroon Shah led deliberations focused on identifying sustainable solutions and cultivating an environment conducive to growth within the regional newspaper sector.—APP

8 Space Summer School to be held at IST

The Virtuoso group will have the basic introductory interactive lectures about all domains and then has to work on a specialized project by choosing one of the domains among Astronomy and Astrophysics; Aviation; Rocketry and Satellite Technology

ISLAMABAD : The Space Education Research Lab (SERL) of National Center of GIS and Space Applications (NCGSA) has announced to hold the eighth Space Summer School from August 05-09, featuring a number of space related exciting activities for the learners. According to the IST, the Space Summer School will be held at Institute of Space Technology (IST) and students from Grade 6-12 can participate in the event. The Space Summer School will give an opportunity to the students to explore the wonders of space through interactive lectures, hands-on activities, exciting competitions, and innovative projects. The deadline to register for participating in the summer school is July 22. The summer school will also provide an opportunity to visit state-of-the-art labs and participate in a mesmerizing Astronomy Night. The space summer school 2024 will contain interactive lectures, hands-on activities, software simulations, STEAM-based space activities/projects, and lab visits within the following domains including Astronomy and Astrophysics; Earth and Atmosphere; Aviation; Rocketry and Satellite Technology and Applications. The students will be divided into two groups including the Abecedarian Group for Grade 6-8 and Virtuoso Group Grade 9-12. Abecedarian and Virtuoso groups will follow their schedule separately. Abecedarians will have interactive lectures and activities covering all the domains of the summer school. The Virtuoso group will have the basic introductory interactive lectures about all domains and then has to work on a specialized project by choosing one of the domains among Astronomy and Astrophysics; Aviation; Rocketry and Satellite Technology. The aspiring students can register through the web link bit.ly/reg_sss2024.—DNA

RWMC starts Muharram cleanliness drive

RAWALPINDI : Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) has kicked off its special cleanliness campaign for Muharram ul Haram besides deploying additional sanitary workers. Chairman RWMC Saqib Rafiq told APP that the administration had finalized all the arrangements under a special cleanliness program prepared for Muharram and Ashura Day while the holidays of all the staff of RWMC would be cancelled on Muharram 9 and 10th. Under the special cleanliness program, all Imambargahs, procession routes and their vicinity were being cleaned besides the waste containers were also emptied, adding nallahs and drains adjacent to Imambargahs were also being cleared with excavators and heavy machinery. The construction material or debris was also being removed from the routes of the procession and its adjacent areas. Saqib said that relief camps would be set up at various places to carry out the cleanliness work regularly till the conclusion of Ashura's day processions. He said two control rooms would be set up at the Municipal Corporation and Deputy Commissioner offices that would look after the entire operation. Saqib added that the staff had been directed that no negligence would be tolerated.—APP

Punjab govt. to boost polio eradication efforts

ISLAMABAD : The Punjab government has decided to establish specialized polio vaccination counters at the entry and exit points of the province to reinforce polio eradication efforts. According to a private news channel, the directives issued by the Minister and Chief Secretary of Punjab aimed to ensure inclusive vaccination coverage across the province. Dedicated polio vaccination counters would be strategically positioned at all entry and exit points throughout Punjab, facilitating streamlined vaccination processes. Chief Secretary instructed health authorities and local administrators to identify and resolve any obstacles hindering vaccination goals promptly. Officials pledged to utilize all available resources to eradicate polio and combat other diseases prevalent in the province.—APP

Under-trial prisoners now receive daily lunch boxes

ABID RAZA

LAHORE : The experiment of providing lunch boxes to under trial prisoners at the time of their departure from jails for appearing before trial courts proved most successful which has now been extended to whole of Punjab. Inspector General of Prisons Punjab Mian Farooq Nazeer, in an exclusive interview with APP here on Sunday, said initially it was launched as a pilot program in few jails that aimed to ensure that prisoners, who often endure long and stressful journeys to court, have access to basic nourishment and hydration. The program's success has now led to its extension across the entire Punjab province. He said now nearly 42,863 under trial prisoners

fosters a more compassionate and just society, recognizing that under-trial prisoners are still facing a trial should not be subjected to inhumane conditions. Regarding the quality of food, Mian Farooq Nazeer said the diet plan of prisoners is made out after thorough consultation with the food and nutrition department of Agriculture University Faisalabad, fully ensuring human body required calories per day. He added that best branded products are used in preparing food and excellent quality chicken of approved weight is cooked six days in a week and served to all 60,288 prisoners. He said all range DIGs and Superintendents Jail conduct surprise visits to kitchens for ensuring strict compliance. He said Superintendents Jail is responsible for the provision of quality food.

Murree admin taking measures to provide best facilities to tourists

DNA

ISLAMABAD : The Murree administration is taking concrete steps to provide all kinds of exceptional and best facilities to the tourists' with dignity to enjoy their trip at recreational spots in the area. The Deputy Commissioner Murree visited different parks and reviewed the arrangements made by the authorities concerned in provision to the public in

terms of quality entertainment, an official source told APP on Sunday. He said the cleanliness campaign has already been launched in various parks to ensure neat and clean ambience for better entertainment facilities for the tourists. A large number of local and foreign tourists are thronging to Murree to enjoy their day. The official said that the administration was also ensuring clean drinking water, quality and clean benches for sitting on corridors, and better lighting ar-

rangements in the parks for tourists in this hilly area. He informed that the authorities concerned would complete the development works on their stipulated time to get desirous results and reviewed other recreational facilities including washrooms to be built at Thanda Jangal entertainment venue. According to the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, practical measures are being taken for the promotion of tourism in Murree, he concluded.

Make the elite feel responsible

TANVEER HUSSAIN



THE main reason for all the serious economic, social and legal problems of the country is that the elite of this country is benefiting from all the resources of this country but does not take responsibility for its problems and difficulties. If we as a nation want a solution to our problems, then the people in power must be made

responsible for it. It is not that difficult a task. For this, it is only necessary to create a consciousness among the people. First of all people should know their rights under the constitution of Pakistan and they should know how their rights are being usurped. In the next step, they should know how to protect their rights in a peaceful way. It does not require fighting and violence; it only requires unity, discipline and good strategy. Awareness should be raised at the public level that public representatives should know the living conditions of the people. When public representatives sit in air-conditioned offices and decide to increase the price of electricity, at that time they do not realize what kind of difficulties people are facing during load shedding for several hours every day in summer season and how difficult it is to pay high bills despite this load shedding. The duration of electricity load shedding should be the same throughout the country including the houses and offices of public representatives and government officials.

If the supply of free electricity and petrol to the houses at government expense is stopped, then they will realize the inflation, then they will make such policies which will not only benefit their caste and relatives but the entire country. The state of government institutions is that the officials of the education department do not admit their children in government schools. Neither the health department officials take the risk of treating the relatives in the government hospital. There are many types of education system in the country. Children studying in government schools and low quality private schools hardly become clerks. While children studying in expensive schools grow up and take the reins of this country. Children studying in schools have their own problems. Public representatives and government officials should make it mandatory for their children to study in government schools. And his family will be treated in the government hospital. This will improve the performance of

government schools and hospitals. When the elite class gets a protocol of 20 vehicles, stop signals for their passage, green channel facility at airports, how will they know public problems. TV channels that represent different parties for their own interests will learn to tell the truth when they are stopped from unnecessary perks and have to live public life without protocol. People should also know that they have an equal right to use public parks, footpaths and public spaces. No one has the right to occupy it. If a shopkeeper places his goods on the footpath or a driver parks his vehicle on the footpath, he is usurping the rights of millions of people. It is the right of every citizen to raise voice against this abuse. Institutions created for the elimination of encroachments are also equal participants in this crime, not only should legal action be taken against them, but it is also necessary to raise questions on the press and media. People should stop buying from this mafia shop.



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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
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- July 26/Liberia National Day
- July 30/Morocco National Day

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Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

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Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Wives of Malaysian diplomats and Diaspora posing for a picture with the High Commissioner of Malaysia Dato Azhar Mazlan on the occasion of ASEAN movie night. Detailed report on the Back Page. —DNA

TV channel to promote climate-resilient agriculture

PM's aide in a statement on Sunday said the idea of this innovative channel aims to educate farmers on climate adaptation strategies, disaster management techniques, and sustainable practices to mitigate environmental degradation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam has unveiled plans to launch a dedicated TV channel tailored to support farmers in combating the impacts of climate change. PM's aide in a statement on Sunday said the idea of this innovative channel aims to educate farmers on climate adaptation strategies, disaster management techniques,

and sustainable practices to mitigate environmental degradation. The Coordinator said the channel will leverage the services of Pakistan Television (PTV) to broadcast programs in six regional languages, ensuring that vulnerable communities receive timely information. The programs will be telecast through local PTV stations at the provincial level, maximizing and localizing the coverage and reach, she added. Romina Khurshid Alam also engaged with a private channel to amplify the voice

of the Climate Ministry, promoting clean and green initiatives. She emphasized the importance of media support in enhancing climate change coverage and re-arranging journalism prioritise. She noted the TV channel will provide farmers with timely information and guidance on adapting to climate-related challenges, including weather alerts to enable preemptive measures. She said adding, the channel will also feature initiatives promoting women's income generation, gender empower-

ment, and environmental sustainability. She said the government seeks to empower farmers with knowledge and tools to build resilience against climate change, leveraging the power of media. She stated media teams from relevant climate change departments and TV initiatives will collaborate to strengthen our efforts protecting the socio-economic impacts of climate change on the farming community. During different meetings convened in June over global heat waves and floods,

the PM's aide directed relevant institutions to strengthen official media teams to keep vulnerable communities informed about climate change timely. She said the goal is to sensitize the media to report on climate change before potential flash flooding and glacial lake outbursts in vulnerable regions. Romina Khurshid Alam is optimistic that this TV channel initiative will be a groundbreaking step towards a more climate-resilient and sustainable agricultural sector in Pakistan.

