



# Islamabad POST

Tuesday, July 09, 2024

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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**Biden tells Democrats he's 'committed' to re-election, beating Trump**

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**Wani is an epitome of courage**

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**Jayasuriya announced SL new coach**

Detailed News On Page-06



QUETTA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif talking to the media after the signing of agreement to solarise agricultural tubewells of Balochistan. - DNA

## Govt pursuing reforms agenda PM says it would be a shame to go back to IMF again

"To free ourselves from this cycle of debt, federal and provincial governments must work together," says PM Shehbaz

STAFF REPORT / DNA

QUETTA: Lamenting that the burden of debt has mortgaged the future of nation's generations, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said it will be a matter of great shame if Pakistan has to once again return to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for another loan after three years. "To free ourselves from this cycle of debt, the federal and provincial governments, along with the relevant institutions, must work together," the premier said while addressing a signing ceremony to launch a significant initiative aimed at the solarisation of agricultural tube wells in Balochistan on Monday. "If we make this collective effort, future generations will be grateful. However, if we fail to make tough decisions, we will find ourselves seeking assistance from the IMF once again," he added. Pakistan is looking to strike a staff-level deal on an IMF bailout of more than \$6 billion this month after addressing all of the Washington-based lender's requirements in its annual budget. Moreover, the country's debt has soared since the mid-2000s, as authorities failed to invest a gusher of loans from international bondholders and countries including China and Gulf nations into productive, export-oriented sectors. Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb warned on Sunday that Pakistan would continue to

**To free from IMF Pakistan must shore up tax revenue**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb warned on Sunday that Pakistan will continue to seek International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailouts if it fails to boost tax revenue. The finance minister said that he was "relatively

PICTURE ON BACK PAGE

confident" of reaching a staff-level agreement with the global lender this month for an estimated loan of \$6-\$8 billion. "But it will not be our last fund programme if we don't bring our tax revenues up," said the finance minister while speaking during an interview with Financial Times.

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### Kenya court rules police killing of Arshad Sharif unlawful

Kenyan court orders its government to pay compensation to Arshad Sharif's family

AGENCIES

NAIROBI: The bereaved family of slain Pakistani journalist Arshad Sharif has been awarded 10 million Kenyan Shilling (Rs 21.7 million) by the High Court in Kenya's Kajiado County as compensation. On October 23, 2022, Sharif was shot dead by Kenyan police at Tinga area in Kajiado County in what the police later described as a case of "mistaken identity". The award followed a ruling by the Kenyan High Court, which stated that the shooting of Sharif in Kajiado by police was "arbitrary and

Continued on Page 06

## Amid terrorism spike Dialogue, diplomacy only way to ensure Pak-Afghan detente

PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto affirms PPP's commitment to constructive politics at APC

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari underscored on Monday the necessity of dialogue and diplomacy over mere visits to Afghanistan, stating that diplomatic efforts are crucial for resolving bilateral issues. Addressing a press conference in Peshawar, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari lamented the current lack of positive politics across Pakistan and stressed the importance of confronting non-democratic practices. He highlighted the unprecedented challenges facing the nation today, attributing them to decisions that inadvertently facilitated the resurgence of terrorist organizations across provinces.

Continued on Page 06

### Qureshi transferred to Lahore's Kot Lakhpat Jail

Former foreign minister moved to Lahore's ATC for May 9 case hearing after JIT completed terrorism-related inquiries

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who was incarcerated in Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, has been transferred to

Continued on Page 06

### Briefs

#### TikTok takes strict action in Pakistan

Takes robust action against spam accounts and related content

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Popular video-sharing platform TikTok on Monday issued its Community Guidelines Enforcement Report for the first quarter of the ongoing year, revealing that the company took action against more than 20 million videos. During the January-March period of 2024, the platform took action against 20,207,878 videos in Pakistan for breaching its Community Guidelines.

#### SC directs LHC CJ, ECP to hold dialogue

ECP filed plea in SC against LHC's decision to constitute election tribunals

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: In its written order on Monday, the Supreme Court directed the Election Commission of Pakistan and the Lahore High Court to hold consultations concerning a dispute over the formation of eight election tribunals. The development came after the ECP filed a plea in the top court against the LHC's action of constituting election tribunals.

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## IOF tanks storm Gaza City displace thousands

The UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said, "50% of UNRWA's headquarters in the Gaza Strip were destroyed, and more than 500 people were killed while being in our headquarters"

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: Israeli Occupation forces (IOF) pounded Gaza City early on Monday and columns of tanks advanced into the heart of the city from different directions in what residents said was one of the heaviest attacks since Oct 7. The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) advanced into the southwest of Gaza City at dawn Monday, ordering Palestinian civilians to evacuate neighborhoods after a night of bombardment that killed and injured dozens of Gazans. The PIC correspondent reported that the IOF suddenly penetrated the vicinity of the universities and the industrial areas on the southern outskirts of Tal al-Hawa neighborhood,

Continued on Page 06

### Dozens killed in Russian missile strikes on Ukraine

Russia fired dozens of missiles across Ukraine on Monday in a massive barrage

AGENCIES

KIEV: A major Russian missile attack across Ukraine killed at least 36 people and injured almost 130 on Monday, officials said, with one missile striking

Continued on Page 06

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# Pakistani nation stands with Kashmiri brothers : Murtaza

Mayor Karachi said that the Pakistan Peoples Party has always advocated for the rights of oppressed nations, including the freedom movement in Kashmir

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that the Pakistani nation stands united with their Kashmiri brothers and fully support their demand for the right to self-determination. He expressed these views while meeting with a delegation of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, led by Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi and included APHC General Secretary Pervez Ahmed Shah, Kashmiri leader Sardar Nazakat, senior Hurriyat leader Syed Ejaz Rahmani, Raja Khadim Hussain, Intiaz Iqbal Wani, and others. Also present were Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad and Mayor Karachi Spokesperson for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi. The Mayor said that the Pakistan Peoples Party has always advocated

for the rights of oppressed nations, including the freedom movement in Kashmir, on various international platforms. Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan, and sacrifices like those of Burhan Wani and other martyrs will never be forgotten, he said. Barrister Murtaza Wahab emphasized that we all pay tribute to Shaheed Burhan Wani, whose martyrdom occurred on this day, and urged for the documentation and publication of all documents and movements related to Kashmir in written form so that future generations can be informed about this great movement. He stated that all movements for freedom and self-determination in the world owe their existence to those who prioritized the nation's survival and future over their own lives and became immortal in human history. He called upon the international community

to play its role at all levels for a just solution to this critical issue and to pressure India to adhere to United Nations resolutions. Pakistan has consistently raised the Kashmir issue on all international forums, and the Pakistani nation will continue its efforts in support of Kashmiris, he added. On this occasion, prayers for forgiveness were also offered for all Kashmiri martyrs, including Burhan Wani. Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi, All Parties Hurriyat Conference remarked that today is observed as a day of resistance, recalling that the massive participation in Burhan Wani's funeral proved that the death of a martyr is the life of a nation. He affirmed that the Kashmiri people will never accept India's slavery and their struggle for freedom will continue unabated.



KALASH: MNA Isphanyar Bhandara given a warm welcome upon his arrival in the Kalash Valley. The MNA remained with the locals for quite some time and listened to their problems. He assured to resolve their issues on priority basis. —DNA

## DC visits routes of mourning processions

FAISALABAD : Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh has visited routes of mourning processions in Tehsil Tandlianwala on Monday and directed to improve security arrangements. He also held a meeting with administration and police officers in Tandlianwala and took briefing about Muharram arrangements. He directed to ensure availability of drinking water in shape of 'Sabeel' in the routes of mourning processions and said that the control room would monitor all types of arrangements actively and no negligence, lethargy or delinquency would be tolerated in this regard at all. He directed to restore sewerage system in the area and said that procession routes should be cleared well before time to foil nefarious designs of the miscreants. City Police Officer (CPO) Kamran Adil, MPA Jaffar Ali Hocha, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Tandlianwala Safa Abid and others were also present on the occasion. —APP

## RCCI urges policy overhaul for sustainable industry growth

DNA  
RAWALPINDI: The government to develop a cogent National Industry Policy with embedded effective implementation frameworks that promote realistic regulation and government-academia-industry collaborations to achieve sustainable growth. This was the crux of a consultative session held by the Revenue Mobilisation Investment and Trade (ReMIT) project and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) with the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) to garner key recommendations and expert suggestions for the policy draft to be prepared for National Industry Policy. Chairman, of the Executive Committee, and President

RCCI, Saqib Rafique said there were alternatives to growing imports of a country to manage its imports and demanded the policymakers to shift their focus on developing indigenous solutions instead of squeezing the already burdened sectors to manage its revenue demands. He urged that the Industry demand consistency of policy to achieve optimum results as there is no effective implementation of already existing policy frameworks. Senior Vice President, RCCI, Hamza Sarosh said the purpose of the consultative meeting was to provide policy recommendations to ReMIT and SDPI who were preparing a policy draft for industry policy. He said due to heightened tax slabs and over-regulated regimes the country will

not be able to avail benefits of its so-called strategic locations which is futile owing to declining revenue, business, exports and employment opportunities. Sarosh noted that Vietnam has more foreign direct investment (FDI) and business growth than China. In contrast, problems for the Pakistani industry are growing every day with policies having narrow and short-sighted approaches. Umar Bhatti, Industrial Policy Consultant, SDPI presented a detailed presentation on discussion on national industrial policy. He said the country's GDP equation from FY 2021-23 indicated the Pakistani economy being consumption-driven. In contrast, its exports have been depleting since 2001 with some economic recovery post-Covid-19 pandemic but that diminished in 2022.

## PIC directs SBP to make public list of 1000 loan defaulters

ISLAMABAD :The Pakistan Information Commission has issued a directive to the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to disclose the list of the top 1000 loan defaulters. Azmat Khan, a resident of Karachi, had sought the list from SBP under the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017. In response, the SBP requested an exemption from disclosing the information under Section 7(d) of the Act, which relates to the records of banking companies and financial institutions concerning their customers' accounts. The commission thoroughly examined the information request, the written reply from the SBP, and the relevant law. The Commission's order clarified that Section 7(d) of the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017, which exempts certain records from disclosure, does not apply to the requested list of loan defaulters. The order said: "It is an admitted fact that 1000 individuals obtained loans from the concerned banks and failed to repay them, causing significant financial damage to both the country and the banks involved. Such individuals cannot be protected from disclosure." The Commission observed that the exemption cited by the SBP did not pertain to this case. Consequently, the plea of the public body has been rejected. The SBP Governor has been directed to disclose the required information and submit it to the Commission within 10 days. Failure to comply will result in the initiation of proceedings against the responsible parties under Section 20(f) of the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017.—APP

## Burhan Wani is an epitome of courage: Mushaal

She said the bravery and courage of the late freedom fighter with which he fought against the brutality of occupied Indian forces is a source of inspiration for every Kashmiri youth

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Former adviser to Pakistan prime minister on human rights Mushaal Mullick on Monday said Burhan Wani is the epitome of courage and a symbol of unflinching commitment to freedom for the people of Kashmir. Wife of jailed Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik, in a video message shared on social media on the 8th martyrdom anniversary of Burhan Wani, said that the movement started by Burhan had reached every of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). She said the bravery and courage of the late freedom fighter with which he fought against the brutality

of occupied Indian forces is a source of inspiration for every Kashmiri youth. Kashmir, IOJK, India, Burhan Wani, Pakistan, Mushaal Mullick, Jammu and Kashmir, Mullick further said Wani exposed the actual face of Indian oppression in his fight for the freedom of Kashmir, stressing that young Kashmiris are following in the footsteps of Wani against the ill intentions of India in front of the whole world. Meanwhile, illegally detained Chairman of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Masarrat Alam Butt has paid tribute to Shaheed Burhan Wani and his associates on their martyrdom anniversary. According to media reports, Burhan Wani, along with his two fellows, was martyred

by Indian troops in a fake encounter in Kokernag on July 8, 2016. Masarrat Alam Butt, in his message from Tihar Jail on the eve of the eighth martyrdom anniversary of Wani, lauded Burhan Wani as a role model for the people of Kashmir in their struggle against Indian oppression. The APHC urged the Kashmiris living on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) to organize protest rallies, seminars and other events to honour popular youth leader Wani and his companions, who lit the candle of Kashmir's freedom movement with their blood. Masarrat Alam Butt termed Wani as a role model for the people of Kashmir in their struggle against Indian subjugation.

## Committee constituted to plan beautification of Capital

DNA

ISLAMABAD : A committee has been constituted to develop a comprehensive plan for beautification of the Federal Capital on the directions of Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa. The committee

will comprise CDA officers, environmental experts, and other professionals. The committee is tasked with providing recommendations for both short-term and long-term plans to enhance the beauty of Islamabad. The chairman directed that the installation of a dancing fountain in Ankara Park should be completed

within one month. Additionally, he instructed that a plan for installing a dancing fountain in Lake View Park be submitted immediately. Muhammad Ali Randhawa also directed that the member of IT and the member of engineering should submit plans for installing fountains with modern technology.

## Labour colonies, daycare centres top priority: Minister

LAHORE: Minister for Labour and Human Resources Faisal Ayub Khokhar on Monday visited Punjab Social Security Head office to review the operations and initiatives of Labour and attached departments. He was briefed by officers from Labour & Human Resource, Labour Welfare, Punjab Social Security and Workers Welfare Funds. Secretary Labour Naeem Ghaus, Commissioner Punjab Social Security Nadia Saqib, DG Labour Khalsum Hai, Executive Officer Workers Welfare Board Tauqeer Elyas Cheema and other relevant officers were present. Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar directed to establish daycare centres within factories for the children of female workers and emphasised on ensuring the construction of labour colonies for workers. He directed the Labour and related departments to formulate comprehensive plans within two days and ensure the installation of biometric machines in offices to verify attendance and directed to take immediate action against ghost employees. He stressed on enhancing human resources to ensure the registration of workers and pledged to amend laws for their welfare if necessary.—APP

## Ulema call for peace in Muharram

LAHORE : Religious leaders from various school of thoughts have called for strict adherence to the Paigham-e-Pakistan Code of Conduct to promote peace and religious harmony during Muharram-ul-Haram, aiming to combat extremism, terrorism, and intolerance in the country. In a joint press conference held in Gujranwala on Monday, prominent figures such as Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council and President of the International Interfaith Council, Deputy Commissioner Gujranwala Tariq Mehmood Qureshi, SSP Rizwan Tariq, ADCG Shabbir Hussein Butt, along with various leading Ulema, emphasized their commitment to this cause. According to a press release issued here, key resolutions of code of conduct are: Eradicate sectarian violence: Sectarian antagonism, violence, and forced imposition of ideologies are against Islamic Shariah and national law. Religious scholars refute extremist mindsets and emphasize peaceful coexistence. Upholding the sanctity of prophets, companions, caliphs, and wives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is mandatory. Only the state has the authority to declare someone an infidel (Takfir). Non-Muslims have the right to worship and practice their rituals freely. It is impermissible to harm peaceful non-Muslims; violators will be punished by the state. Women's rights, including inheritance and education, must be respected. Citizens are allowed to hold religious gatherings during Muharram and Safar, vigilance against enemies' conspiracies during religious observances, religious leaders should promote unity and identify miscreants, leaders should educate their followers and avoid targeting other sects, media should highlight the Paigham-e-Pakistan Code and report any sectarian content, the Ulema-Mashaikh pledged full cooperation with law enforcement and government agencies to uphold these principles, aiming for national stability and prosperity through a unified policy against extremism and terrorism.—DNA

## Court Notice

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نکتہ ذکر وارثان میں شامل ہونے کی اور کوئی عذر  
تہمت قبول نہ ہوگی حکم عدالت ہر عدالت

## IGP releases additional Rs2m medical grant for cops

Police will ensure the strict implementation of Section 144 during Ashura, whereas bans on aerial firing, weapon displays, hate speech, and incitement will be strictly ensured. Punjab government has also imposed a ban on double riding from the 7th to the 10th of Muharram

ABID RAZA

LAHORE:IG Punjab Dr Usman Anwar has released an additional Rs2 million as medical grant for the treatment of employees and their families serving in various districts, including Lahore. According to details, SI Abdul Kabir from Rawalpindi was given Rs5 lakh for cancer treatment. Traffic Assistant Zafar Iqbal from Okara received Rs390,000 for leg surgery. SI Ijaz Ahmed from Khanewal was given Rs3

lakh for major surgery. Constable driver M Ramzan from Lahore Police was given Rs2 lakh for his wife's cancer treatment, while Head Constable Ali Akbar from Lahore Police was given Rs2 lakh for major surgery procedure. SI Nadeem Ahmad from PTS Ferozabad received Rs2 lakh for open heart surgery, and Constable Zil Hussain from Pindi was given Rs2 lakh for eye and jaw treatment. Meanwhile, Punjab police have completed foolproof security arrangements for

all religious processions and Majalis across the province for Muharram (today). More than 10,700 processions and over 38,000 Majalis will take place during Ashura across the province, including Lahore. Over 215,000 officers and personnel will be on duty for security, with over 28,000 officers and personnel specifically deployed in the provincial capital. Police will be assisted by Rangers and the Pakistan Army, along with other govt security institutions to maintain peace and

law and order. Additionally, over 66,000 community volunteers will assist security Majalis, and over 45,000 volunteers will help in security of the religious processions. Various field formations, including CTD, special branch, traffic police, Dolphin Squad, and Peru, will perform their duties as part of the security plan. Across the province, 633 points have been identified as flashpoints, with 283 in Lahore alone. In Lahore, 54 locations are deemed extremely sensitive, and 229 are sensitive,

with additional personnel deployed accordingly. Province-wide, 586 locations are classified as sensitive, and 146 as extremely sensitive. Police will ensure the strict implementation of Section 144 during Ashura, whereas bans on aerial firing, weapon displays, hate speech, and incitement will be strictly ensured. Punjab government has also imposed a ban on double riding from the 7th to the 10th of Muharram. Meanwhile, Lahore police have completed security arrangements for Muharram.

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July 01/Japan  
Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore  
Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada  
National Day

July 01/Somalia  
Independence Day

July 04/USA  
Independence Day

July 05/Algeria  
Independence Day

July 09/Argentina  
Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia  
Revolution Day

July 14/France  
National Day

July 15/Brunei  
Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium  
National Day

July 20/TRNC  
Independence Day

July 23/Egypt  
National Day

July 26/Cuba  
National Day

July 26/Liberia  
National Day

July 30/Morocco  
National Day

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Marriott.....051- 2826121  
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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

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PIA Cargo.....9280979  
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Railway Exchange9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi..5555489  
CAA.....9281092



## Hospitals

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



## Departments

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

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# ICCI to organize Sports Economy seminar: Bakhtawari

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ahsand Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has underlined the need for devising a comprehensive Sports Policy to turn the tide on a continuous decline of sports in the country. He said this while talking to Deputy Director General (Technical) Pakistan Sports Board Shahid Islam who called on him at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry the other day. He said that the sports industry is playing an important role in the economic development of many countries and that the government should also strengthen this industry in the country for better economic growth. He said that there was a time when Squash and Hockey were the distinctions of Pakistan but with the passage of time due to consecutive obliviousness, we have lost our glory in the field, adding that on the gross root level i.e. schools and colleges no attention is being paid on the sports activities. He said that to overcome this alarming situation, it is incumbent upon the PSB to not only explore employment opportunities for the players in different departments but also encourage



sponsorships for the promotion and advancement of the sports activities and that sports based admissions in educational institutions must also be encouraged to a reasonable level. He went on to say that ICCI will extend every possible cooperation to the PSB for the purpose and that in near future the ICCI is going to organize a seminar on 'Sports Economy' which will help assemble all the

stakeholder under one roof to deliberate and put forward workable recommendations for the growth of the sports in the country. He further said that ICCI had constituted a Sports Committee to promote sports activities and that PSB should cooperate with this Committee in organizing various sports events in its facilities and that both the organizations should also con-

sider organizing a big event to help promote sports and business activities. On his part DDG Pakistan Sports Board pledged his full support to the ICCI for the convening of 'Sports Economy' seminar by saying that an ICCI Display Centre at Pakistan Sports Board will go a long way in the export of sports products through their exhibition. He also apprised the participants of

the meeting about the initiatives taken by Pakistan Sports Board for the promotion of sports and inspiration of sportsmen in the country. On this occasion, former President FPCCI Zubair Ahmed Malik, former senior Vice President Khalid Chaudhry, Imtiaz Abbasi, Irfan Chaudhry, Chaudhry Nasir Mehmood, Zafar Iqbal Gujjar and Shahid Abbasi were also present.

# Pak-China Joint Lab for AI to intelligentize Pakistan's agriculture

ISLAMABAD: Pak-China recently set up Joint Lab for AI will intelligentize Pakistan's agriculture. In a wheat fields of Punjab province, drones "queue" are patrolling, with intelligent management and control systems are replacing manual "care" for crops. Farmers could accurately perform operations such as fertilization and irrigation with just one click on their mobile phones. Such brand-new technologies are credited to the China-Pakistan cooperation project "High-throughput Crop Monitoring Using Computer Vision for Climate Smart Agriculture." In May, the Pakistan China Joint Lab for Artificial Intelligence and Smart Agriculture (AI&SA) has been established at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF). Punjab Province, as Pakistan's main agricultural production area, its annual grain output accounts for about 76% of the country's total annual grain output, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. Both parties agreed that it has unique advantages to carry out pilot applications of high-throughput crop monitoring projects here. In this province, about 600 farmers have joined the pilot application. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan, Vice Chancellor UAF, noted lately that in the 25,000 villages across Punjab, if drone spraying technology could be adopted on a large scale, it will help increase productivity, reduce costs and greatly promote the development of intelligent agriculture. "We use drones equipped with visual recognition equipment to fly around the fields to achieve intelligent management of crop monitoring, cultivation management, pest and disease analysis, and agricultural production, including growth determination, crop health monitoring, water requirement analysis, fertilization, as well as pesticide application," Dr Wu Jun, the Chinese Director of the lab, introduced. Wheat speed breeding facility [Photo provided by the lab] Mohammad Malik, a local farmer who has been growing wheat, sugarcane and other crops in Punjab for more than 30 years, is one of the participants in the pilot project. At first, he had many doubts about the project. "This technology is too complicated for farmers like me, and I doubt its effectiveness and practicality." The project team members promptly explained it, "We could produce a text guide and audio-visual materials of the vegetation health map written in the local dialect and send them to your son's smartphone application." "We now have a more accurate grasp of the water and fertilizer needs of crops, which avoids over- or under-watering as we did in the past, thus reduces input costs," said Malik, with joy, he has learned how to use these techniques. "Now our whole family is looking forward to this innovative technology helping us increase the yields." It is well known that the biggest difficulty facing traditional farming is the unpredictable natural climate and the impact of pests and diseases, which leads to the dual instability of food production and income. —DNA

# Minister concerned at decline in support for Afghan refugees

FAIAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD : Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions & Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engr Amir Muqam on Monday hold meeting with UNHCR's high level delegation led by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi accompanied by Ms. Philippa Candler Representative of UNHCR, Pakistan. The meeting was attended by Secretary SA-FRON Zafar Hasan, Joint Secretary Refugees Agha Waseem Ahmad and Chief

Commissioner Afghan Refugees Muhammad Abbas Khan and other senior officials of Ministry of SA-FRON and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Speaking on the occasion, Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam said that Pakistan acknowledges UNHCR's continued support for Afghan refugees in Pakistan for the past 45 years. He said that Pakistan hosts millions of Afghan refugees, providing protection, education and health facilities. "Currently, there are 1.45 million registered Afghan citizens card holders and this does not include a great number

of unregistered Afghan refugees and other nationals," he added. The Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam said that it is a matter of concern that there is decline in support for Afghan refugees and development funds for their hosting areas in Pakistan. "We need exclusive, generous and sustainable interventions. UNHCR's High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi lauded the people and government of Pakistan for hosting Afghan refugees for over four decades. He said that UNHCR will organize a global dialogue likely in October to dis-

cuss the issues pertaining to refugees. He said that Pakistan would be specially invited at this occasion. He expressed the hope that this event will create a new dimension and avenues for the support of refugees across the globe and for the rests. The high level delegation was comprised of Ms. Hai Kyung Jun, Regional Director UNHCR Regional Office, Bangkok, Mr. Herve De Villeroche, Special Advisor on Development, UNHCR Geneva Headquarters and Mr. Ewan Watson, UNHCR Head of the Global Communication Service.

# FIA briefs Interior Minister on overbilling for protected users

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Monday briefed the Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on

over-billing after in reply to the notice taken by the minister. Mohsin Naqvi had expressed serious concern over inclusion of protected users in the non-protected category and asked for

the data of all distribution companies (Discos) providing relief to protected consumers. He directed all FIA directors to check the data of discos and submit report while giving the task to collect all the evi-

dence in 3 days. The minister ordered the directors of FIA across Pakistan to collect the records and a comprehensive report of all the evidence will be submitted to the Prime Minister. He ordered to Additional DG FIA North Peshawar, Lahore to go to Gujranwala and Faisalabad to assess the situation and collect data. "Abuse of protected users must be addressed" he said, adding that the responsible persons should be determined by examining the evidence one by one. Secretary Interior, Additional DG FIA HQ, Additional Home Secretary, and Additional DG FIA North attended the meeting along with all FIA directors participated in the meeting through video link.