HEC asked finalize actions on scholarship misuse

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant directive aimed at ensuring accountability and transparency, the Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) has ordered the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to expedite and finalize actions regarding the misuse of scholarships and the breach of public trust. The order comes in response to an appeal by citizen Azmat Khan, highlighting the need for immediate governance measures. The appellant has sought list of scholars who went abroad on HEC scholarships over the past decade. Specifically, the list should include details of scholars from 01-01-2013 to 31-12-2023, distinguishing between those pursuing M.Phil and PhD programs. Additionally, the list should identify students who did not

return or complete their study programs within the stipulated time period and detail the actions taken against them by the HEC. In its response to the appeal, HEC cited Section 7(g) of the Right of Access to Information (RTI) Act, 2017, asserting that the sought information is exempt from disclosure as it could potentially lead to the harassment of individuals, particularly female scholars. Instead, HEC provided cumulative statistics for the period from January 1, 2013, to December 31, 2023. According to these statistics, a total of 3,001 scholars proceeded abroad on HEC scholarships. Out of these, 1,126 scholars successfully completed their studies, while 1,810 are still pursuing their education. However, 65 scholars completed/did not complete their studies and did not return to

Pakistan after completing their programs. HEC in its response has expressed strong concerns regarding the scholars who either did not complete their degree programs or did not return, stating that legal proceedings have been initiated against them. Efforts to recover government funds are ongoing, with substantial recoveries already made. In its order, the Pakistan Information Commission emphasized the importance of addressing the breach of trust and unfair utilization of public funds. The PIC highlighted that while HEC has reported ongoing actions, a specific timeline for these actions is necessary. The Chairman of HEC has been directed to finalize these actions and submit a comprehensive report to the Pakistan Information Commission.

Traffic Wardens asked to make efforts to ease traffic flow

A control room would be set up at Traffic Headquarters to monitor the situation while motorists who seek help and assistance can use CTP helpline 051-9272616

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi, Taimoor Khan has directed the Traffic Wardens to make all-out efforts to ease traffic flow on city roads during Muharram. According to a City Traffic Police (CTP) Spokesman, over 931 Traffic Wardens under the supervision of inspectors and DSPs would perform duties on city roads to control traffic flow during Muharram. He informed traffic Police Officers and Wardens have also been directed to take action against vehicles having tinted glasses, revolving lights, unregistered vehicles and motorcycles

and others moving without, improper and fake number plates. In order to ensure the security of the mourning processions during Muharram-ul-Haram, CTP Rawalpindi has issued a comprehensive traffic plan. According to the plan, there would be a complete ban on parking any vehicle or pushcart on the route of the procession. Fork lifters would move with Muharram processions, he said. The wardens have been directed to remove all kind of encroachments from the processions routes besides keeping a vigil on suspected persons and things. Entry of vehicles on the route of the processions would be blocked by

erecting barricades and other hurdles, the spokesman added. He said, Traffic Police officials would be deployed along with district police personnel to ensure the security of the mourners. Strict disciplinary action would be taken against the delinquent officials, he said. He informed that traffic load would be diverted to alternate routes during mourning processions. A control room would be set up at Traffic Headquarters to monitor the situation while motorists who seek help and assistance can use CTP helpline 051-9272616. PM pays tributes to Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed.—APP

Mohsin Naqvi takes notice of overbilling

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday took strict notice of the increasing complaints of overbilling of protected consumers and ordered legal action against the officers and staff involved in it. The Minister issued directions to all Directors of FIA to immediately redress the injustice being faced by consumers using up to 200 units. He has strictly prohibited the inclusion of protected consumers in the non-protected category, terming it a criminal act that will not be tolerated. Mohsin Naqvi ordered FIA to review the entire situation and take action against those responsible without any discrimination, in light of the facts. He reiterated that adding protected consumers in the list of non-protected consumers is unacceptable under any circumstances. He further said that the overbilling has put an additional burden of millions of rupees on consumers, and protected consumers who are already facing difficulties have been further affected. He emphasized that the overbilling complaints and injustices faced by protected consumers must be addressed immediately.—APP

Int'l workshop on July 11

ISLAMABAD: Recognizing the importance of Traditional Toys, ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) will hold an International Online Workshop "Making Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) Education Fun with Traditional Toys" on July 11. According to the ECOSF, the workshop is being organized jointly by ECOSF in collaboration with the National Science Museum of Thailand (NSM). The teachers and students can participate in the workshop to learn STEAM through an innovative concept of Traditional Toys. The last date to register for the workshop is July 10 and the details of the workshop can be accessed through the web link: <https://www.ecosf.org/STEAM-Education-Fun>. The evolution of toys always mirrors the changes in society and technology. Traditional toys have communicated with humans and dealt with the problem of identity. They have also conveyed messages, old patterns, beliefs, and some rites that are being forgotten.—APP

IRSA releases 332,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 332,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 522,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1510.20 feet and was 112.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 287,700 cusecs and 133,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1190.80 feet, which was 142.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 49,070 cusecs.—APP

Ambassador Blome celebrates US Pakistan partnership

ISLAMABAD - U.S. Ambassador Donald A. Blome, accompanied by U.S. Consul General Lahore Kristin K. Hawkins, celebrated the 248th anniversary of U.S. independence during his visit to Lahore. The July 5 event, attended by a wide range of government, business, and civil society representatives, highlighted key areas of partnership between the United States and Pakistan, including a robust trade and investment relationship, innovative collaboration through the U.S.-Pakistan "Green Alliance" framework on climate challenges, extensive people-to-people ties, and more. In his remarks, Ambassador Blome noted, "The United States will remain a committed partner of the people of Pakistan in strengthening fundamental freedoms and democratic institutions, as well as in expanding economic opportunities for the people of Pakistan." Ambassador Blome also commended U.S. business representatives in attendance for their work in creating high-quality jobs for Pakistanis, fostering women's inclusion in the workforce, introducing innovative business practices, and supporting local communities through their corporate social responsibility efforts.—DNA

INVITATION FOR BIDS

TENDER FOR HIRING OF FIRM FOR WATERPROOFING OF ROOFS AT KARACHI EXPO CENTRE

Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), an authority established for promotion of trade and business, under the Ministry of Commerce, invites sealed bids from firms registered with Pakistan Engineering Council having valid certificate of category C4, Income Tax and Sales Tax Departments and which are on Active Taxpayers List of the Federal Board of Revenue and qualified in all respects, for Waterproofing of the Roofs at Karachi Expo Centre.

2. Bidding documents, containing detailed terms and conditions, method of procurement, procedure for submission of bids, bid security, bid validity, opening of bid, evaluation criteria, clarification / rejection of bids, performance guarantee etc. are available for the interested bidders at EPADS website of PPRA. The bidding documents fees of Rs.3,000/- through pay order in favor of "TDAP, Karachi" may be submitted along with Technical Bid at the time of Technical Bid Submission.

3. Single Stage Two Envelope Procedure as per PPRA rule 36(b) would be used for Open Competitive Bidding for each work. Sealed Bid proposal should accompany a bid security equivalent to two per cent (2%) of the bid amount in the shape of pay order in favour of TDAP.

4. The bids, prepared in accordance with the instructions in the bidding documents, must reach at the office of the Deputy Director (Expo), Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), 8 th Floor, Block-A, FTC Building, Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi on or before 11:00 AM on 22 nd July, 2024. Bids will be opened the same day at 11:30 AM. This advertisement is also available on EPADS & TDAP websites.

5. Trade Development Authority of Pakistan reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to annul the bidding process at any time, however, reasons for rejection or annulling bid process will be communicated to the concerned bidder(s) in accordance with the Procurement Rules.

Deputy Director, (Expo Centre)
Tel: 021-99232668

Trade Development Authority of Pakistan
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
Block-A, 5th Floor, Finance & Trade Centre, Shahrah-e-Faisal,
Karachi-75350



Briefs

PIA launches 'Operation Ashura' special flights to Najaf

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has launched a series of special flights to Najaf and Iraq to facilitate shia pilgrims during the upcoming Ashura in commemoration of the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) days. According to a private news channel, the operation, dubbed "Operation Ashura," commenced on July 5, with additional flights scheduled for July 7 and July 11. PIA's special flights will not only transport shia pilgrims to Najaf but also ensure their safe return. The return operations are set to begin on July 20, with flights scheduled on July 21 and July 25 to bring pilgrims back from Najaf. "Operation Ashura" was designed to provide a seamless travel experience for pilgrims during this significant period of religious observance.—APP

HEC invites application under Pak-France PERIDOT Research Programme

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Higher Education Commission (HEC) has invited applications from Pakistan's faculty members of public and private universities, for funding under the Pak-France PERIDOT Research Programme (Phase XI). According to the HEC, PERIDOT is the Franco-Pakistani Hubert Curien Partnership (PHC) Programme aimed at providing opportunities for Pakistani and French researchers to interact for executing joint research activities. The programme is being implemented in Pakistan by HEC and in France, jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAEDI) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR). The objective of this programme is to develop new scientific and technological cooperation between French and Pakistan's higher education institutions (HEIs) research laboratories by supporting the mobility of researchers from both sides. The joint research proposals have been invited from Pakistan's faculty members of public and private universities for mobility grants in three areas including 'Sustainable Energy, Environment and Climate Change', 'Agriculture, Food Security and Health' and 'Entrepreneurship, Humanities and Social Sciences'. The applications can be submitted to HEC till October 01 through the online portal which is now open for applications, the HEC said. A joint application (in collaboration with a French faculty member) that has been submitted to Campus France is a mandatory pre-requisite for applying to this grant.

AIOU admissions to commence from July 15

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is commencing the admissions for the Autumn 2024 semester (first phase) across the country from July 15. Admissions in first phase include Matric, FA, BS (face to face), MS, MPhil, and PhD programs, said a press release here on Sunday. Prospectuses and admission application forms for all the programs will be available online on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk) on July 15, 2024. Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has instructed the regional heads of university to enable facilitation centers to support students. SWIFT Centers have also been established across the country to provide information and support to students. Details of all swift centers are available on website.

Trade leaders to take joint action against the anti-business budget

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Trade leaders have reiterated their commitment and strong resolve in a consultative meeting at the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) to take a united, joint and concerted action against the anti-business measures introduced in the budget 2024. They also expressed serious apprehensions and dismay to the additional taxes imposed on the existing taxpayers in the fiscal budget 2024. Increase in sales tax rate, change and increase in income tax slab, duty hike and exorbitant electricity bills have made it difficult to do business. They warned that businesses will come to a complete standstill. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Chamber President Saqib Rafiq and Group Leader Sohail Altaf. In the meeting, President of All Pakistan Anjuman Tajran Ajmal Baloch, President of Markazi Tanzeem e Tajran Pakistan Kashif Chaudhry, President of Anjuman Tajran of Punjab and Rawalpindi Shahid Ghafoor Pracha, President of Anjuman Tajran Cantt., Sheikh Hafeez, Arshad Awan, Sheikh Asif Idris, Raja Jawad and Zafar Qadri was also present. President Saqib Rafiq said that



important decisions have been taken in the meeting to decide the future course of action. Trade leaders Ajmal Baloch and Kashif

Chaudhry, while emphasizing on moving forward together and with consensus, said that the contact with all trade unions, associations and chambers across

Pakistan has been started from today to adopt a common plan of action. A joint action plan will be finalized after consultations in the next few days. All partici-

pants agreed to speed up the nationwide consultation process with all stakeholders and reiterated that all decisions will be made by consensus.

IRS-BNU hold grand dialogue on Pakistan-India Relations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A grand gathering of intellectuals and experts at a roundtable convened by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with the Beaconhouse National University (BNU) discussed the challenges and opportunities for engagement between Pakistan and India following recent elections in both countries. Former Federal Minister for Information Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Former Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs Khurram Dastagir Khan, Former National Security Advisor, Gen Nasir Khan Janjua, and Former Finance Minister, Dr Salman Shah were the keynote speakers amongst a panel of 30 experts, while former Minister for Information and Climate Change and the current chairperson of Senate Committee on Climate Change Sherry Rehman spoke as the guest of honor. Amb Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, and Amb Mansoor Ahmed Khan, Director Beaconhouse Center for Policy Research, opened the discussion by presenting an analysis of the state of Pakistan-India relations and posing a key question: what is Pakistan's current position regarding its rela-

tions with India and what steps should be taken next? The panelists then discussed different approaches for interaction with India-adopted a more receptive and responsible stance—including formal dialogues, track II initiatives, or alternative backchannel methods. They also explored the possibilities for resolving Jammu and Kashmir dispute and other issues, fostering economic ties, and promoting normalization between the two nations. Some also suggested enhancing ties with Afghanistan and fostering a more strategic approach with China. Some former top diplomats also called for seeking assistance from Russia and the US to facilitate dialogue between Pakistan and India. Much emphasis was placed by various speakers on bolstering Pakistan's internal socio-economic and military capabilities, as well as improving governance. The participants argued that an effective dialogue process between the two countries hinged on building an enabling environment to agree upon key areas of engagement, addressing mutual concerns such as climate and water, while upholding Pakistan's stance on Kashmir. Regarding water negotiations, the importance of both sides honoring the Indus Waters Treaty was duly underlined.

Some participants also highlighted the need for clarity on Pakistan's long-term foreign policy objectives. They emphasized a regional cooperative approach towards the multifaceted challenges faced by the region as a whole such as poverty, human security, and climate change. The speakers deplored Indian unilateral actions in the disputed territory of Kashmir. They also condemned India's use of proxies against Pakistan as well as its aggressive military posturing and spending. Some of the participants of the roundtable were of the view that while India was on the rise economically, which had resulted in a policy-level perception of looking at itself as a regional power, even an emerging global power, a good proportion of its socioeconomic challenges remained unaddressed such as income inequality, suppression of minority religious groups, and rampant poverty. The participants of the roundtable included Amb Jauhar Saleem, President IRS; Dr. Moeed Yusuf, VC BNU; Amb Mansoor Ahmad Khan, Director BCPR at the BNU; Amb Salman Bashir, Former Foreign Secretary, and High Commissioner to India; Amb Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Former Foreign Secretary; Amb. Tehmina Janjua former foreign secretary; Lt Gen Asad Durrani, Former Direc-

tor General ISI; Amb Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Former Amb to US, India and China; Amb Khalid Mehmood, Chairman BoG Institute of Strategic Studies (ISS); Amb Aziz Ahmad Khan, Former High Commissioner of Pakistan to India; Amb Shaqaf Kakakhal, Chairperson BoG SDPI and former UN Assistant Secretary General; Amb Zamir Akram, Advisor Strategic Plans Division; Amb Abdul Basit, Former High Commissioner of Pakistan to India; Mr Qasim Niaz, Former Federal Secretary Commerce; Amb Ali Sarwar Naqvi, Executive Director, Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS); Dr. Rifhat Hussain, Former Dean, Professor at NUST; Amb Raza Muhammad, President Institute Policy Research Institute (IPRI); Dr. Maria Sultan, Chairperson, President South Asian Strategic Stability Institute University (SASSI); Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Dean, Professor SPIR, QAU; Mr. Jamal Aziz, Executive Director, Research Society of International Law (RSIL); Dr. Shaheen Akhtar, HOD IR Dept, NDU; Air Commodore Khalid Banuri, Adviser Jinnah Centre for Character and Leadership AHQ; Amb Syed Zulfiqar Gardezi, Former Deputy High Commissioner to India; Amb Babar Amin, Former Deputy High Commissioner to India; and Dr. Mujeeb Afzal, Associate Professor at QAU

Pak, China to enhance cultural exchanges

ISLAMABAD: A Sino-Pak Round-Table Exchange Meeting under Belt and Road Cooperation in Education, Science-Technology sector was held here. The meeting was attended by the delegations of University of Sargodha and Chinese institutions & enterprises, representing China Association for International Science and Technology Cooperation (CAISTC), Beijing International Economic Research Center (BIERC) and Zhongguancun Talent Association (ZTA), Glodon Company Limited, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Saturday. During the meeting, Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas, Vice Chancellor, University of Sargodha made an introduction of his university to the participants and expressed the willingness to have deeper cooperation in education, science, etc. with the Chinese side. Prof. Dr. Gulam Yasin, Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Sargodha, pointed areas of mutual interest and collaboration between China and Pakistan under the Belt and Road Initiative i.e. cultural exchange and social integration, sustainable development and social policy, migration and mobility, and education and workforce development. He proposed to enhance bilateral science and technology cooperation mainly in renewable energy, healthcare, environmental protection, and IT by establishing joint research centers, exchanging student and faculty, developing curricula. According to Prof. Dr. Aamir Ali Chaudhry, Dean, Faculty of Science, University of Sargodha, higher education institutions in Pakistan and China can take the lead in fostering collaborative research and joint exchange programs in areas like agriculture biotechnology, food and industrial biotechnology, bioinformatics, renewable energy, nano-materials, informatics, infrastructure development and environmental sustainability. In recent years, BRI taken by China is a step to bring whole world under one umbrella and to provide equal opportunities for people of all countries to get benefits for their growth and development," he said. At the meeting, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the University of Sargodha and SuperAccuracy Science & Technology Co., Ltd. Based on the MoU, KylinRay advanced Technology will be introduced to Pakistan, a Cancer Research Center is being planned, and medical education activities will be held. It's learned that more cooperative opportunities in construction science and technology, talent training, etc. among the participants are being discussed after the meeting. —DNA

HEC not to attest degrees obtained from unapproved university

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has warned the parents and students that degrees obtained from unapproved university sub-campuses will not be attested by the Commission. "No university or degree awarding institution is currently permitted to operate through sub-campuses by the HEC under the public-private partnership (PPP) mode", an official source revealed. The HEC does not endorse any such proposals due to a range of issues, previously observed in permitted PPP Campuses established by certain public sector universities in Punjab, and subsequently closed, such as academic irregularities and concerns regarding educational quality. Therefore the students are strongly advised against seeking admission at any campus not listed as recognized on the HEC website <http://www.hec.gov.pk/site/Accreditation>. Degree obtained from unapproved campuses will not be validated by HEC for verification/attestation. The HEC has also issued an advisory to Government College University Faisalabad, directing the cessation of further admissions in its two sub-campuses in Layyah and Sahiwal, which were authorized operations under the PPP mode until 23-04-2022 and 14-08-2023 respectively.—APP

Turnover tax imposed on petroleum dealers reversed

ISLAMABAD: Reforms Group of the Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) has successfully convinced the government that imposing a 0.5 percent advance turnover tax on petroleum retailers was a misinterpretation of the law. The delegation of dealers held marathon meetings with top government functionaries and convinced them that 0.5 percent advance turnover tax was double taxation as the outlets were already paying advance fixed withholding tax at Rs1.04 per liter as final income tax. Dealers supported the new taxation measure

introduced by the government to boost revenue and cover its financial shortfall as challenging revenue collection targets will help it clinch an IMF bailout but clarified that filling stations could not survive the blow, said Hassan Shah, Spokesman of PPDA. Dealers met with Minister of State for Finance & Revenue Ali Pervez Malik, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Amjed Zubair Tiwana, Petroleum Secretary Mr. Momin Agha, Chairman OGRA, MD PSO and other officials, he added. Dealers told government officials that imposing turno-

ver tax through the Finance Act 2024-25, passed by the Parliament and endorsed by the President of Pakistan, has left this anomaly, which must be resolved, he informed. The new turnover tax would strangle petroleum retailers as petrol pumps were already operating at meager margins, and record inflation had made the retail business unviable, dealers said. Hassan Shah said that on July 05, the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) asked the FBR to clarify the applicability of section 236H of the Income Tax Ordinance. —APP