# Public schools to have 'WASH' stations

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to promote and improve hygiene culture in government schools, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has initiated the establishment of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) stations. According to an official source, this initiative is aimed at providing a clean and hygienic environment for students, teachers, and school staff, promoting a healthy learning environment. The WASH stations will include facilities for handwashing, sanitation, and clean water access. The initiative was launched by the ministry under the initiative 'Cleaner Future for Our School' to install wash stations in government schools, starting with 100 schools, to promote cleanliness, hygiene, and a healthy environment for the students. Under this initiative, two wash stations per school will be installed, one strategically placed at the school entrance, which will encourage students, teachers, and visitors to clean their hands before entering or leaving the school. However, the second wash station will be located next to the sports arena, which will promote cleanliness and hygiene among students engaging in physical activities. The ministry has planned to expand this initiative to more schools in the future.—APP

# World population day observed

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is fifth most populous country in the world with a population of 241 million (Census 2023), growing at a high rate of 2.55%. With this current population growth, Pakistan's population is projected to reach 263 million by 2030 and 383 million by 2050. This rapid Population growth rate presents significant challenges to our national development, straining our resources. World Population Day is observed on 11th July every year to raise awareness of population issues and promote solutions that guide towards a sustainable future. The day commemorates 11th July 1987 when the world population reached the five billion marks. The occasion affords the opportunity to educate the public, to mobilize political will and resources to address population issues.—APP

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## Briefs

## New Gwadar International Airport gets 12 MW electricity

ISLAMABAD: In a major development, New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) has finally been powered up with 24 hours electricity after being connected to the National Grid. Approximately 12 MW electricity has been provided to the Airport by Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO). Commercial tariff will be charged in accordance with per unit of electricity, a Qesco official told Gwadar Pro. In order to keep power supply smooth and free from power breakdown, 12 MW will remain available to NGIA round the clock as three power transmission lines will be feeding NGIA. "It means if one goes out of function, then the second will be automatically connected and if the second goes haywire then the third will be present in the system as a backup arrangement," he added. "One power supply is from a 286-kilometre long, 132kV dual-circuit transmission line through Naal-Basima-Naag-Panjgur, the second is from Mund-Pishin-Turbat transmission line and the third comes from Gabd-Remden power transmission line to Jiwini-Gwadar Grid Station, he explained.—APP

## IRSA releases 333,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 333,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 478,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1514.49 feet and was 116.49 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 261,100 cusecs and 153,500 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1192.05 feet, which was 144.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 54,700 cusecs and 16,900 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 210,500, 182,900, 128,500 and 50,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 87,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 42,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

## ANF seizes 97 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover 97 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that 60 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted on Srinagar highway Islamabad and 2 suspects were arrested. 25 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle near Sahuwala Sialkot and arrested an accused. 5 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused arrested in Pathan Colony, Hyderabad. 4 kg heroin and 1 kg intoxicated tablets were recovered from a parcel at the courier office in Raja Bazar Rawalpindi. In 5th operation, 2.4 kg hashish was recovered from an accused in Dera Ismail Khan.—APP

## USAID, Pakistani institutions to enhance student support

The 3rd annual summit, organized through USAID's Higher Education System Strengthening Activity (HESSA), brought together over 100 officials and faculty from 16 partner universities across Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Pakistani higher education institutions are taking significant strides to transform student support services across universities in Pakistan. This initiative aimed to equip students with the essential skills needed to thrive in today's competitive global environment, said a news release issued here on

Monday. The 3rd annual summit, organized through USAID's Higher Education System Strengthening Activity (HESSA), brought together over 100 officials and faculty from 16 partner universities across Pakistan. This four-day event highlights the robust partnership between the United States and Pakistan, underscoring their joint commitment to enhancing access to quality higher education for all Pakistanis. The opening session of the four-day event was chaired by Prof. Dr. Bushra

Mirza, Member (R&D) Higher Education Commission of Pakistan alongside Maura O'Brien, USAID Deputy Mission Director. Dr. Mirza emphasized the need for universities to foster student belonging. "It is important for higher education institutions to foster a sense of belonging, and empower students to navigate and shape their futures. As we gather at this summit, let's reaffirm our commitment to creating inclusive and supportive environments where every student can thrive,"

she added. Ms. O'Brien highlighted the importance of soft skills in her remarks, stating, "By prioritizing soft skills building, universities can better prepare students to meet the demands of the modern workforce and enhance their career prospects." The HESSA activity is implemented by the University of Utah and supports the Higher Education Commission and 16 partner universities across Pakistan to improve institutional capacity to drive market-led education and research in

Pakistan. The summit covered six thematic areas vital to the support of higher education institutions in Pakistan: financial aid, student leadership, student microenterprises, career readiness, alumni engagement, and mental health. The United States is committed to strengthening higher education in Pakistan and empowering all Pakistanis through quality education. The first two annual summits in the series focused on student services and financial aid development.

## IFA conducts 1278 raids; imposes Rs 1.7 mln fines in June

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) conducted 1,278 raids and inspections in the Federal Capital during June, imposing fines totaling Rs 1,724,000 on violators. Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of IFA, Dr. Tahira Saddique, revealed in the monthly performance report that these inspections targeted businesses selling harmful or low-quality food products. Over 54,014 liters/kgs of hazardous oils and other unsafe items, including expired food, meat, dairy, drinks, leftover/stale foods, and MSGs, were discarded during various raids. Additionally, 588 improvement notices were issued, and 38 food points were sealed for violations. The authority also gave 504 verbal instructions and imposed heavy fines on 107 violators. Furthermore, one FIR was lodged for not observing the standard operating procedures (SOPs) set by the IFA. Dr. Tahira stated that the IFA's ongoing efforts reflected a broader commitment to public health and consumer safety. Through increased inspections, hefty fines, and proactive awareness campaigns, the authority aimed to create a safer environment for consumers and hold businesses accountable for their products. These measures are part of a larger strategy to clamp down on unsafe food practices and promote higher food quality standards in the city, she added.—APP

## Neelum-Jhelum HPP generates cheap electricity

The contract for the remedial work at NJHP was entrusted to China Gezhouba Group Corporation (CGGC) which completed the work at earliest and the power production was successfully reinstated in August 2023

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP) has generated 762 million units of green, clean and low-cost hydel electricity in Fiscal Year 2023-24, according to WAPDA statistics. According to the authority, fiscal year 2023-24 proved a better year for green, clean and low-cost hydel electricity generation in Pakistan. Twenty-two Hydel Power Stations of WAPDA cumulatively provided 34,436 billion units of electricity to the National Grid, which is 3,266 billion units more

than that of FY 2022-23. This additional generation is because of the improved hydrology and effective operation and maintenance of the Hydel Power Stations, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. The production of 3,266 billion units helped save national exchequer an amount of Rs. 143.7 billion, if the same quantum of electricity had to be generated through imported furnace oil. Due to a blockage in the tail race tunnel technical fault, the 969-MW NJHP suspended electricity production in July 2022. The contract for the remedial work at NJHP was entrusted to China Gezhouba

Group Corporation (CGGC) which completed the work at earliest and the power production was successfully reinstated in August 2023. Prior to the suspension of power generation, NJHP had provided more than 18 billion units of electricity to the National Grid. According to WAPDA, currently, the cumulative installed generation capacity of WAPDA Hydel Power Stations, including Neelum Jhelum, stands at about 9,500 MW. Hydel generation is the most economical electricity generated in the country. The tariff for fiscal year 2023-24 determined by NEPRA for WAP-

DA hydel electricity is Rs. 3.81 per unit, which constitutes about 30% of the total electricity provided to the National Grid. A number of mega projects are under construction in Water and Hydropower Sectors including Diamer Basha Dam, Mohmand Dam, Dasu Hydropower Project and Tarbela 5th Extension etc. scheduled for completion in a phased manner. These projects will increase the WAPDA hydel generation in next four to five years from 9,500 MW to 20,700 MW with an addition of about 11,200 MW clean, green and low-cost hydel electricity.

## President pays tribute to late Abdul Sattar Edhi

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday paid tribute to philanthropist and humanitarian Abdul Sattar Edhi on his death anniversary being observed on the day. Born in 1928, Abdul Sattar Edhi was a Pakistani humanitarian and philanthropist who founded the Edhi Foundation, which runs the ambulance network, along with homeless shelters, animal shelters, rehabilitation centres, and orphanages across Pakistan. He died on July 8, 2016 at the age of 88. The president lauded the late Edhi's exemplary services to Pakistan and humanity and remembered him as the top humanitarian personality in Pakistan's history. He said that late Edhi rendered invaluable services in the social sector, regardless of race, faith and social status. President Zardari said that Abdul Sattar Edhi laid the foundation of hospitals, orphanages, shelter houses and rehabilitation centers in the country. He also prayed to Allah Almighty for granting peace to the departed soul of Edhi and elevation of his status in paradise.—DNA

## It is becoming difficult for people to accept this budget

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of FPCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that people are finding it harder and harder to live with this budget. He said every necessity of life has become very expensive and out of most people's reach. Mian Zahid Hussain said that while non-filers and tax defaulters find novel ways to avoid taxes, existing taxpayers will be forced to bear the burden of the government's new tax measures to boost collection. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said the volume of the current budget is 18500 billion

rupees. Despite the taxes of 12900 billion rupees, an increase of 40%, it has a deficit of 8500 billion rupees. He said the government must borrow 5700 billion rupees to bridge the gap. The current budget has set aside ten thousand billion rupees for debt servicing. In contrast, next year, 11 thousand billion rupees will be required. Taxes must be increased by another five thousand billion rupees but the budget deficit will remain the same. Mian Zahid Hussain said that changes and experiments have been made in every sector of business activities, including exports, in the current budget. As a result of these experiments, it is widely feared that the economy will be damaged if exports decrease by four to five billion dollars. The business leader said the export sector should have

been left alone to function peacefully. The tax burden on the salaried has been increased. Government spending, salaries, and pensions of top officials have increased, but ordinary people have been left behind. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the government has claimed to work on pension reforms and the imposition of tax on traders. Still, this work will continue until the next budget, while efforts will be made to save costs by closing some departments. He noted that if all the economic activities were digitized, the term non-filer would be automatically abolished, the tax base would be widened, and the government would get the tax comfortably. Mian Zahid Hussain said that due to the measures proposed in the budget, the traders will not come into

the tax net at any cost. Still, they will be attracted to the cash economy. He said that public anxiety is growing in masses and businesses. Still, the government is not ready to follow the suggestions of FPCCI, the largest organization in the business community, which is a mistake. FPCCI is still prepared to support the government in bringing the country out of economic recession, increasing exports, broadening the tax net, and providing convenience to the people, he said.