Politicians and bureaucracy promoting IPPs

ISLAMABAD: On Sunday, Dr Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, said that persistently raising the cost of power is a reprehensible business practice. As a result of the continued hikes in the power tariff, the economy is being destroyed, and the nation is becoming mentally ill, he said. Talking to party workers, Dr Hanif Mughal said that many politicians and bureaucrats are the slaves of those who own IPPs; therefore, they are making decisions that are putting the nation's security at risk.—DNA

Revisit all IPPs contracts: ICCI Presidents urges Government

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has said that the country has suffered immense irreparable damage due to the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) which have not only made Pakistan indebted, but has made the lives of masses problematic, restlessness and miserable. In a statement issued here on Saturday he demanded that the federal government should immediately revisit all the contracts with IPPs and procure electricity from cheaper sources without capacity charges,

adding that the crippling impact of high electricity tariffs is the widespread industrial closures and substantial job losses. He said that the main reason for the electricity crisis in Pakistan is the contracts made with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) along with electricity stealing and the consequences are always borne by the traders and the people in the form of non-availability and expensive electricity. The federal government should formulate a strategy to deal with IPPs and ensure affordable electricity prices for industries and domestic users in the national interest. ICCI President blamed 1994 Power Policy for trapping

Pakistan's energy sector in unfavorable contractual agreements with IPPs, leading to a spiraling circular debt that reached PKR 2.64 trillion by February 2024 and the dollar-linked guarantees benefit IPPs at the expense of the government and the public. Any depreciation of the Pakistani rupee translates to higher returns for IPPs, further straining the national budget. He said that the total capacity production of the IPPs is 48000 MW and yesterday's (Friday) production was 20,000 MW whereas the demand was 22000 MW and the question is as to where the rest of the production is being used, adding that country's total

defence budget is Rs.2150 billion but astonishingly Rs. 2500 billion have been earmarked for the IPPs. He went on to say that during the last two days Rs.10/- per unit has been increased for domestic consumers and Rs. 18/- for commercial units. Moreover, the peak hours' time has been enhanced by two hours which led to Rs. 12 billion burden on the consumers. Consumers have to pay Rs.1500 billion due to the fixed tax from Rs. 200 to Rs.1000. Furthermore the consumers are paying Rs. 2 billion due to the overbilling. He warned that the recent surge in electricity prices could lead to social unrest and business frustration.

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Does 'Israel' want war?

ISRAEL is deeply divided. That is not news. It is a commonplace, and more usually the question is phrased as 'bifurcated – but along which axis?' Today the cleavage is between a tired, and increasingly pessimistic army versus a seemingly determined political leadership, which insists, 'There is no choice but war – if Israel is to survive.' Popular support for now leans toward the latter – Netanyahu's perspective. Whilst Netanyahu has many harsh critics – including within the White House – the West generally ignores the reality that "Israel's" desire for a military campaign in Lebanon extends beyond Netanyahu, to many others in Israeli politics. The choice is between: "War now; or War later" – as is understood by many Israelis seeing the surrounding walls unerringly close-in upon "Israel". It is all too easy in the West to repeat the narrative that Netanyahu is playing 'fast and loose' with "Israel's" future; just to secure his own personal prospects. The reality is that both sides to this internal Israeli schism have their points: Those in the West may not agree with either view, preferring quiet and fearing for "Israel's" future; but some climatic dénouement to the dynamics unleashed in 1948 is ultimately bound to unfold. Israeli journalist Alon Ben David (a leading military affairs commentator with Channel 13) reports that the losses suffered by the Israeli army in Gaza have significantly diminished its capabilities to wage war on multiple fronts. He argues that Israeli forces are "not currently ready for a broad campaign in Lebanon."

"If a broad war with Hezbollah is imposed on us, the [Israeli army] will fight with what it has, and it will hurt the enemy ... [but the army] is currently unable to bring about a significant achievement against Hezbollah and dramatically to change the reality in the north". Ben David warns that the war in Lebanon "will end in a bad settlement that will be achieved at a painful price ... Never, throughout its 76 years, has the [army] been built for a nine-month war. Instead [it] was built as a shock army, which mobilizes the reserves at the moment of command; goes out decisively in a short time, and then returns to normal". Ben David adds that a senior Air Force reserve officer has sent a letter to army authorities "imploping" them to "make it clear to the political echelon that the [army] is not prepared for a prolonged campaign in Lebanon." The main – and genuine – problem the government faces is in regard to public expectations. The state evacuated some 80,000-100,000 residents from their homes on the border with Lebanon in the period after 8 October. Presently, there is no date for allowing them to return home. Popular anger is growing at this perceived strategic failure. Strong pressures are therefore being applied by the residents of the north, the media, and the opposition. On the other side, senior IOF officials say they believe Hezbollah has lost the advantage of surprise – after much of "Israel's" north has been evacuated. "Ultimately, we'll have to return northern residents back home. If an agreement ensuring their safety won't pass: we'll have to take action." Another senior officer said any political agreement is meaningless without a ground operation along the border aimed at destroying Hezbollah's entrenchment in the area. "Airstrikes won't destroy the infrastructures", he stressed.



Burhan Wani : a symbol of Kashmiri resistance

IN Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) no one could have predicted that a young man, only 22 years old, would turn guerrilla warfare on his head by taking on the vast Indian occupational apparatus even without hiding who he was. Born in Dadsara village in the Tral area of Pulwama on September 19, 1994, Burhan Wani was the son of a school principal Muhammad Muzaffar Wani. With two younger brothers and a sister, he went by the name Burhan. Like many young Kashmiris, Wani experienced personally the effects of military crackdowns, arbitrary detentions, and other atrocities by the occupational military. As a result, he developed animosity towards an authority that continues to be oppressive to Kashmiris. Wani fled from his house at the age of 15 in search of a gun. Following that, the occupational authorities announced a reward of Rs 10 lakh for him and martyred the majority of his assistants. However, Wani's legacy continues to influence the region. Many continue to publicly confront the Indian military jackboots in IOJK to stand up for what is right and wrong for everyone.

Burhan Wani regarded social media as an incredibly powerful weapon for advocacy and mobilization at a time when it was poised to completely transform global communication. He disseminated his message, rallied support, and gave updates on the resistance effort in Kashmir through Facebook and WhatsApp. He transformed into a virtual commander with his insightful posts and videos, inspiring a whole generation of Kashmiri youth to take part in the fight against the illegal occupation of their motherland. Wani addressed a large audience on social media, both inside and outside of Kashmir, while eluding censorship in the traditional media. A political expert noted that his influence extended beyond his role as a resistance commander, providing purpose to thousands of young Kashmiri boys who felt oppressed and marginalized. His actions and leadership helped to define the ongoing battle for Kashmiris' freedom since many people shared his intention to exact permanent revenge on those who are oppressed. His legacy continues to inspire young Kashmiris to reclaim their identity amidst ongoing conflict. On the one hand, the elusive "Burhan effect" is still significant; it is a potent representation of Kashmiris' persistent political unhappiness and their wish to escape the oppressive rule of New Delhi. He was martyred dead on July 8, 2016 during a fierce fight with Indian occupational forces in Kokernag area of Kashmir. After the martyrdom of Burhan Wani on 8 July, there were days and weeks when Kashmir saw no end to strife. Wani today is an icon of Kashmiri resistance and the continuing battle for freedom against oppression.

Israel', US shift crosshairs on Lebanon as Hezbollah overtakes 'Israel's' air 'superiority'

Julia Kassem

The Zionist entity and US shifted from becoming compelled to pressure Hamas into surrender to focusing pressure on Hezbollah, requesting that the Lebanese Resistance group inflict some leverage on Hamas, despite Hezbollah having made itself more than clear in previous months under both US and French pressure to cease its operations against "Israel" at the border. Again, former IOF soldier and Biden envoy, Hochstein, returned to Lebanon to try to convince Beirut to limit Hezbollah operations on the occupied Shebaa farms – in an implicit and perhaps accidental acknowledgment of the illegal occupation of that territory – as the Israeli crosshairs shift...

IN the immediate aftermath of the 2006 war, the Zionist entity attempted to save face by claiming that nobody had won, despite the failure of "Israel's" objectives, the ability for Hezbollah to push off an Israeli invasion and inflict massive soldier casualties and military losses, and "Israel's" failure to achieve its intended goals of disabling and disarming Hezbollah. It wasn't until 2008 that an Israeli investigation admitted its army failed – due in part to "overreliance on air force" and lack of adequate military preparation and skill. These dimensions would contribute to its military failures against Gaza in its bombing-heavy campaigns in 2014/ 2021, and now in Al-Aqsa Flood, where the Zionist entity is facing defeat from all ends. Following the invasion of Rafah, Hezbollah intensified its operation against the Zionist entity and really honed their mastery in precision on its sites. Next, there was a steep acceleration towards delivering devastating blows that decimated the military headquarters in Kiriya-Shmona and the occupied Golan Heights.

Now, Israeli officials proceed in their saber-rattling in calling for war on Lebanon, where Gallant laughably claims that the tanks that couldn't even pass through Gaza, with what's left of them rolling back in humiliating retreat – will now pass through to the Litani. Since October 8, Hezbollah effectively deterred and drained the Zionist entity, and de-secured the Israeli military infrastructure on the border of Occupied Palestine, with "Israel" issuing endless demands and threats to carry out an invasion of South Lebanon. In reality, not only is "Israel" unable to conduct any ground campaign on Lebanon – which anyone who knows a thing of the results of the 2006 Lebanon war knows – but is now growing clearly unable to challenge "Israel" in the air. In previous campaigns, "Israel" had air superiority over its Arab neighbors with constructively weaker air power. At the time of the 2008-issued commission of the 2006 war, the Israeli Air Force was described as "superb" but insufficient in any overall military or political achievements. Hezbollah defeated "Israel" in any attempt at a ground invasion, launched far too late into the closing days of the war with crushing defeat. The occupying Israeli army would then face the same failures to commence a ground invasion of Gaza in 2009 and 2014 – facing the same defeat at the hands of relatively low-tech Resistance groups. Even nearly 18 years ago, Hezbollah showed that with low technology, it defeated the most well-equipped, technological army. While it continues to employ a war of attrition, using low-cost means and limited capacity in its precise strikes on the Israeli military, the considerable election, the ball is now in Hezbollah's court, as it is now clearly setting the terms for escalation, response, and intensity.

The Zionist entity and US shifted from becoming compelled to pressure Hamas into surrender to focusing pressure on

Hezbollah, requesting that the Lebanese Resistance group inflict some leverage on Hamas, despite Hezbollah having made itself more than clear in previous months under both US and French pressure to cease its operations against "Israel" at the border. Again, former IOF soldier and Biden envoy, Hochstein, returned to Lebanon to try to convince Beirut to limit Hezbollah operations on the occupied Shebaa farms – in an implicit and perhaps accidental acknowledgment of the illegal occupation of that territory – as the Israeli crosshairs shift onto Lebanon. In the last few months alone, Hezbollah shot down 5 (expensive) Hermes drones, with the first downing occurring on February 26, as well as 2 Skylark drones. Hezbollah anti-aircraft missiles turned back Israeli jets on June 6th, and just four days later, the Lebanese Resistance group attempted to shoot down another Israeli jet fighter, showing that they were close to scoring a hit. The script had been flipped – The Israeli military is now unable to send its drones and jets into Lebanon, and Hezbollah's are crossing into occupied Palestine unintercepted, reaching their targets, and fulfilling their missions. In 2019, Hezbollah SG Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah affirmed "Israel's" declining air superiority in downing Israeli drones caught over Musharrafieh, in the Southern Suburb of Beirut, subsequently vowing that Israeli drones over Lebanon will be shot down – a threat to the then near – daily violations of airspace waged by Tel Aviv over Lebanon was made and the sincere promise has held firm and grown since.

In February 2022, "Israel" failed to intercept a Hezbollah reconnaissance drone – a locally-produced drone aptly named Hassaan – flying into Occupied Palestinian airspace for over 40 minutes, with the Iron Dome failing to bring it down. As "Israel" and the US scrambled to secure the offshore drilling near South Lebanon later that same year, Hezbollah further worked to undermine their control over land as well as the air, flying a drone over the Karish gas field in the Mediterranean. In light of a 2021 downing of an Israeli drone to the success of the following year's operations, as Hezbollah rapidly updated its anti-aircraft missiles, then-outgoing Zionist Air Force commander Amikam Norkin admitted that the Zionist entity had lost its domination over Lebanon's skies. "Israel's" to freely invade Lebanon's airspace and conduct its missions represents and highlights a landmark loss of air superiority long touted by the Zionist entity, further entwined with its more existential loss of security, only making its claims of a ground invasion more laughable – aside from the obvious fact that it is facing defeat in Gaza. "Israel" now is not only blinded within the territory of Occupied Palestine and its border with Lebanon, but also within Lebanon and the region. No amount of US and French pleading to the Lebanese government, or bluffing the Palestinians and Palestinian Resistance via Qatar can also restore the US's lost negotiating power in

attempting to mitigate the huge losses incurred by both Washington and Tel Aviv. In the early months of the war, Hezbollah took to a very controlled war of attrition strategy that gradually blinded Israeli air control and intelligence from the North of Occupied Palestine by destroying security infrastructure along the border. Attacks on the Meron air base – responsible for directing the very warplanes responsible for terrorizing our region – ensued following the assassination of Hamas official Saleh al-Arouri on January 3, and have continued since. More recently, on June 27, Hezbollah lit ablaze the Berea barracks well into the point where "Israel" witnessed not only the loss of its ability to wage offensives over the skies, but also the destruction of any ability to thwart incoming barrages from the Lebanese Resistance. Hezbollah has waged attacks against Iron Dome batteries, launch sites and systems, adding to the damage of the system long exposed by the Resistance axis at various points in time as ineffective, leaving "Israel" completely compromised even in terms of "defensive" air power. The entity is losing both air and sea because of the successful naval operations by the Yemeni Ansarallah movement, unwavering in their commitment to pressure the Zionist entity by striking and apprehending "Israel"-linked ships, and just hinting at an initiation of its "fifth" phase of operations coming at the helm of "Israel's" failure in its supposed third phase. Israeli, as well as American military officials, know that ultimately, they're losing the race for better munitions to Iran, fearing the acquisition of more advanced Iranian air defense weaponry by the Resistance.

The US has long feared Israel's advanced hardware systems and highly effective surface-to-air missiles, with other regional allies in the Resistance Axis revealing a fraction of the extent that they can effectively challenge Israeli, and by extension, American military superiority, and the continuation of the Zionist project on an existential level. Hezbollah continues to deter an Israeli attack while offering no hope for an Israeli invasion (which should have been obvious enough in August of 2006) as Tel Aviv updates its threat of an attack on Lebanon from mid-June to mid-July. In all cases, it's evident how the Zionist entity no longer holds control over neither the pace nor course of escalation, and less so over its outcomes. Not even "Israel's" assassinations of senior Hezbollah commanders – such as Wednesday's killing of Mohammed Nasser "Abu Nehme" – can bring it on course to controlling the pace of the escalation ladder. If predictability is desperate "Israel's" aim at this point, it should again be reminded of Sayyed Nasrallah's May 24 promise of "surprises" for the Zionist entity. It's still a question of whether the Israeli-provoked all-out war between Hezbollah and the Zionist entity will ensue, but it is no secret that the occupation is headed toward its demise.

Structural adjustment programs: Impact on Pakistan's economy

Muhtasim Afridi



The newly formed government, Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), seeks to negotiate the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the IMF in a move to avert default, which may consist of at least \$6 billion US dollars. While its approval remains unclear, this bailout package from the international lender will mark the 24th term for the country, leading to further burdening of debt

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) serves as the backbone for underdeveloped economies around the globe. In times of recession, the international lender provides financial support in the form of loans or bailout packages to help countries stand on their feet. However, when any state seeks an IMF loan, it must adhere to given reforms called structural adjustment programs. Similarly, when the government of Pakistan visits the IMF for a loan, the ruling party has to agree on certain conditions to get it approved. But in that way Pakistan (just like other states receiving loans from the organization) let the IMF decide its foreign policy. Pakistan and the IMF always had a rocky relationship throughout history, characterized by many ups and downs. Very rarely, the country is found to meet the IMF deadline successfully, in most cases it fails to do so – given the poor economic activity. The condition of Pakistan's economy can be well understood by the fact that whenever a new party holds power, its first plan is to get an IMF loan – "first things first". In return for a loan, the top leadership has to sacrifice its key decisions. To put it, "the sovereignty of any nation is compromised the moment it lets others make its decisions."

The newly formed government, Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), seeks to negotiate the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the IMF in a move to avert default, which may consist of at least \$6 billion US dollars. While its approval remains unclear, this bailout package from the international lender will mark the 24th term for the country, leading to further burdening of debt. While it might bring some optimism into the air, it is quite hard to predict a bright future for Pakistan's economy – given the impact of IMF's structural adjustment programs on the country's domestic and foreign policies. In past regimes, the set of reforms suggested by

the IMF under structural adjustment programs has brought little improvement in terms of tax revenue; nevertheless, it did not serve the interest of Pakistan at large – given that the country has needs and problems other than the Western nations. Pakistan is in dire need of introducing technical equipment in industries, such as heavy machinery used for boosting processes; however, high taxes on such imports, as suggested by the IMF, slow the development of the technical sector. It ultimately limits Pakistan's relations with the developed states (China, Italy, Germany) that produce machinery – heavy tariffs on imports directly affect the trade volume. Contrary to that, the government of Pakistan provides subsidies to the agricultural sector, which might help in ensuring food security but it adds little to the economy because food products are cheap in the international market, hence they do not generate revenue comparably higher than the technological goods. In contemporary times, everything is based on technology – the developed states are thriving because they have machinery and produce electronic or digital products that are high in demand and price. Pakistan needs a strong technological base to generate revenue and increase trade with other states.

Moreover, high tariffs on vehicles greatly impact Pakistan's trade relations. The country imports cars from Japan, China, Indonesia, Thailand, and South Korea. Each household, including the elite class and the middle-class families in particular, demands a vehicle. Now, increased taxes on such imports surge the final cost for the citizens, ultimately testing their buying power. The wealthy class in Pakistan has the purchasing power to buy vehicles; however, for the middle class, it becomes difficult to meet the sky-high prices. Therefore, they go for alternative means rather than buying expensive cars, which eventually decreases Pakistan's trade

volume and consequently weakens foreign policy towards other states. Another major setback for Pakistan's economy is the long-delayed Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project, which otherwise would have fulfilled the energy needs of the country at a very low cost and would have further contributed to increased trade volume between the two neighbours. Both Muslim majorities observe peaceful relations in terms of trade; however, the project is stalled due to the cloud of embargoes on Iran. Despite US sanctions on Iran, the country is all set to commence the project and the ball is now in the court of Pakistan. The US, being the greatest contributor to the IMF, would never allow Pakistan to proceed with the project. However, if Pakistan does that, it might not receive further bailout packages from the international lender, which would bring Pakistan to the brink of default. Pakistan does make independent choices on certain occasions; however, the country does not enjoy full authority over its key decisions – given its huge dependence on international lender. In such a globalized world, states are trying to attract Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), such as investment by Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) – they serve as a means to strengthen foreign policy, but due to high taxes imposed on corporations by the government, they do not operate in Pakistan. In essence, the structural adjustment programs revolve around taxes as a means to generate revenue; however, this is not a sustainable economic model, the country needs to have policies of its own, and it must know its priorities to get out of the vicious cycle of loans.