## AIOU to provide free education facilities

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor, AIOU Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood Monday said that the university is extending free education facilities for the students of Gilgit-Baltistan, Balochistan Province, and the merged tribal districts (formerly FATA). The objective behind this initiative is to contribute to the efforts of the present government towards the enrolment of out-of-school children. AIOU is setting an exemplary role by playing its role in the national initiative of enrolling out-of-school children through providing free education up to matriculation level for children. The university's autumn semester for 2024 is commencing from July 15. The Vice-Chancellor has directed the heads of the relevant regional offices to ensure that this message reaches every household in these three regions so that out-of-school children can benefit from this university facility and illuminate their lives through education. Additionally, the university provides fee concessions for those students who are unable to continue their education due to financial constraints, said a news release. For availing of this facility, individuals can contact the nearest regional office of the university. AIOU also offers free education to prisoners and transgender individuals so that they can be empowered to become productive and positive members of society. The university provides education to prisoners within jail premises. The aim of providing free education to prisoners is to transform the lives of criminals in such a way that they can start a new life as civilized, useful, and positive citizens of society after completing their sentences. More than 1,200 prisoners have already been connected to the educational network of the university.—DNA

## Saudi group to invest in retail Oil Sector in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD In a recent development, Saudi Group Asyad Holding through UAE-based Wafi Energy Holding Limited has acquired 77.42% shareholdings and control of Shell Pakistan Limited. The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved the acquisition under Section 11 of the Competition Act, 2010, thus solidifying the said transaction to boost the retail oil sector in Pakistan, according to a press release issued here on Monday. M/s Shell Pakistan Limited, listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange, maintains a substantial business footprint in the retail supply of motor fuels and lubricants across Pakistan. Whereas, M/s Wafi Energy LLC is a wholly-owned affiliate of Asyad Holding Group which specializes in the management and operation of fuel stations in Saudi Arabia. The Group has established M/s Wafi Energy Holding Limited to flex its wings for investment pur-

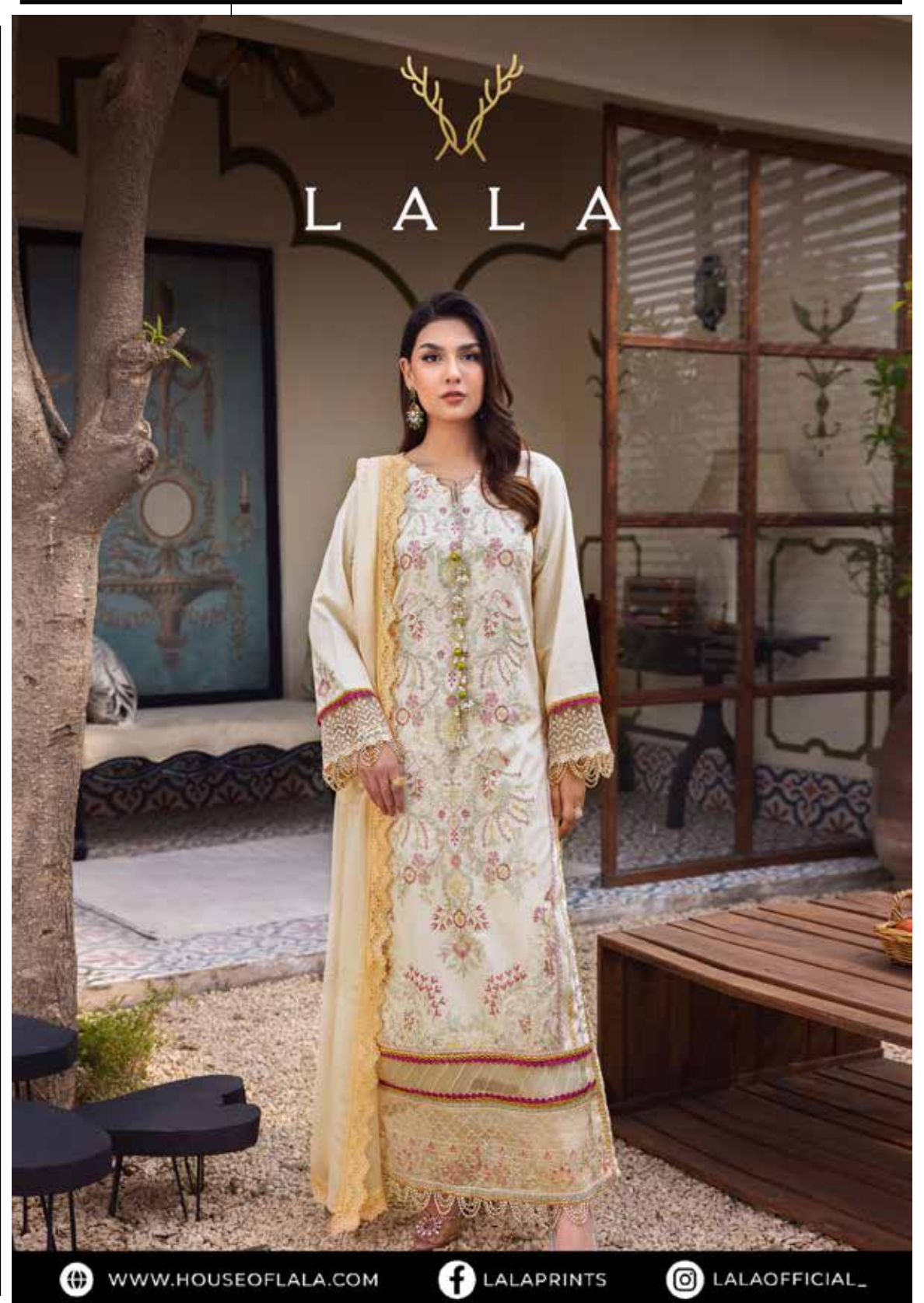
poses in Pakistan. The CCP's Phase I competition assessment identified 'Retail Fuel, Vehicle Lubricants, and Industrial Lubricants' as the relevant product markets. It was also revealed that Shell Pakistan has distinct shares in all three relevant markets but that will remain unchanged post-transaction. The analysis further confirmed that Wafi Energy Holding Limited will not gain a dominant position in the relevant markets even after attaining direct control of Shell Pakistan. Therefore, the CCP has swiftly authorized the said acquisition under Section 31 of the Competition Act, 2010. Chairman CCP, Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, while signing the Order expressed that this development is expected to boost competition by elevating service standards in the retail fuel supply chain and thus, contribute immensely to flourishing Pakistani markets.—DNA

## Jazz appoints Farrukh Khan as CFO and CEO of MFH

ISLAMABAD: Jazz appointed Farrukh Khan, CEO & Managing Director of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), as its new Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and CEO of Micro-Finance Holdings (MFH), effective September 15, 2024. Farrukh will also join the board of Mobilink Microfinance Bank. Gabor Kocsis, the outgoing CFO, will remain with Jazz until the end of the year, focusing on strategic projects to facilitate a smooth transition and maintain momentum in ongoing initiatives said a news release. Farrukh Khan brings over 30 years of leadership experience in major financial institutions, including roles as CEO of Acumen Fund, co-founder and CEO of BMA

Capital Management, and CFO at American Express. His expertise in mergers and public offerings will enhance Jazz's financial strategy and innovation. Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz & Chairman MMBL, commented, "We welcomed Farrukh Khan to our leadership team. His rich expertise and leadership in capital markets are crucial as we evolve into a ServiceCo." This announcement comes as Jazz unveils its vision to transition from a Mobile Telco to a dynamic ServiceCo. Leveraging core strengths in data and connectivity, Jazz is poised to disrupt various sectors including financial services, software development, data centers & cloud

solutions, and entertainment. With a projected compound annual growth rate of 20%+, Jazz aims to double its revenue by 2027, with significant contributions from its new ventures including the fintech platform Jazz-Cash, digital offering Garaj, and the digital streaming service Tamasha. Farrukh Khan shared his enthusiasm about his new role, stating, "I'm excited to join Jazz during such a transformative time. The team has built outstanding businesses, and I'm eager to help drive the company's ambitious vision to evolve into a ServiceCo. I look forward to driving financial innovation and supporting the company's expansion into new sectors."—DNA





Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 05 Issue: 197

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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## Waste and sewage in Gaza

ISRAELI occupation forces continue systematic destruction of water and sanitation facilities and waste management systems, turning it into a new method of slow death in the Gaza Strip. The problem of waste and sewage, especially in places of displacement, shelters, and hospitals, exceeds what is being revealed by local and international reports, leaving its epidemiological effects on the residents of the Gaza Strip which Israel seeks to turn into an unlivable place. Hosni Muhanna, the coordinator of the Union of Municipalities in the Gaza Strip, said that the accumulation of more than 300,000 tons of waste in the streets, alleys, and around the displacement camps, in addition to the overflow of wastewater in many places, has become a real crisis that portends a health disaster in the Strip, which has been under ongoing Israeli aggression for nine months. Muhanna noted that municipalities in the Strip have become unable to deal with the crisis, especially in light of the continued Israeli aggression and the deliberate direct targeting of municipal crews and service facilities. According to Muhanna, the leakage of accumulated waste leachate under high temperatures into the ground leading to groundwater pollution, which portends a real disaster that will require many years of serious work to overcome its repercussions. The Gaza Municipality continues to send distress calls and warnings about the dangers resulting from the accumulation of waste in the streets and shelter centers and the lack of fuel and machinery to collect and transport waste, especially that municipal crews have been prevented from reaching the main landfill in the Juhur al-Dik area, east of the city. The municipality confirmed that of the 300,000 tons of waste accumulated in the Strip, there are more than 100,000 tons in the streets of Gaza City alone. The municipality stated that the Israeli aggression, genocidal war, and the destruction of about 125 municipal vehicles, especially waste collection vehicles, and the failure to allocate and provide fuel for this service caused almost complete paralysis that has been seriously affecting the health and environmental conditions in the city. It added that the searing heat of Gaza summer causes waste to ignite, leading to the emission of fumes that are harmful to health, the environment, and the respiratory system. The Gaza Municipality calls on all international and concerned parties to intervene urgently and quickly to provide the necessary fuel and mechanisms to collect waste and reduce the health and environmental catastrophe the city is experiencing. The Emergency Committee in the municipality of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip warned, on Thursday, of an "imminent humanitarian and environmental catastrophe," due to the depletion of diesel and the fuel needed to operate sewage plants and water wells. The committee said in a statement that this "will expose one million and two hundred thousand residents and displaced people to fatal risks and diseases as a result of pollution and the overflow of sewage in the streets." Since the start of the Israeli occupation's aggression against the Gaza Strip on October 7 last year, municipal vehicles have been targeted and destroyed, and the fuel needed to operate machinery, generators, and stations has been banned. All solutions to the crisis seem almost impossible, unless the free countries of the world respond and pressure Israel to stop its aggression and allow the entry of sufficient fuel to operate machinery in an effective manner.



## Crushing defeat of Tories

AS predicted by exit polls, the UK general election ended with a devastating defeat for the Conservative Party, with Labour winning a resounding majority in parliament. Since 2010, the Conservative Party has held 10 Downing Street, and this change of power marks the end of an era. The British people have expressed their view toward the development of the country and the future of the nation through an eventful election campaign. Over the past 14 years, there has been a fundamental shift in domestic and foreign policy in the UK, especially since Brexit in 2016. The country's domestic politics has entered a period of heightened volatility, with a merry-go-round of prime ministers providing limited stability. Cost of living issues remain unresolved, economic growth is weak, and politicians lack the courage and confidence to truly face fundamental social challenges. As early as two years ago, polls showed a significant lead for the Labour Party over the Conservatives, so the outcome of this election was expected. Many have viewed the election outcome as a vote against the Conservative Party's rule, which is at least a "change." As for whether it is "the future and hope," voters seem to largely no longer care. The fundamental problem at the heart of the Conservative government is that it has become seriously out of touch with the basic needs of the people, unable to truly respond to and solve long-standing social livelihood issues. The British people are not lacking in patience and resilience. Even the 2008 global financial crisis did not completely drain the confidence and vitality of British society. However, the Conservative government, lacking in courage and determination, did not earnestly address social issues with a strong sense of social responsibility. During negotiations around Brexit, the most concerning social issues for the British people were employment opportunities and national welfare. However, many elites only cared about abstract data and hollow arguments about economic growth, meaning public confidence in the government to effectively listen to social needs ultimately fell short. Secondly, the Conservative government in the UK has been severely constrained by ideological limitations over an extended period of long time, unable to construct an effective foreign policy agenda that aligned with the fundamental interests of the UK. Against the backdrop of great power competition, in recent years the UK has completely leaned toward the US when it came to international affairs, becoming one of Washington's most loyal pawns. This diplomatic stance fundamentally restricts the space for independent UK diplomacy and erodes the cultural advantages and international influence inherited from the 20th century. On the issue of China, the Conservative government in the UK has always been stuck in the nostalgia of empire, living in the cocoon of their constructed ideology, unwilling and afraid to face the rapidly changing real world, and constantly fantasizing about challenging the core diplomatic interests of China. The Sunak government closely followed US policy, describing China as an "epoch-defining systemic challenge" to Western society. Shortly after the G7 summit, they even threatened to make China "pay a price" for their stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

# Austria's militarization campaign in service of the Zionist genocide

Nicole Schoen

The national armament campaign was kicked off in summer 2023 when Austria decided to participate in the European air defense project "Skyshield Initiative" but reached its peak in this year. The budget for the military was approved with 4 billion euros, 700 million more than in the previous year and 18.1 billion in total until 2027. It constitutes Austria's biggest defense acquisition since 20 years. PR arguments of the responsible politicians and officers were circulated, and some analyses and interviews were published in every outlet, so the average Austrian citizen was informed about the basic parameters of the project, knew some rough numbers, and a few selected opinions. Further details and background research exceeding a mediocre...

FROM "Boycott Israel!" to calls for an end to Austrian cooperation with the Israeli occupation entity: The slogans and demands chanted at the weekly protests in Vienna and other cities in Austria against the ongoing genocide in Gaza are well known by now – also to people beyond the streets and the active Palestine solidarity movement. However, the underlying political-economic reality is not. Taking into account the absurd refusal of Austrian media to call the Zionist terror against Palestinians by name, and their obsessive demonization of any solidarity with the Palestinian people, the information vacuum seems logical. There is no other topic that unites the media landscape from public to private and liberal to conservative as sharply behind the country's official policies as the "Near East conflict". Practically all outlets in Austria appeal in unison to the guilty conscience of Austrian society and shamelessly exploit its "historic responsibility" to legitimize another genocide. From the uncritical repetition of Israeli military propaganda and open endorsement of the crimes of the IOF to defamatory articles against (pro-)Palestinian groups and individuals: Even nine months into the incessant massacres in the Gaza Strip, the overall media coverage remains dominated by Zionist talking points. Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky call it manufacturing consent when targeted, mass media circulated propaganda, and misinformation are willfully used to garner popular support for an originally controversial (government) endeavour such as an imperialist war. Take the preparation for the invasion of Iraq: The population of the United States was in favour of the war. It was only much later that its position turned after the propagated claims around Iraq's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction were eventually exposed as lies. In a similar manner, media play an essential role in the largely prevailing public acceptance of the Israeli atrocities in Gaza and the escalating repression of solidarity work in Austria. In accordance with political decision makers, they are defending the interests of the Austrian government and the rulers of the EU and the US tooth and nail. Western powers are fighting increasingly desperately against their waning hegemony and loosening grip over the Global South as the imperialist world order was dealt a major blow on October 7th and continues to shake under the mounting consequences. Since the US/NATO-led war in Ukraine started, media have shown a comparable approach towards a related issue: national defense, militarization, and armament. They employ war-romanticizing rhetoric and fear-mongering or opt for the rationalization of the militarization craze, which not very accidentally seems to thrive alongside the soaring profits of the defense industry. According to recurrent polls, the majority of the population in Austria, however, stands firmly behind the constitutionally enacted neutrality that was agreed upon as a prerequisite demanded by the Soviet Union to establish an

Austrian state after the departure of the Allied forces in 1955. A popular petition affirming the importance of it with 120,000 signatures was presented to the parliament in January. Austria's chancellor Karl Nehammer, therefore, coined a new term: "Defensive neutrality". The government's narrative, led by Defense Minister Klaudia Tanner, promotes a neutrality that needs to be defended militarily. Many established journalists follow this lead. In the weekly news profile, for example, Gernot Bauer writes of Austria as "a country of losers" due to the tendency of young men choosing to do alternative service instead of joining the military. The author urges a "mental armament" and laments a recent survey in which only 16% of the inquired stated that they were ready to defend the republic "by the weapon". The national armament campaign was kicked off in summer 2023 when Austria decided to participate in the European air defense project "Skyshield Initiative" but reached its peak in this year. The budget for the military was approved with 4 billion euros, 700 million more than in the previous year and 18.1 billion in total until 2027. It constitutes Austria's biggest defense acquisition since 20 years. PR arguments of the responsible politicians and officers were circulated, and some analyses and interviews were published in every outlet, so the average Austrian citizen was informed about the basic parameters of the project, knew some rough numbers, and a few selected opinions. Further details and background research exceeding a mediocre Norway explanation were nowhere to be found though. Nobody really questioned where the billions are actually going. The billions are mostly being funneled into the genocidal arms industries of the US and "Israel". Austria is investing in weapons, machinery, and equipment manufactured by exactly those criminal countries and corporations that are facilitating the slaughter in Gaza. By those who send unlimited tons of bombs to the Zionist occupation that has so far killed over 16,000 Palestinian children, and by those who supply ammunition, drones, warplanes, and tanks. The blunt material reality of Austria's co-sponsoring of the genocide becomes irrefutable when studying the deals sealed in the context of the government's latest defense spree. 1.8 billion euros went into 225 armored personnel carriers of the model Pandur Evolution. As with prior yet much smaller orders in 2017 (34 for 105 million) and 2021 (30 for 108 million), the vehicles are produced by the company SteyrSpezial-Fahrzeuge (SSF) at their plant in Vienna-Simmering. Since 2003, SSF has been owned by – the world's fifth largest – US defense contractor General Dynamics (GD), and is fully integrated in its European subsidiary General Dynamics European Land Systems (GDELS). General Dynamics has been supplying Israeli forces with all kinds of heavy weaponry for decades. They were used in the assaults on the Gaza Strip in 2008, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2021, and 2022 and are killing hundreds of Palestinian civilians every day in the current genocidal

onslaught. Arms sold to "Israel" by GD include various types of bombs (e.g. bunker busters), gun systems, and components for the F-15, F-16 and F-35 fighter jets, as well as for Merkava IV and Leopard tanks, and other combat and crew vehicles. The formal signing of the contract for the Pandur bulk purchase took place at the beginning of this year. Attending were, aside from the chancellor and the defense minister, the CEO of GDELS Martin Reischer, and last but not least, Karl Hufnagl, the CEO of ESL Advanced Information Technology, ESLAIT for short. The company located in Vienna will contribute "16 mortar setups and further systems to the project" is what a short news prompt in the Austrian military journal habtAcht! read back then. The blog militaryleak.com reports a 300 million euro deal with ESLAIT for the supply of WS4 Panther weapons systems to be constructed onto the earlier mentioned Pandur Evolution carriers. The WS4 Panther systems translate into remotely operated machine gun stations that have been part of the Austrian military inventory since they were first acquired in 2018. ESLAIT is the Austrian subsidiary of the leading Israeli drone manufacturer Elbit Systems. Its drones have surveilled and bombed the Gaza Strip and West Bank refugee camps from Jenin to Tulikarm for years. They are also being deployed – and shot down by the Islamic Resistance – in the Zionist aggression on South Lebanon. It is noteworthy that the Hermes 900 drones, which cost six million euros each contain engines produced by the Austrian company Rotax. Elbit Systems obviously plays a pivotal role in the Zionist entity's existential arms industries. Since 2023, European (NATO) countries have increasingly turned to Elbit Systems after the corporation presented itself as an experienced partner in the midst of the lucrative EU defense boom. Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria took the bait, among others. Why were these important matters not discussed transparently? Did Austrian media try to conceal the problematic defense aspirations of the government with their surface coverage? Or did they not have any questions to begin with? Either option would certainly qualify as a journalistic capitulation. Parallel to the military investments and corresponding media agitation, Austria's militarization campaign is also intervening in public education. With national defense being a "mindset" above everything, according to the government, teaching material that "prompts children's and youth's interest in the military" were admitted into curricula and school books. On top of that, an e-lecture series for teachers was hosted in April, including a talk held by a military official about "the current situation in Israel and in Ukraine". The declared objective behind the lectures was literally to "increase the will to fight" among students. It seems as if the next generation is already being raised by the upgraded "defensive neutrality". Soon, mass media will take over anyway.

Source: Al Mayadeen English

# With supreme leader's blessing, Pezeshkian bids to change Iran

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

The main idea behind the presence of a moderate politician in the list of presidential candidates was to co-opt discontent by creating a semi-opposition responsible for countering a more vocal opposition to the Islamic Republic that is located outside the country. The system used the same strategy in 2013, after the crushing of the Green Movement – a post-election protest movement born from civil society after the fraudulent reelection in 2009 of the principlist politician...

IN a speech on June 3, Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei explained that the country's next president should be "an active, hardworking, knowledgeable president who believes in the principles of the revolution." He added that "the elections should be an epic scene of honor and a competition to serve the people, not a battlefield to gain power." Khamenei went on to say: "The upcoming elections will be full of achievements and the repercussions will be felt in the world. Therefore, these elections are very important." The six-person shortlist was a surprise because the name of an independent politician supported by the reformist faction, MasoudPezeshkian, was on the final list of approved candidates. This was due to the objective of the system ("nezam") to focus on popular participation rather than the succession of the supreme leader, as was the case in the last presidential election in 2021. As part of the electoral engineering process, former Foreign Minister JavadZarif was used as a tool to attract voters to the poll. The moderate candidate's team targeted specific parts of the electorate, namely Iranian women, ethnic minorities and Generation Z. Pezeshkian was the most suitable candidate to achieve this objective. He eventually won the Iranian presidential runoff election on Friday. After his election, he said that he had to thank Khamenei: "Without him, my name would not have come out of the polls." Indeed, the Guardian Council had previously barred him from standing in March's parliamentary elections due to his criticism of the political system at the time of MahsaAmini's killing. According to official Iranian sources, Pezeshkian received more than 16 million votes in the runoff, while his opponent, ultraconservative hard-liner Saeed Jalili, received about 13.5 million. The Iranian Election

Headquarters announced that voter turnout in the runoff was 49.8 percent, about 10 percent up from the first round held a week earlier. Pezeshkian will propose a new diplomatic platform of direct nuclear negotiations with the West. This will depend on Khamenei's support and the US president's willingness to engage with Tehran at a time of confrontation in the Middle East and while Iran is supporting Russia militarily in the context of the war in Ukraine. Pezeshkian said that he was supporting a more proactive engagement policy toward Western actors and endorsed a return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal throughout his campaign. This election indicates that Khamenei has prioritized regime survival in the face of rising internal discontent. This is why, anticipating a low turnout, the regime authorized the candidacy of a reformist, though weak and not very charismatic, among the six candidates for the post of president. The system has manipulated the electoral competition, which allows it, at least in the short term, to manage the crisis of legitimacy after the protest movement of 2022. The main idea behind the presence of a moderate politician in the list of presidential candidates was to co-opt discontent by creating a semi-opposition responsible for countering a more vocal opposition to the Islamic Republic that is located outside the country. The system used the same strategy in 2013, after the crushing of the Green Movement – a post-election protest movement born from civil society after the fraudulent reelection in 2009 of the principlist politician Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In 2013, the pragmatic centrist politician Hassan Rouhani ran and was elected. This time, the regime's strategy was not totally successful. The participation

rate was less than 50 percent, which means that the boycott campaign of Iranian opponents both outside and inside the country was not fully crushed by the system. The idea of the presence of a moderate politician in the second round of the presidential election was not sufficient to mobilize the majority of the Iranian electorate. There are now two options for the new Iranian president. Pezeshkian may not fulfill his promises made to the Iranian electorate if he chooses to remain faithful to the system. Alternatively, he could become a dissident if he tries to defy the authority of the supreme leader to apply his electoral program. Indeed, a large part of the Iranian youth did not vote for the moderate politician, even if they admit to having feared the rise to power of a hard-liner like Jalili, who was presented as a scarecrow. Overall, the election of Pezeshkian represents a limited but real change promoted by the top-level authority in the Islamic Republic: the Office of the Supreme Leader. Indeed, without the approval of the supreme leader, the election of Pezeshkian would not have been possible. From this perspective, external pressures and internal discontent were the key factors behind Khamenei's decision to promote the election of a moderate president, who will focus on internal issues in general and on improving the economic situation of the country in particular. Pezeshkian's desire to transform Iran into an emerging country remains linked to his ability to transform the Iranian political system. The new president needs to go beyond Rouhani's nuclear policy, which achieved only a limited lifting of sanctions. This ambitious economic project will hurt the economic interests of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and it remains to be seen if this policy can be successful without a Democrat winning the US presidency in November.



## Briefs

## PM says it would be a shame to...

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seek the IMF bailouts "if it fails to boost tax revenue". The finance czar said that he was "relatively confident" of reaching a staff-level agreement with the global lender this month for an estimated loan of \$6 to \$8 billion. "But it will not be our last fund programme if we don't bring our tax revenues up," said the finance minister while speaking during an interview with the a British newspaper.

The federal government presented the tax-loaded Rs18.877 trillion budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25) last month, aimed at shoring up public revenue and satisfying the IMF, which has repeatedly demanded improved tax collection. The budget aims to raise Rs13 trillion by next July, a roughly 40% increase from the current financial year, to bring down a ruinous debt burden that has caused 57% of government revenue to be swallowed by interest payments. Saying that turning to the IMF was a necessity, the PM Shehbaz said Pakistan had to finalise a deal with the IMF this month. "Tomorrow in Islamabad, I will discuss measures to provide relief to the poor. The federal government stands with Balochistan in its development and prosperity. We will embrace anyone who genuinely cares for the well-being of Balochistan and Pakistan."

PM Shehbaz further said that security and maintenance of law and order were imperative for investment to flow into Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Regarding Gwadar, he said: "I am not complaining, but the Safe City project there has been halted. Gwadar, by the grace of God, will prove to be more beneficial than the Reko Diq mines. We are committed to transforming Gwadar into a magnificent port. Together, we will eradicate the scourge of terrorism." The solarisation of agricultural tube wells in Balochistan, the premier said, was part of the broader government efforts to address the economic challenges facing Pakistan and to promote sustainable development in the region. "The government is committed to economic reforms, security, and development, particularly in the underserved regions of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," the PM added. During the ceremony, the prime minister oversaw the signing of the agreement between the federal and the Balochistan governments in Quetta. Federal ministers, the governor and the chief minister of Balochistan, and members of the provincial cabinet were also present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, PM Shehbaz said the federal government in cooperation with the Balochistan government would shift around 28,000 agricultural tube wells of the province from electricity to solar energy. He said the total cost of "this project is Rs55 billion and its 70% will be provided by the federal government", while the rest by the Balochistan government.