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Briefs

13 injured as elephant goes on rampage in SL

ANKARA: An elephant went on a rampage during a religious event in southern Sri Lanka, injuring 13 people, local media reported on Sunday. The incident occurred on Saturday night during the Ruhunu Kataragama Mahadevala procession, a major religious and cultural event held at Kataragama, in the Uva province, local English daily The Sri Lanka Mirror reported. The injured are being treated at the local hospital, and no one was critically injured, the police said. Elephant rampages during religious festivals are not uncommon in the country, mainly because of the loud noises made by the attendees. Authorities often urge people to avoid making loud noises during processions to ensure that elephants remain calm.—APP

More cases of ASF reported in S.Korea

SEOUL: South Korean authorities confirmed more cases of African swine fever at a pig farm in a southeastern county as Prime Minister Han Duck-soo instructed officials to take 'emergency' containment measures, Seoul-based Yonhap News reported on Sunday. The directive came after the sixth case of the virus, which is deadly to pigs but not harmful to humans, was confirmed at the farm in Yecheon County, 161 kilometers (100 miles) southeast of Seoul. Han ordered authorities to take relevant measures, including culling, a standstill order and an epidemiological analysis, the prime minister's office said in a statement. Meanwhile, South Korea's Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, on Sunday, instructed officials to take emergency containment measures as authorities confirmed more cases of African swine fever (ASF) at a pig farm in a southeastern county. The instruction came after this year's sixth case of the virus, which is deadly to pigs but not harmful to humans, was confirmed at the farm raising some 900 pigs in Yecheon County, 161 kilometres southeast of Seoul, reports Yonhap News Agency. Han ordered authorities to take relevant measures, including culling, a standstill order and an epidemiological analysis, the Prime Minister's office said in a statement.—DNA

Li Qiang congratulates new British PM

BEIJING: Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Sunday congratulated new British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on his election, state media reported, the first senior leader in Beijing to do so publicly. China is "willing to work with the new UK government to consolidate mutual political trust and expand mutually beneficial cooperation", Li told Starmer, according to state news agency Xinhua. Their call came after days of silence from top officials in Beijing, with the Chinese foreign ministry saying only that it noted the results of the UK election. By comparison, Chinese leader Xi Jinping congratulated Iran's incoming president Masoud Pezeshkian just hours after his election on Saturday. China was Britain's fifth-largest trading partner as of 2023, according to the UK Department for Business and Trade. But diplomatic relations between the two countries have been icy in recent years, with Beijing and London sparring over tightening communist control in former British colony Hong Kong. The two sides have also traded accusations of espionage, with Beijing saying last month that M16 had recruited Chinese state employees to spy for the UK. Xinhua on Sunday said Li told Starmer that the "strengthening of bilateral coordination and cooperation was in the interests of both sides".—APP

SAARC Secretary's Bhutan visit strengthens regional coop

Ambassador Sarwar conveyed his gratitude to the Royal Government of Bhutan for endorsing his nomination as the Secretary-General of SAARC

DNA

KATHMANDU: Ambassador Gollam Sarwar, the Secretary-General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), was in Bhutan from 2nd to 6th July on an official introductory visit. He had productive interactions with His Majesty The King of Bhutan, Bhutan's leadership and high dignitaries. The Secretary-General was granted an audience by His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, King of Bhutan, on 05 July in Thimphu. During the meeting, Ambassador Sarwar apprised His Majesty The King about the ongoing activities of

SAARC and its way forward and requested His Majesty for continued support of Bhutan for the SAARC process. While appreciating the role of Ambassador Sarwar as the new Secretary-General of SAARC, His Majesty The King assured full support for the SAARC process. His Majesty and the Secretary-General also exchanged thoughts about renewed political and diplomatic efforts to revitalize SAARC to achieve the objectives of the organization as envisioned by the leaders for greater prosperity for the two billion people of the region. His Majesty The King of Bhutan also kindly shared his vision with the Secretary-General of SAARC about his ongoing

dream project namely, Gelephu Mindfulness City in the Southern part of Bhutan, which will be an important financial hub and create an important economic corridor between South Asia, South East Asia and beyond. Ambassador Sarwar earlier called on the Prime Minister of Bhutan, H.E. Dashi Tshering Tobgay; and had Official Meetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade, H. E. Mr. D.N. Dhungyel. Ambassador Sarwar conveyed his gratitude to the Royal Government of Bhutan for endorsing his nomination as the Secretary-General of SAARC. He updated the Royal Government on the activities

of SAARC and discussed ways to take the SAARC process forward. Ambassador Sarwar sought the support and cooperation of the Royal Government of Bhutan to re-energize the SAARC process. Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Bhutan appreciated the efforts of the Secretary-General and re-assured continued commitment of Bhutan to the SAARC process in the interest of the lives and livelihoods of almost a quarter of the global population in the region. The Minister for Foreign and External Affairs also hosted an official dinner in honor of the Secretary-General. While in Bhutan, Secre-

tary General Sarwar visited the Secretariat of the SAARC Development Fund (SDF) and discussed about ongoing project-based activities of SDF in all the eight member states of SAARC. Terming the SDF as one of the most significant flagship initiatives of SAARC, the Secretary-General gave valuable guidance to the organisation on various administrative and substantive matters with a view to transforming SDF as one of the most important socio-economic development Institutes in South Asia. The Secretary-General was accompanied by Mr. Dawa Tshering, Director, SAARC Secretariat, during the official meetings and events in Bhutan.



WASHINGTON: Mr. Mohammad Hanif Channa Minister Trade & Investment Embassy of Pakistan Washington DC USA giving appointment letter to Mr. Najeeb Choudhary Founder & Principal Metro Management USA Ambassador on Trade & Investment Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia The Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) on behalf of Sheikh Atif Ikram President FPCCI. Malik Sohail Hussain Chairman Coordination FPCCI & Secretary General USPICC, Mr Sadeeq Sheikh Founder President & Chairman USPICC and Zahid Hussain Editor In Chief Dunya Newspaper USA are also present at the occasion in Pakistan Embassy Washington DC.—DNA

Gaza children spend daily hours carrying essentials

Israel is 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 more than 1 million Palestinians had sought refuge from the war before it was invaded on May 6

GENEVA: The UN Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) said that children in the Gaza Strip spend eight hours a day carrying food and water, forcing families to resort to using seawater for daily tasks. "Children in #Gaza can spend 6-8 hours a day collecting water & food, often carrying heavy weights & walking long distances," the agency wrote on X. "Sanitation facilities & infrastructure are severely compromised, forcing thousands of families to rely on seawater to wash, clean & even drink," it added. 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 attack by the Palestinian group, Hamas. More than 38,000 Palestinians have since been killed, mostly women and children, and over 87,700 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 is 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 more than 1 million Palestinians had sought refuge from the war before it was invaded on May 6.—APP

West African leaders meet amid coup alliance

ABUJA: A West African leaders' summit has opened a day after the military rulers of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger forged a new alliance severing ties with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The ECOWAS summit is being hosted in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, after several West African leaders called for a resumption of dialogue with the three coup-hit Sahel countries, which signed a new defence pact on Saturday during a summit of their own in Niamey, the capital of Niger. Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger announced the pact, known as the Alliance of Sahel States, last September. It allows them to cooperate in the event of armed rebellion or external aggression. The three countries withdrew from ECOWAS in January after the regional bloc's tough stand against the coups.

Reporting from Abuja, Al Jazeera's Ahmed Idris said the timing of Saturday's announcement by the Sahel alliance was aimed at showing the three countries can do without the regional bloc. "But some analysts say Mali and Niger in particular could face difficulties if all member countries of ECOWAS decide to isolate the two landlocked countries," he said. "Right now, the military leaders of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger seem to have momentum on their side and they are scouting the global community for support. ECOWAS has a lot of work ahead before it can bring these three countries back into the fold, if at all they agree to do that." Speaking at the summit on Saturday, Niger's General Abdourahamane Tchiani called the 50-year-old ECOWAS "a threat to our states", adding that the three countries aim to create an alliance free of foreign influence for their people.