## Supreme Court directs...

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been meeting with the prisoners. The attorney general should address these complaints," said the SC order. The court then adjourned the hearing till July 11. The apex court in May had referred the matter to and Procedure Committee for reconstitution of the bench after reservations raised against the six-member bench. Petitioner former chief justice Jawad S Khawaja's lawyer Khawaja Ahmad Hasan had raised an objection on the bench, saying that a larger bench should be constituted in light of Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Yahya Afriqi's note. On January 29, Justice Tariq Masood rescued himself from hearing in-court appeals against civilians' trial in military court, leading to the dissolution of a six-member larger bench. In October last year, the Supreme Court declared the trial of civilians in military courts as unconstitutional and held that 103 persons and others, who may be placed concerning the events arising from May 9-10 could be tried by criminal courts, established under the ordinary or special law of the land.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey hosted a reception to meet the Pakistani Olympic Community, taking part in the Paris Olympics 2024. Ambassador wished athletes best of luck. – DNA

## Gary arrives in Lahore to discuss team with PCB chief

Pakistan cricket czar also holding meetings with ex-Pakistan captains as well as international players

## SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Pakistan white ball head coach Gary Kirsten Monday arrived in Lahore to discuss about changes in the Pakistan team including captaincy with Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi. Following the disappointing T20 World Cup campaign, the PCB chief had summoned him for consultation about Pakistan team's future. Whereas, Naqvi's discussion with the head coach over maintaining Babar Azam's captaincy is extremely important. Raising numerous questions, Kirsten has already submitted a report pertaining to Pakistan's dismal performance in the World Cup. The sources said the PCB chief would review the document highlighting players' fitness, discipline and game awareness among other things that led to the team's early exit from the mega event. The development comes as the Green Shirts failed to even make it to the Super Eight stage of the World Cup after suffering an upset loss against the minnows United States followed by a defeat against



arch-rivals India. The Babar Azam-led side only managed to win matches against Canada and Ireland which were insufficient to propel the team to the next stage of the tournament. The below-par performance by the national side resulted in scathing criticism from fans and for-

mer cricketers alike prompting the PCB head to announce a "major surgery" in the squad. However, the board decided to wait for Kirsten and senior manager Wahab Riaz's report to make any decision with regard to the team's future. After going through the report, the PCB chief will

also consult other board officials and former cricketers before taking a decision on the way forward.

Earlier, Geo News while citing sources had reported that Kirsten had expressed concerns over the players' fitness levels, stating they are not up to the mark. In a discussion with the team after their elimination from the World Cup, the coach pointed out that the team's skill level is significantly lagging compared to the rest of the world. "Despite playing so much cricket, no one knows which shot to play and when," he said, adding that only players who value unity, focus on fitness, and improve their skill set will be part of the team moving forward. Meanwhile, the Pakistan cricket czar has also started holding meetings with former captains of the national side as well as international players to discuss about possible changes in the team. On the other hand, Assistant Coach Azhar Mahmood has also been summoned from England. Kirsten and Mahmood both have reached Lahore, whereas Pakistan's Test coach Jason Gillespie, who's currently in Karachi, will also meet Naqvi soon.

## PTA, PEMRA, three journalists...

## FROM PAGE 01

(Pemra), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) are responsible to stop campaigns against the judges. The remark came as a full court bench headed by the IHC top judge initiated the proceedings against those involved in vilifying campaign against Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb, Justice Babar Sattar, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz are part of the full court bench. In the social media campaign, questions have been raised over genuineness of Justice Jahangiri's educational degree, terming it "invalid". Subsequently, a case was also filed on the same matter in the Supreme Judicial Council. It should be noted that Jahangiri was a member of the IHC judges' group who wrote a letter on March 25 seeking Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa to convene the judicial convention to consider the matter of alleged interference of intelligence operatives in the judicial functions or "intimidation" of judges in a manner that undermined the independence of the judiciary. The six IHC judges – Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Justice Babar Sattar, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, Justice Jahangiri, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan and Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz – had written a letter to the chief justice, who is also chairman

of the SJC. Addressing the additional attorney general, the IHC CJ said the court cannot tolerate the malicious campaign any longer. The IHC, he said, took action in a similar matter earlier as well but nobody learnt a lesson from it. He warned that whoever was involved in the campaign would be brought to justice. The high court chief justice said it was the responsibility of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to stop such campaigns. Justice Aurangzeb said the government did not take any action when the drive was run against judges. He said an impression was being given that the government was behind the malicious campaign. Meanwhile, Justice Farooq said they were not afraid of the accountability, however, any such campaign in the name of accountability would not be tolerated. The chief justice asked whether they should tell the government and Pemra what their responsibility was and what they were supposed to do. Blasting the ongoing campaign on national and social media, he wondered if the judges should now give clarification in tweets that their educational degrees were authentic. After this, the IHC issued notices to the Pemra, FIA director general and PTA, as well as journalist Gharidah Farooqi, Ammar Solangi, and Hasan Ayub. The hearing was then adjourned till the end of summer vacations.

## Dozens killed in Russian...

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a large children's hospital in the capital, Kyiv, where emergency crews searched the rubble for casualties. The daytime Russian barrage targeted five Ukrainian cities with more than 40 missiles of different types, hitting apartment buildings and public infrastructure, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a social media post. Strikes in Kryvyi Rih, Zelenskyy's birthplace in central Ukraine, killed 10 people and injured 47 in what the head of city administration, Oleksandr Vilkul, said was a massive missile attack. Seven people were killed in Kyiv, authorities said. "It is very important that the world should not be silent about it now and that everyone should see what Russia is and what it is doing," Zelenskyy said on social media. Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital in Kyiv. One of the most important CHILDREN'S hospitals not only in Ukraine.

## Jayasuriya announced Sri Lanka's head coach

Legendary opener will be in charge during white-ball series against India

COLOMBO: Legendary opener Sanath Jayasuriya is named the interim head coach of the Sri Lankan cricket team ahead of the white-ball series against India which will be played this month. After Sri Lanka's disappointing performance in the T20 World Cup 2024 where they suffered a group-stage exit, Mahela Jayawardene stepped down as the team's consultant and Chris Silverwood has now been replaced by Jayasuriya. The CEO of Sri Lanka Cricket, Ashley De Silva, said: "Sanath with his wealth of international cricketing experience is well positioned to guide the national team until we find a permanent solution." In the T20 World Cup, Sri Lanka finished third in Group C as they only managed to win one match. Their match against Nepal was called off due to rain in Florida which troubled their chances of making it to the Super 8 greatly. Jayasuriya confirmed that he was approached by Sri Lanka Cricket to coach the national team and he accepted it. "I have been asked to take over coaching and I am happy to do it," Sanath Jayasuriya told AFP news agency. Silverwood became Sri Lanka's head coach in April 2022 and under his tenure, the Islanders won the Asia Cup in 2022 by beating Pakistan in the final but their performance wasn't up to the mark in ODI World Cup 2023. – Agencies



## Pakistan must shore up tax...

## FROM PAGE 01

The federal government presented the tax-loaded Rs18.877 trillion budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25) last month, aimed at shoring up public revenue and satisfying the IMF, which has repeatedly demanded improved tax collection. The budget aims to raise Rs13 trillion by next July, a roughly 40% increase from the current financial year, to bring down a ruinous debt burden that has caused 57% of government revenue to be swallowed by interest payments. The tax rises will mostly fall on salaried workers, who comprise a relatively small part of Pakistan's mostly informal economy, as well as some retail and export businesses. The budget also threatened punitive measures for tax avoiders, including restrictions on mobile phones, gas and electricity access and the ability to fly abroad. "We do not have five years for our programme," Aurangzeb warned in the wake of a budget that seeks to reset the country's ailing economy. "We have to start showing, start delivering, in the next two to three months," he said.

## Dialogue, diplomacy only way...

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Regarding the upcoming all-party conference on operations, Bilawal affirmed the PPP's commitment to constructive politics, pledging to participate actively and convey their concerns effectively. He emphasized the need for consensus-driven decisions to address security challenges and revive the economy. On the Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, Bilawal acknowledged the complexities involved, noting the Afghan government's capacity constraints in counter-terrorism efforts. He urged mutual efforts to improve bilateral relations, foreseeing economic benefits for both countries once stability is achieved. Reflecting on past policy mistakes, Bilawal cautioned against overly critical stances towards the government's decisions, particularly in the context of provincial responsibilities in combating terrorism. He expressed hope in the upcoming all-parties conference as a positive step towards national security dialogue, urging unity in safeguarding the nation's interests.

## Qureshi transferred to Lahore's..

## FROM PAGE 01

Kot Lakhpat Jail in Lahore under strict security measures. A judge from an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore will conduct a hearing at Kot Lakhpat Jail, where the PTI leader will be presented regarding the May 9 incidents. Jail sources reported that Qureshi was moved after a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) completed its inquiry into several terrorism-related cases at Adiala Jail. "Qureshi will be presented in court at Kot Lakhpat Jail today," stated Barrister Taimoor Malik, Qureshi's legal counsel. Following the hearing, the court will decide if the former minister remains in Lahore or returns to Adiala Jail. On July 4, an Islamabad-based district and sessions court acquitted PTI founder Imran, Qureshi and several other leaders in a case registered at the Aabpara police station. On June 27, the hearing of May 9 cases against 500 accused, including former premier Imran Khan and former foreign minister Qureshi, was adjourned until July 15 without any proceedings.

## Kenya court rules police killing ...

## FROM PAGE 01

unconstitutional". Justice Stella Mutuku said the shooting violated the journalist's "right to life, right to equal benefit and protection of the law and right dignity, among others," NTV Kenya reported. Additionally, the judge ordered the government to pay the family Sh10 million as compensation for the loss of life, although she suspended the monetary compensation for 30 days to allow the government appeal against the decision. "In view of the analysis above, I find that the respondents, jointly and severally through their actions violated the rights of the petitioners," the judge said. She added that the family should be updated on the status of the investigations and appropriate action be taken against the police officers found culpable. The ruling came after Sharif's widow, Javeria Siddique, sued Kenyan officials, accusing them of delaying investigations into the shooting and keeping the family in the dark concerning the probe. The officials sued included Attorney General Justin Muturi, Inspector General of Police Japhet Koome, Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Renson Ingonga and the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA), among others. Sharif was a passenger in a vehicle when he was killed and the police claimed to have mistaken his vehicle for a different that they had been trailing, which was allegedly stolen from Pangani. The following day, the judge said the police boss admitted that officers had "fatally wounded" Sharif in a case of "mistaken identity". The court ruled that Sharif was subjected to torture as his life was cut short without a just cause.

## IOF tanks storm Gaza City displace ...

## FROM PAGE 01

south of Gaza City, amid fire belts and violent bombardment. Eyewitnesses reported that the bombardment and incursion caused a large exodus from schools and homes towards the north amidst heavy fire from Israeli Quadcopter aircraft. The Israeli warplanes bombed several buildings on top of the residents, while rescue crews were struggling to save the victims. At least, one martyr was reported and seven people were injured as the IOF bombed a house near the Tayaran Junction south of Gaza City, while the IOF renewed artillery shelling of the southeastern areas. As the US-backed Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip entered day 276 on Monday, aerial and artillery strikes continued to pound and target different areas and massacre more civilians, especially in northern Gaza. Palestinian Information Center (PIC) said that the Israeli occupation army continued to bomb homes and attack citizens in different areas of Gaza during the past 24 hours. According to media sources, the Israeli army targeted a number of citizens in al-Saftawi neighborhood in

the north of Gaza, injuring eight of them, including three kids. The Israeli army also bombed a house near the Tayaran junction in the south of Gaza City, killing one civilian and injuring seven others. More casualties were reported in other areas of Gaza following Israeli aerial, artillery and shooting attacks last night and today. Meanwhile, Palestinians in Gaza City have experienced today one of the most intense Israeli bombardments since the Israeli army launched its US-backed genocidal war on the embattled coastal enclave. Columns of Israeli tanks were reported to have closed in on the center of Gaza City from different directions, in the midst of aerial strikes. The civil emergency service in Gaza says a number of people have been killed, but its crews have so far been unable to reach them because of the intense Israeli attacks on several areas in the east and west of Gaza City. The Al-Ahli Hospital in Zeitoun neighborhood in the south of the city was also reported to have been evacuated, with its patients being taken to one of the remaining medical facilities still functioning in the area, which is the overcrowded Indonesian Hospital. Ahead of its operation in Gaza

City, the Israeli army had issued evacuation orders for several neighborhoods in the center of the city, including Tuffah, Daraj and the Old City, according to local residents and journalists. But one of the areas that has come under the most intense bombardment in the morning, Tel al-Hawa, was not included in the Israeli evacuation orders. Citizens who fled those areas of Gaza City along with families reported that they did not know where to go. Meanwhile, The armed wings of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) say they have targeted a number of Israeli soldiers and military vehicles throughout the besieged Gaza Strip. PIJ's Al-Quds Brigades said it destroyed two Israeli military vehicles in Tal al-Hawa using improvised explosive devices. Hamas's Qassam Brigades said it targeted a group of soldiers with homemade 114mm short-range "Rajum" rockets in the so-called Netzarim Corridor, west of Gaza City. The Netzarim Corridor, named after a Jewish settlement in Gaza that was dismantled in 2005, was set up during the war by the Israeli army to separate northern Gaza from the south. Al-Quds Brigades said it shelled an Israeli military command centre in the Netzarim Corridor.

**Semi-Final-1 Wed, 10 July**  
Spain vs France,  
Allianz Arena  
(12:00am)

**Semi-Final-2 Thu, 11 July**  
Netherlands vs England,  
Signal Iduna Park  
(12:00am)



## Briefs

Russia backs  
Turkiye's  
proposal for  
Moscow-Kyiv  
peace

MOSCOW: Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov agreed on Monday with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan who urged the creation of an international peace platform with the broad participation of various countries in the interests of resolving the Ukrainian conflict. Speaking at a press briefing in Moscow, Peskov emphasized that Russian President Vladimir Putin has always been "a staunch supporter" of diplomatic settlement of the conflict. "You know that President Putin is a staunch supporter of prioritizing diplomatic efforts to find a solution to the Ukrainian conflict. Of course, we have never refused to negotiate. On the contrary, we have always favored negotiations involving all interested parties. While there is no such platform currently, you can only agree with Mr. Fidan on this point," he said. Speaking at the Informal Summit of the Heads of State of the Organization of Turkic States in Shusha, Azerbaijan on Saturday, Fidan called for a broadened peace effort and a diplomatic platform to mitigate polarization in the Russia-Ukraine crisis.—APP

June hottest  
on record,  
beating 2023  
high

LONDON: Last month was the hottest June on record across the globe, the EU's climate monitor said Monday, capping half a year of wild and destructive weather from floods to heatwaves. Every month since June 2023 has eclipsed its own temperature record in a 13-month streak of unprecedented global heat, the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said. "This is more than a statistical oddity and it highlights a large and continuing shift in our climate," said the service director, Carlo Buontempo. "Even if this specific streak of extremes ends at some point, we are bound to see new records being broken as the climate continues to warm." This was "inevitable" as long as humanity kept adding heat-trapping gases into the atmosphere, he said. The global average temperature notched last month broke the previous June record set in 2023. The fresh high came at the midway point of a year marked by climate extremes. Scorching heat has blanketed swathes of the world from India to Saudi Arabia, the United States and Mexico in the first half of this year. Relentless rain, a phenomena scientists have also linked to a warmer planet, caused extensive flooding in Kenya, China, Brazil, Afghanistan, Russia and France. Wildfires have torched land in Greece and Canada and last week, Hurricane Beryl became the earliest category five Atlantic hurricane on record as it barreled across several Caribbean islands.—DNA

Climate  
change hits  
Nepal's honey  
hunters

LAMJUNG, NEPA: Hanging from a rope-and-bamboo ladder off a Himalayan mountain cliff, skilled Nepali climbers gather highly prized hallucinogenic honey - an ancient tradition stung by environmental degradation and rapid climate change. Wreathed in smoke to drive away defensive clouds of giant bees, 26-year-old Som Ram Gurung dangles dangerously 100 metres (325 feet) off the ground, slicing off dark and dripping hunks of delicious honeycomb. For as long as anyone can remember in villages of Lamjung district, collecting the honey was worth the risk. The combs are valued as "mad honey", sweetness with a sting in its tail that collectors say provides an intoxicating buzz with mild psychoactive properties derived from rhododendron nectar that the bees love. It was never easy to harvest. The high-altitude honey comes from the world's largest honey bee species, Apis laboriosa, which favours inaccessible cliffs.—APP

France's far right defeated  
in parliamentary elections

Far-right RN led first round but fell to third as left-wing NPF alliance and Macron's centrists joined forces to prevent vote splitting in France's parliamentary elections

## NEWS DESK

PARIS: The far-right National Rally (RN) has suffered a stinging defeat in the run-off round of France's parliamentary elections, hobbled by electoral pacts between the left and President Emmanuel Macron's centrists. Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella's RN led the first round of voting in the election on June 30 but fell back to third in Sunday's second round after the victorious left-wing New Popular Front (NPF) alliance and Macron's second-placed centrists joined forces to avoid splitting the anti-RN vote. The New Popular Front and its allies won 187 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly, Macron's centrist group won 159 seats and the

National Rally and its allies won 142 seats, interior ministry figures show. All three blocs fell far short of the 289 seats required for an outright majority. The RN and its allies won 39 parliamentary seats in the first round of the election and topped the vote in 258 of the 501 constituencies that were still up for grabs in the second round. But their first-round win was overturned by their rivals in two-thirds, or 109, of those constituencies after the third-placed left-wing or centrist candidate bowed out of the running to set up a duel between the RN candidate and its closest rival from a mainstream alliance.

The strategy of parties banding together across the political divide to avoid splitting the anti-far-right vote has been regularly

used since 2002, when Le Pen's father Jean-Marie faced Jacques Chirac in a presidential run-off. On Sunday, it helped left-wing lawmaker Francois Ruffin overturn his RN rival's seven-point first-round lead in the northern city of Amiens, after the centrist candidate withdrew and urged her supporters to back Ruffin. It also worked in the Calvados area in Normandy, where Macron's former prime minister Elisabeth Borne, widely despised on the left for pushing through an increase in the retirement age last year, saved her seat after the third-placed left-wing candidate bowed out. The big question going into the run-off on Sunday had been whether left-wing and centrist voters whose candidates had pulled out of the run-off would vote for the

other alternative to the far-right. While polls had shown voters growing weary of being asked repeatedly to "hold their noses" and vote for other parties to block the RN, they complied again on Sunday. Nearly everywhere the RN found itself in a duel, it lost. It lost in 90 out of 152 constituencies where it did battle with the left, in 105 out of 128 constituencies where it faced off against a centrist and 32 out of 39 constituencies where it duelled with the centrist-right. The RN, which campaigned on dramatically limiting immigration, restoring law and order and boosting purchasing power, did better in constituencies where three candidates were vying for a seat in the run-off. It won 10 out of the 11 three-way races

in which it was leading after the first-round. The RN may derive solace from seeing nearly all of its outgoing 89 MPs re-elected. Only eight of its incumbents lost their seats. By contrast, Macron's camp shed nearly 100 seats, down from 250 seats in the outgoing assembly to 159 seats. Thirty-three RN lawmakers won re-election in the first round, with another 48 securing their seat in the run-off. The final tally of 142 seats for the RN and its allies is a dramatic increase on the eight seats it had going into the last election in 2022. Le Pen, who wants to launch a fourth bid for the presidency in 2027, hailed the "rising tide" of support. "It did not rise high enough this time, but it continues to rise and, consequently, our victory has only been delayed," she declared.

Yasin Ekrem says  
Turkiye-Qatar ties  
rapidly growing

'The Palestinian cause has always been our common ground. We will never leave our Palestinian brothers alone'

## WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Yasin Ekrem Serim said Sunday that relations between Türkiye and Qatar are rapidly developing in all areas and have a "strategic character based on mutual trust." Serim, speaking to the Al Jazeera news network about his visit to Qatar and current international developments, said he was very pleased to visit Qatar after two years. He expressed his gratitude for the hospitality shown by Qatari officials and noted that he has had regular contacts with Qatar's Minister of State for International Cooperation, Lolwah Rashid Al Khater, regarding humanitarian aid to Gaza since March. "Since the beginning of the crisis, Türkiye and Qatar have been responsible for a significant portion of the aid delivered to Gaza," he said. He

highlighted the positive relations between the two countries, saying "Türkiye-Qatar relations are rapidly developing in all areas and have a strategic character based on mutual trust." He noted that the relationship between the two countries is built on "brotherly" sentiments and that significant progress has been made in all areas. Emphasizing continuous contact between the two countries, Serim referred to high-level mutual visits and meetings. Serim condemned the massacres in Gaza and stressed the importance of intensifying cooperation with regional countries on this issue. He declared that the world has been informed that "there will be no silence in the face of the oppression in Gaza" and reiterated that "the Palestinian cause has always been our common ground. We will never leave our Pales-

tinian brothers alone." Serim emphasized the need to stop the bloodshed in Gaza and to prevent the spread of the conflict to Lebanon and the entire region. He said the UN Security Council's decision on June 10 to approve a resolution endorsing a cease-fire plan in Gaza was a significant step towards ending the massacre there. He also welcomed the International Court of Justice's decision ordering Israel to stop its attacks on the southern city of Rafah and to open the Rafah border crossing for humanitarian aid, reaffirming ongoing support for Palestine. Serim stressed the need to end the Israeli occupation and work towards a two-state solution, praising mediation efforts and affirming continued contributions to these efforts. He added that having a state is the most natural right of the Palestinian people.

South Korea  
Samsung  
workers  
start strike

SEOUL: Workers at South Korean tech giant Samsung began a three day general strike Monday, the head of a union representing tens of thousands of employees told AFP, after talks with management broke down. "The strike has started from today," Son Woo-mok, head of the National Samsung Electronics Union, told AFP, adding that a major rally was scheduled later in the day. The union, which has around 28,000 members, or more than a fifth of the company's total workforce, announced the three day general strike last week, saying it was a last resort after talks broke down. The move follows a one-day walkout in June, the first such collective action at the company, which went decades without unionisation. Management at the firm, the world's biggest producer of memory chips, has been locked in negotiations with the union over wages and benefits since January but the two sides have failed to narrow their differences. "We are now at critical crossroads," the union said in an appeal sent out to members last week, urging them to support the "critical" strike. "This strike is the last card we can use," the union said, saying that workers at the company needed to "act as one".—APP

Biden makes  
campaign sweep  
as Democratic  
pressure mounts

HARRISBURG: Embattled US President Joe Biden hit the campaign trail Sunday seeking to reassure voters he was up for a grueling reelection fight, even as more top Democrats reportedly joined the chorus urging him to quit the race. The 81-year-old remained defiant as he hop-scotched across Pennsylvania - first to the relative safe ground of a predominantly Black church and a campaign field office, and then to a rally with union workers. As Biden arrived in the state capital Harrisburg, reporters shouted questions including whether the Democratic Party was behind him, to which the president grinned and loudly responded: "Yes." But an uprising has swelled among some fellow Democrats, analysts and voters concerned he lacks the mental acuity and physical fitness to serve a second term - worries brought to the fore by a disastrous debate performance last month against Republican challenger Donald Trump. So far, five Democratic lawmakers have publicly called on Biden to drop out. The drip-drip of dissent increased Sunday as four senior congressmen, including ranking House Judiciary Committee Democrat Jerrold Nadler and ranking Armed Services Committee Democrat Adam Smith, said on a call with senior party lawmakers that it was time Biden exit the race, according to The New York Times and Politico, citing people familiar with the call. The president, however, has unequivocally declared he is fit to serve, the only one who can defeat Trump, and that he is staying in the race. Democratic lawmakers will return to Capitol Hill Monday under pressure to either fall in line behind Biden or urge him to step aside. Senator Mark Warner is reportedly working to convene a forum of colleagues to address the crisis. As for the president, his next major test will come on Thursday, when he is scheduled to hold a press conference during the NATO leaders' summit in Washington. Two high-profile congressional Democrats on Sunday stopped short of calling for Biden to quit, but warned he still needed to win over worried voters. "There's only one reason" the race between Trump and Biden "is close, and that's the president's age," Representative Adam Schiff told NBC's "Meet the Press." Democratic Senator Chris Murphy said "the president needs to do more," including unscripted events, to reassure voters. "This week is going to be absolutely critical," Murphy told CNN. Biden himself largely avoided discussing the crisis when he gave a seven-minute address at Mt. Airy Church of God in Christ.—DNA