ECOWAS lifted sanctions on Niger in February in an attempt to mend relations, but little progress has been made. The bloc had imposed sanctions following the July 2023 coup that brought Tchiani to power. Abdulaziz, a media assistant to the Nigerian president, told Al Jazeera that much has been achieved in the past year despite the souring relations between ECOWAS and the Sahel alliance. "The handling of the fragile situations in these countries - even though perhaps not ideally what we would want - has helped to de-escalate tensions, but at one point, tensions were really high and things could have gone south," he said. As the Sahel region shifts towards allying with Russia, the United States is set to complete its withdrawal from a key base in Niger on Sunday, which it had built to combat armed groups that pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda and ISIL (ISIS). About 1,000

US military personnel were set to withdraw from Niger's Air Base 101. Amid the political and military shifts following the coups, the armed groups continue to pose a considerable danger to the whole region. Kabir Adamu, a security consultant, told Al Jazeera that Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger will still need support from the rest of the region. "If they decide to operate on their own or try to isolate other ECOWAS countries, or other countries within the Sahel, these [armed] groups will continue to exploit these gaps that will be created and of course, continue to impact a heavy toll on both the security forces and the citizens of the three countries." According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), which tracks violence in the region, more than 8,000 people were killed in Burkina Faso in 2023, and gains against armed groups largely backslid in Niger.—Agencies

Punjab: Quality of development projects, role of executing depts & M&E

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



Punjab, the most populous province of Pakistan, invests significantly in development projects to improve infrastructure and public services. Departments such as Works and Services (W&S), Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Irrigation, Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), Lahore Development Authority (LDA), and Local Government and Community Development are primarily responsible for executing these construction endeavors. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) sub-department of the Planning and Development (P&D) department oversees

these projects to ensure they meet the required standards and objectives. The M&E department plays a crucial role in ensuring that development projects adhere to approved plans and quality standards. After monitoring ongoing or completed projects, M&E prepares detailed reports highlighting any deviations or issues. These reports often reveal serious structural problems, quality concerns, and non-compliance with project plans (PC-1). Common issues include unauthorized design changes, lack of feasibility studies, absence of consultant engineers, and insufficient quality control material tests. Frequent observations note cracks, honeycombing, settlement, and seepage in concrete structures. Deviation from PC-1: One of the most prevalent issues observed by M&E is that many development projects do not adhere to the initially approved project concept (PC-1). This deviation can lead to compromised project integrity and increased costs. The design changes made without proper authorization reflect a lack of coordination and

accountability among the involved parties. Absence of Feasibility Studies: Starting construction without a comprehensive feasibility study is another critical issue. Feasibility studies are essential to evaluate the practicality and impact of a project. Without these studies, projects are prone to unforeseen challenges and risks that can hinder their successful completion. Lack of Consultant Engineers: Consultant engineers provide specialized expertise and oversight to ensure that construction meets the required standards. Their absence often results in sub-par quality and structural deficiencies. Inadequate Quality Control Material Tests: Regular quality control tests are crucial to ensure the materials used in construction meet the necessary standards. The lack of frequent testing leads to the use of inferior materials, resulting in structural problems like cracks, honeycombing, settlement, and seepage. The relationship between M&E and the executing departments is often contentious. Executing departments argue that M&E teams lack practical field experience and fabricate observations

to demonstrate their effectiveness. On the other hand, M&E teams assert that their reports are based on site visits conducted in the presence of the executing department's engineers, with photographic evidence to support their findings. This blame game undermines the accountability and effectiveness of the development projects. Instead of addressing the root causes of the issues, both parties deflect responsibility, leading to unresolved problems and compromised project quality. To address these challenges and ensure the successful completion of development projects in Punjab, several measures can be taken: Enhanced Coordination and Communication: Establishing clear lines of communication and coordination between M&E and executing departments is crucial. Regular meetings and joint site visits can help identify and resolve issues promptly. Strict Adherence to PC-1: Ensuring that all projects strictly adhere to the approved PC-1 is essential. Any design changes should be approved by the relevant authorities to maintain project integrity and accountability. Mandatory Fea-

sibility Studies: Making feasibility studies a mandatory requirement before the commencement of any construction project will help identify potential challenges and mitigate risks. Hiring Qualified Consultant Engineers: Ensuring that all projects have qualified consultant engineers will enhance oversight and quality control, reducing the likelihood of structural issues. Frequent Quality Control Tests: Implementing a robust quality control testing regime will ensure that the materials used in construction meet the required standards, minimizing structural problems. Comprehensive Training for M&E Teams: Providing comprehensive training to M&E teams on field practices and construction standards will enhance their ability to accurately assess project quality and address any issues. Accountability and Legal Action: Holding all responsible parties accountable, including M&E officials, executing engineers, and authorities, is crucial. Strict legal action should be taken against those found to be negligent or fabricating reports.

Josep visits bloc's Red Sea mission

LONDON: EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell visited the bloc's Aspides mission in the Red Sea on Saturday, according to the Greek Defense Ministry. Borrell, accompanied by Greek Defense Minister Nikos Dendias, visited the Greek frigate, Psara, it said. The EU leader met Greek Foreign Minister George Gerapetritis on Friday to discuss regional developments in Athens. Meanwhile, a ministry statement added that 87,828 people have also been injured in the onslaught. "Israeli attacks killed 55 people and injured 123 others in the last 24 hours," the statement said. "Many people are still trapped under rubble and on the roads as rescuers are unable to reach them," it added. Flouting a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate cease-fire, Israel has faced international condemnation amid its continued brutal offensive on Gaza since an Oct. 7, 2023 attack by Hamas. 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 Tel Aviv to immediately halt its operation in the southern city of Rafah, where over a million Palestinians had sought refuge from the war before it was invaded on May 6.—Agencies

PNG minister charged with assault in Australia

SYDNEY: Papua New Guinea's influential Petroleum Minister Jimmy Maladina has been charged with assault following an alleged "domestic dispute" in Australia, according to court documents. Police said a 31-year-old woman was allegedly attacked in Sydney by a 58-year-old man who was known to her on Saturday morning local time. Mr Maladina was granted conditional bail ahead of a court appearance on 11 July. In a statement, he said he was "aware of the recent media reports" and was "cooperating with the authorities to address this matter". "I understand the gravity of this situation and the concerns it raises," said Mr Maladina. "As a public servant, I hold myself to high standards of conduct, both personally and professionally. I want to make it clear that violence in any form is unacceptable, and I am committed to handling this situation with integrity and transparency."—APP

SCO media summit debates western sanctions' inhumanity

BEIJING: Officials, academics, and media delegates from member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) convened in Shanghai on Saturday for a roundtable discussing the inhumane nature of Western sanctions. The meeting in China's financial hub was held to deliberate on the future direction and strategic plans of this formidable Eurasian political, economic, security, and defense bloc. As the SCO represents a significant portion of the world's population and economy, the meeting's focal points were diverse, covering internal growth, external security, and practical decision-making. Amid rapidly changing geopolitical dynamics, speakers at the summit reiterated that the SCO is not an enemy of the West and poses no threat to any nation. The main objectives of this powerful regional bloc, they asserted, are to stimulate economic growth among member states, bolster security, and establish strong regional alliances. Participants reaffirmed their respective countries' commitment to strengthening the organization to enhance regional ties and defend against internal and external threats. He argued that developing such a mechanism would bring mutual benefits, protecting sanctions-battered countries while allowing them to share their experiences in navigating and neutralizing sanctions. Professor Pan Guang, a senior researcher at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences and chief expert at the China National Institute for SCO (CNISCO), expressed China's strong opposition to these punitive measures against independent countries. He insisted that China views sanctions as a stance against humanity and advocated for collective efforts from all SCO member countries to oppose and thwart these draconian measures. As a prime driver of the geopolitical landscape, the SCO represents nearly two-thirds of the Eurasian landmass, close to 40 percent of the global population, and around one-third of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). As an SCO member, the Islamic Republic of Iran enjoys increased trading opportunities, resistance to sanctions, and broader financial exchanges within this powerful regional grouping. Iran was announced as a new permanent member of the SCO in September 2022, following relentless efforts by the Ebrahim Raisi administration.—DNA

Briefs

IHCBA condemns campaign against J. Jahangiri

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Bar Association has called an immediate meeting on a malicious social media campaign against Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri. The IHC Bar Association's Executive Committee has summoned a meeting on July 9 pertaining to the matter. The IHC Bar Association has condemned the malicious social media targeting Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, asserting, that Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri was a competent and honest judge. The notification mentioned Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri's excellent career spanning as a lawyer and Deputy Attorney General. The IHC Bar Association stressed its commitment to ensure judicial independence and autonomy. It is pertinent to note that a letter is circulating on social media purportedly from the Karachi University's (KU) controller of examinations regarding the law degree of Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri. A reference has also been filed with the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) on the letter circulating on social media.

11,000 passports were issued to Afghans

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Close to 11,000 Pakistani passports were issued to Afghan nationals in lieu of money between 2010 and 2012. Sources told 24News TV channel that besides Karachi's Saddar Passport Office, passports were also issued to Afghans from Awami Markaz, Malir and Thatta offices. They revealed that 1,000 passports were issued from the Safdar Passport Office alone. However, they disclosed, a majority of passports were issued from Pakistani missions in Saudi Arabia. Sources said that the concerned department as well as the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) were investigating to identify those responsible and take action against them. In this connection, they informed, Safdar Passport Office superintendent and a former officer at the office had been taken into custody. Sources told 24News that NADRA's role in the corruption scandal was also being probed. Earlier this year, Amnesty International calls government of Pakistan must stop ignoring global calls to halt unlawful deportation of Afghan refugees. "The Pakistani authorities' callous disregard for the persecution, serious human rights violations and humanitarian catastrophe that await Afghan refugees if deported to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan is heart-breaking.

ASEAN Movie Nights Grand Finale

"PASKAL" testament to Malaysian patriotism, says Amb. Dato Mazlan

The Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting graced the event as chief guest. The Minister noted with great satisfaction over the excellent state of relations between Pakistan and Malaysia

STAFF REPORT/DNA

ISLAMABAD: The High Commission of Malaysia in Islamabad held the grand finale of the ASEAN Movie Nights programme. This programme was initiated under the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI) aimed at promoting the rich film and culture heritage of ASEAN member countries in Islamabad. The final series showcased Malaysia's action-packed film "PASKAL." Based on the true story of the Malaysian Armed Forces' heroic efforts in rescuing the merchant ship MV Bunga Laurel from pirate attack in 2011, the film captivated the audience with its gripping narrative and action-packed performance. Officiating the event, the High Commissioner of Malaysia, Ambassador Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, underlined the key message of the film, stating, "PASKAL is not just an action movie; it is a testament to Malaysia's patriotism, sense of belonging, the exceptional capabilities and professionalism of our military, and the sophisticated quality of our film industry."

The Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting graced the event as chief guest. The Minister noted with great satisfaction over the excellent state of relations between Pakistan and Malaysia. He shared the similarities between Malaysia and Pakistan in



nation building and patriotism. He lauded the High Commissioner of Malaysia and ACI for the Movie Nights programme, adding that both Malaysia and Pakistan should collaborate in future project/programme, especially in cultural exchange and film industry. The event drew a huge audience of over 200 guests from a cross-section of the society ranging from the Dean and Ambassadors of the Diplomatic Corps, ASEAN Heads of Mission, senior government officials, university students and friends of the media, reflecting the strong interest and support for Malaysia's and ASEAN's cultural and cinematic exchange. During the event, the guests enjoyed Malaysian traditional cuisine and snacks including fried rice, fried beehoon, classic boiled and spicy chickpeas, fried banana balls, and Ice Cream Malaysia, among others. The ASEAN-Malaysia Movie Night programme was a resounding success, bringing together diverse communities and fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation to each of ASEAN countries' unique cultures and stories through the cinematic experience. In his concluding remarks, the High Commissioner of Malaysia suggested that this programme should be held annually for a much wider cultural engagement and understanding between ASEAN and Pakistan.

British PM heads to Scotland, N. Ireland, Wales to reset ties

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is heading off Sunday to the four corners of the UK as part of an "immediate reset" with governments in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Starmer, who said he has a "mandate to do politics differently" after his party's landslide victory, will meet Scottish First Minister John Swinney in Edinburgh in an effort to "turn disagreement into co-operation." "That begins today with an immediate reset of my government's approach to working with the first and deputy first ministers," he said. "Meaningful co-operation centered on respect will be key to delivering change across our United Kingdom." While each of the devolved nations in the UK elects members to the House of Commons in London, they also have their own regional parliaments. Starmer's Labour Party trounced Swinney's Scottish National Party for seats in Parliament. But the SNP, which has pushed for Scottish independence, still holds a majority at Holyrood, the Scottish parliament. The trip to build better working relations across the UK is part of Starmer's broader mission to work toward serving people as he tackles of mountain of problems. The Labour government inherited a wobbly economy that left Britons struggling to pay bills after global economic woes and fiscal missteps. It also faces a public that is disenchanted after 14 years of chaotic Conservative rule and fiscal austerity that hollowed out public services, including the revered National Health Service, which Starmer declared broken. Starmer said he wants to transfer power

from the bureaucratic halls of government in London to leaders who know what's best for their communities. After his brief tour, he'll return to England, where he plans to meet with regional mayors, saying in his first news conference Saturday that he would engage with politicians regardless of their party. "There's no monopoly on good ideas," he said "I'm not a tribal political." Starmer continued to speak with other world leaders, having separate calls with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. He spoke with both about his priorities for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the return of hostages to Israel, and an increase in humanitarian aid, a spokesperson said. He told Abbas that the recognition of a Palestinian state as part of a peace process was the "undeniable right of Palestinians" and told Netanyahu it was important to ensure the long-term conditions for a two-state solution, including ensuring financial means for Abbas' Palestinian Authority to operate effectively. On Tuesday, Starmer will jet off to Washington for a NATO meeting. Meanwhile, his top diplomat, Foreign Secretary David Lammy, was due in Poland and Sweden Sunday after visiting Germany on Saturday for his first trip abroad to strengthen ties with European partners. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said on the social media platform X that the UK was an indispensable part of Europe and they were working with the British government to see how it could move closer to the European Union. Lammy reiterated Starmer's pledge not to rejoin the EU single market after British voters in 2016 voted to break from the political and economic union.

Rupee expected to depreciate by end of 2024 despite IMF deal

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistani rupee, which is currently being exchanged at Rs278 against the dollar, is expected to depreciate to Rs 295 by the end of December 2024 despite the government's hope of securing a new bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). "As Pakistan navigates these turbulent waters, we expect economic challenges to persist in the near term with elevated inflation and demand contraction," said Tresmark in a client note issued a day earlier. The prediction comes after Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik's remarks claiming that the government was looking forward to an IMF bailout in excess of \$6 billion after addressing all of the lender's requirements in its tax-heavy budget. In the budget, the government increased the taxes on the already burdened salaried class, brought exporters

into the normal tax regime, increased the petroleum levy and imposed new taxes on the real estate sectors, among others, to increase revenue generation aimed at stabilising the country's economic indicators. "We hope to culminate this [IMF] process in the next three to four weeks," Malik told Reuters. This week, the rupee traded within narrow ranges due to balanced supply and demand dynamics for dollars in the market and saw slight fluctuations throughout the week before recovering losses to close at Rs278.37 on Friday. Elaborating on the performance of the local currency, Tresmark's notice said that the rupee is projected to trade at Rs295 against the dollar by this year's end and at Rs325 by June 2025. Positive indicators such as a narrowing trade deficit and a resilient stock market suggest a gradual economic recovery and an expected IMF agreement, anticipated to bring in between \$6 billion to \$8 billion, is seen as crucial for stabilising the economy, Tresmark noted. However, potential implications from the Finance Bill's tax measures and escalating fuel prices may further strain purchasing power and demand, the report cautioned. On the policy rate issue, it said that it is anticipated to remain between 17 to 19% by December 2024 to counter growth-related inflationary pressures. Meanwhile, Sakib Sherani, an economist who heads the private firm Macro Economic Insights.

Gaza's students in Pakistan to be facilitated in medical education

By providing them with the opportunity to study in Pakistan, PMDC wants to help them to achieve their goals in medical education, he maintained

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has said that it will facilitate the students of Gaza in Pakistan in completion of medical and dental education. In a statement issued on Sunday, President PMDC Prof Dr Rizwan Taj said that the decision in this connection was made by the PMDC Council on the request of the Pakistani High Commissioner in London to adjust the students of Gaza in Pakistan keeping in view the Gaza's current situation. He said that the decision will allow Gaza students to continue their medical education in Pakistan on humanitarian grounds, ensuring that their studies are not interrupted due to the challenging circumstances in their home country. It should be mentioned here that the High Commission proposed that the students come in batches of 20-30, with an expected number of 100 students and upon completion of their clinical placement in Pakistan, these students will graduate from the universities of Gaza for clinical rotations in Pakistani medical colleges and attached teaching hospitals in the public sector, as a special case. Prof Dr Rizwan Taj said that a committee will be constituted headed by President PMDC to smoothly execute the induction of these students into the Pakistani medical education system in the corresponding years. He said that Gaza students will have the opportunity to learn in a well-equipped environment, which might be lacking in Gaza due to ongoing conflicts and resource constraints. Exposure to various medical specialities during their education in Pakistan will allow students to pursue specific areas of interest, he added. The PMDC President said that due to the ongoing conflict, many students were facing disruptions in their education. By providing them with the opportunity to study in Pakistan, PMDC wants to help them to achieve their goals in medical education, he maintained. Dr Rizwan Taj said that providing these opportunities to Gaza students will also open doors for their personal and professional growth.

NATO risks committing suicide unless changes war agenda: Hungary's Orban

Stressing that several member states have recently entertained the possibility of launching a NATO operation in Ukraine, Orban said NATO "will be committing suicide" unless it changes tack regarding Ukraine

WEB DESK

BUDAPEST: Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban says NATO risks "committing suicide" if the US-led military alliance fails to change its war-mongering agenda back to what it claims to be a defensive one amid the protracted conflict in Ukraine. Orban made the statement in an op-ed published in Newsweek on Saturday as he addressed the latest Ukraine-related tendencies involving NATO, of which Hungary has been a member since 1999. The Hungarian prime minister, who is an outspoken critic of Western involvement in the Ukraine conflict, said NATO has effectively made warmongering its raison d'être by jettisoning its original "peaceful" and "defensive" nature. The Hungarian leader underlined Budapest's active participation in multiple NATO operations and initiatives over the years, as well as its compliance with the bloc's 2% defense spending target. Orban said the NATO his country joined 25 years ago was a "peace project," and a "military alliance for defense," however, "today, instead of peace, the agenda is the pursuit of war; instead of defense, it is offense." Orban has repeatedly warned that escalatory steps by the US-led military bloc regarding Ukraine could eventually lead to a direct military confrontation with Russia, yielding catastrophic consequences. "Ever more voices within NATO are making the case for the necessity—or even inevitability—of military confrontation with the world's other geopolitical power centers," the premier said in his op-ed, warning that the attitude "functions like a self-fulfilling prophecy." Stressing that several member states have recently entertained the possibility of launching a NATO operation in

Ukraine, Orban said NATO "will be committing suicide" unless it changes tack regarding Ukraine. In late February, French President Emmanuel Macron said he did not rule out the deployment of French troops to Ukraine and has since doubled down on the controversial idea on multiple occasions despite criticism from Germany and other NATO member states. In May, Estonia and neighboring Lithuania also signaled their readiness to send troops to Ukraine for logistical and other non-combat missions. The Hungarian premier on Friday paid a surprise visit to Moscow and met with Russian President Vladimir Putin, with Orban's office saying he was on a "peacekeeping mission," and that the discussion between the two leaders centered on potential ways to peacefully resolve the Ukraine conflict. Earlier in the week, the Hungarian prime minister arrived in Kiev, where he sat down with Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky, and voiced his support for an immediate ceasefire and peace negotiations with Moscow. Following the visits, Orban acknowledged that Moscow's and Kiev's positions remain very "far apart," but said, "We've already taken the most important step – establishing contact," and vowed to continue the effort. Since Russia launched its "special military operation" in Ukraine in February 2022, the Hungarian leader has made it clear that Russia's advantage in resources and men makes the country unbeatable. He is the European Union's most prominent critic of providing Ukraine with military aid. The United States has provided more than \$51.2 billion worth of weaponry for Ukraine since the conflict with Russia started in 2022, according to the Pentagon. The Kremlin has repeatedly warned the endless flow of advanced arms to Ukraine will only prolong the war, adding that it would take retaliatory measures against the West if the weaponry is used on targets inside Russia.



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