Boeing to plead  
guilty to criminal  
fraud charge

Boeing has agreed to plead guilty to a criminal fraud conspiracy charge after the US found the company violated a deal meant to reform it after two fatal crashes by its 737 Max planes that killed 346 passengers and crew. The Department of Justice (DoJ) said the plane-maker had also agreed to pay a criminal fine of \$243.6m (£190m). However, the families of the people who died on the flights five years ago have criticised it as a "sweetheart deal" that would allow Boeing to avoid full responsibility for the deaths. One called it an "atrocious abomination". The settlement must now be approved by a US judge. By pleading guilty, Boeing will avoid the spectacle of a criminal trial - something that victims' families have been pressing for. The company has been in crisis over its safety record since two near-identical crashes involving 737 Max aircraft in 2018 and 2019. It led to the global grounding of the plane for more than a year. In 2021, prosecutors charged Boeing with one count of conspiracy to defraud regulators, alleging it had deceived the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) about its MCAS flight control system, which was implicated in both crashes. It agreed not to prosecute Boeing if the company paid a penalty and successfully completed a three-year period of increased monitoring and reporting. But in January, shortly before that period was due to end, a door panel in a Boeing plane operated by Alaska Airlines blew out soon after take-off and forced the jet to land.—APP



BEIJING: Ambassador of Pakistan to China H.E. Khalil Hashmi was a keynote speaker at the 12th World Peace Forum organised by Tsinghua University in Beijing, China.—DNA

## UK launches border security command to combat immigration

Shelving controversial Rwanda Plan, new Labour government vows to strengthen Britain's border security, target smuggling gangs

## FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Britain announced a new Border Security Command to strengthen its border security and "smash the criminal (people) smuggling gangs making millions out of small boat crossings." The move, as promised by the Labour Party during its election campaign, came only days after its election victory and after new Home Secretary Yvette Cooper took office. "Rapid recruitment for an exceptional leader used to working in complex and challenging environments - for example, at senior levels of policing, intelligence or the military - will kick off tomorrow

(Monday), with the new recruit expected to take up their post in the coming weeks," a statement from the Home Office said. The border security commander, who will be appointed by Cooper, will "provide strategic direction to work across agencies, drawing together the work of the National Crime Agency (NCA), intelligence agencies, police, Immigration Enforcement and (the) Border Force, to better protect our borders and go after the smuggling gangs facilitating small boat crossings," it said. It said that "early legislation is being prepared to introduce new counter terror style powers and stronger measures to tackle organized immigration crime." Cooper has also "commissioned

a bespoke investigation from the department and the NCA into the latest routes, methods and tactics used by people smuggling gangs across Europe to inform a major law enforcement drive over the coming months." The home secretary will also have further calls this week with European interior ministers and with the director general of Europol to discuss strengthening security cooperation, the statement added. "Criminal smuggling gangs are making millions out of small boat crossings, undermining our border security and putting lives at risk," Cooper said. "We can't carry on like this. We need to tackle the root of the problem, going after these dan-

gerous criminals and bringing them to justice." "The Border Security Command will be a major step change in UK enforcement efforts to tackle organized immigration crime, drawing on substantial resources to work across Europe and beyond to disrupt trafficking networks and to coordinate with prosecutors in Europe to deliver justice. "Work is underway to bring in a border security commander to lead this work - and we will begin recruitment on additional capacity in the National Crime Agency immediately," she added. Prime Minister Keir Starmer said his government would not allow any flights to Rwanda to take asylum seekers from the UK. The controversial Rwanda Plan, which

was legalized in the UK by the Conservative government, has been under scrutiny by opposition parties and human rights organizations, and former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak had pledged to start the flights this summer if he had won the election. According to Home Office data, approximately 40,000 people entered the country illegally in 2023. Nearly 130,000 asylum applications were received between April 15, 2023 and April 14, 2024, and 56,834 people were granted asylum with a grant rate of 61%, the highest annual number of substantive decisions on asylum cases in more than 20 years, according to the Home Office. During the same period, 36,597 applications were rejected.

S.Korea  
withdraws  
plan  
to suspend  
doctors

SEOUL: South Korea says it'll withdraw its earlier plan to suspend licenses of striking doctors to resolve the country's long medical impasse. Health Minister Cho KyooHong said Monday the government has decided not to suspend their licenses of the strikers, regardless of whether they return to their hospitals or not. More than 13,000 junior doctors, who are medical interns and residents, walked off the job in February in protest of the government's plan to sharply boost school admissions. Their walkouts have significantly burdened operations of university hospitals where they had worked while training. Their strikes suffered a setback after a Seoul court in May ruled in support of the government's plan. The government later withdraw its plan to suspend licenses of doctor who returned to their hospitals but didn't do so on others who remained off the job.—DNA

Türkiye, EU  
to discuss  
visa, trade,  
customs

ANKARA: Türkiye and the EU will hold the first round of High-Level Trade Dialogue on Monday to discuss visa, bilateral trade, and Customs Union issues. Turkish Trade Minister Ömer Bolat, a Turkish delegation, and EU Commission Vice Chairman Valdis Dombrovskis and commission officials will take part in the talks in Brussels. Parties will discuss increasing bilateral trade, expanding the Customs Union, and the green transition. The meeting will also address issues with visa applications from Türkiye to EU countries.—APP

Floods kill six  
rhinos  
in India  
national park

NEW DELHI: More than 130 wild animals, including at least six rare rhinos, have died in flooding at a national park in north-eastern India, officials say. The Kaziranga National Park in Assam is experiencing its worst deluge in recent years. The dead animals - many of whom died by drowning - include 117 hog deer, two sambar deer, a rhesus macaque and an otter. In 2017, more than 350 animals died due to floods in the park and vehicle collisions during migration through animal corridors to the highlands. Getty Images Officials say they have rescued 97 animals from flood waters - 25 of them are receiving medical care while 52 others have been released after treatment. Kaziranga is home to the world's largest population of one-horned rhinos, which were nearly extinct at the turn of the century. It's a Unesco World Heritage site, with over 2,400 one-horned rhinos. The park is also a tiger reserve and home to elephants, wild water buffalo and numerous bird species. The endangered South Asian dolphins are also found in the rivers that criss-cross the park. Last week, an 18-month-old rhino calf took shelter at a house in a village near the park and was rescued by the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation, the Press Trust of India reported. Assam has been devastated by floods due to torrential rains, with major rivers in the state flowing above the danger level. This year's rains have inundated large parts of the park and submerged thousands of villages. More than 60 people have been killed and over two million people displaced in the deluge. There has been extensive damage to roads and other infrastructure, as well as loss of crops and livestock. Getty Images Officials have warned of even more rain with water levels in the Brahmaputra river, which runs through the state, expected to increase in the coming days. Across Assam, hundreds of relief camps have been set up to shelter the displaced.—Agencies



**Briefs**

**Yousafzai barred from travelling to UK**

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has barred the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shaukat Yousafzai from travelling to Britain today. Former provincial minister Shaukat Yousafzai was offloaded from Islamabad International Airport again. The PTI leader was bound to Manchester city of England via Turkiye by Turkish Airline flight, however, he was stopped by FIA at the airport. FIA informed Shaukat Yousafzai that he was banned from travel abroad and his name has been included in the Exit Control List (ECL) in the first order and second order included his arrest. However, PTI leader Shaukat Yousafzai was returned by of flooding him from the plane. It is pertinent to note that Turkish Airlines has issued a boarding pass to Shaukat Yousafzai. Shaukat Yousafzai asserted he was going to meet her daughter in Manchester. He disclosed a FIR was registered against him in Shanga'sKarora police station to bar him from performing Umrah. The court has granted him bail, however, the federal government hasn't removed his name from ECL yet.

**LHC orders removing Elahi's name from PCL**

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday directed the authorities concerned to remove the names of PTI President Parvez Elahi and his family members from the passport control list (PCL). After hearing the arguments of the lawyers of the litigants, the court issued orders to remove the names of Parvez Elahi, his son Rasikh Elahi and daughter-in-law Zara Elahi from the PCL. The former Punjab chief minister walked free from Lahore's KotLakhpat Jail following months-long incarceration on May 21 this year after the province's top court approved his bail plea in the Punjab Assembly illegal recruitment case. Elahi was among dozens of PTI leaders who were arrested following a crackdown on the opposition party in the aftermath of the May 9 incidents. The May 9 events refer to the violent protests that broke out in many parts of the country following PTI founder Imran Khan's arrest in a corruption case. The riots saw attacks on public and private properties, including military installations, with the army declaring May 9 as a "Black Chapter" in the country's history. On June 1, 2023, the former Punjab chief minister was arrested outside his residence in a corruption case and was released on bail in May this year.

## Biden tells Hill Democrats he 'declines' to step aside

The question of how to move forward has been well-aired for over a week now. And it's time for it to end. We have one job. And that is to beat Donald Trump, Biden concluded

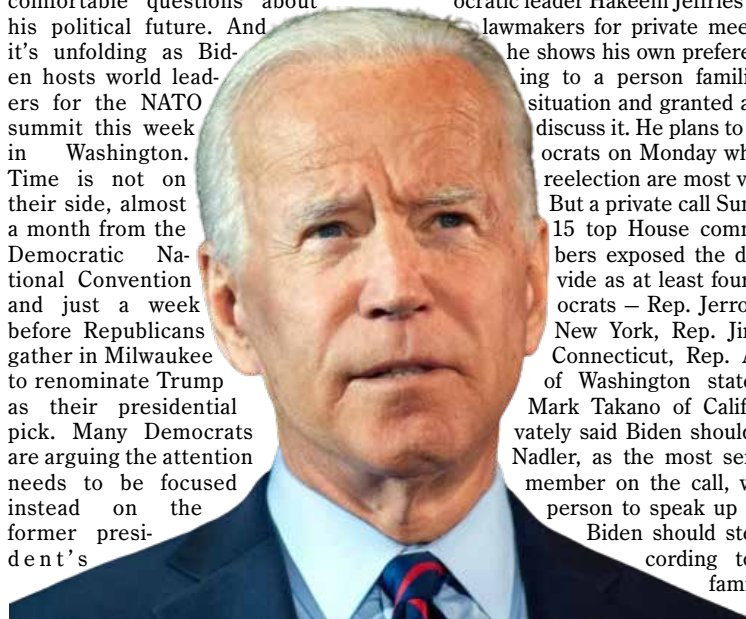
FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden, in a letter to congressional Democrats, stood firm against calls for him to drop his candidacy and called for an "end" to the intra-party drama that has torn apart Democrats since his dismal public debate performance. Biden's efforts to shore up a deeply anxious Democratic Party came Monday as lawmakers are returning to Washington and confronting a choice: decide whether to work to revive his campaign or edge out the party leader, a make-or-break time for his reelection and their own political futures. Biden wrote in the two-page letter that "the question of how to move forward has been well-aired for over a week now. And it's time for it to end." He stressed that the party has "one job," which is to defeat presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump in November. "We have 42 days to the Democratic Convention and 119 days to the general election," Biden said in the letter, distributed by his reelection campaign. "Any weakening of resolve or lack of clarity about the task ahead only helps Trump and hurts us. It's time to come together, move forward as a unified party, and defeat Donald Trump." Anxiety is running high as top-ranking Democratic lawmakers are joining calls for Biden to step aside despite his defiance. At the same time, some of the president's most staunch supporters are redoubling

the fight for Biden's presidency, insisting there's no one better to beat Trump in what many see as among the most important elections of a lifetime. As lawmakers weigh whether Biden should stay or go, there appear to be no easy answers. It's a tenuous and highly volatile juncture for the president's party. Democrats who have worked alongside Biden for years – if not decades – and cherished his life's work on policy priorities are now entertaining uncomfortable questions about his political future. And it's unfolding as Biden hosts world leaders for the NATO summit this week in Washington. Time is not on their side, almost a month from the Democratic National Convention and just a week before Republicans gather in Milwaukee to renominate Trump as their presidential pick. Many Democrats are arguing the attention needs to be focused instead on the former president's

felony conviction in the hush money case and pending federal charges in his effort to overturn the 2020 election. It's what Biden himself might call an inflection point. As he defiantly says he will only step aside if the Lord almighty comes and tells him to, Democrats in the House and Senate are deciding how hard they want to fight the president to change course, or if they want to change course at all. In an effort to "get on the same page," House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries is convening lawmakers for private meetings before he shows his own preference, according to a person familiar with the situation and granted anonymity to discuss it. He plans to gather Democrats on Monday whose bids for reelection are most vulnerable. But a private call Sunday of some 15 top House committee members exposed the deepening divide as at least four more Democrats – Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York, Rep. Jim Himes of Connecticut, Rep. Adam Smith of Washington state and Rep. Mark Takano of California – privately said Biden should step aside. Nadler, as the most senior ranking member on the call, was the first person to speak up and say that Biden should step aside, according to a person familiar with the call who

was granted anonymity to discuss it. He did so aware of his seniority and that it would allow others to join him. Many others on the call raised concerns about Biden's capability and chance of winning reelection, even if they stopped short of saying Biden should step out of the race. Still other members, including Rep. Maxine Waters of California and Rep. Bobby Scott of Virginia, both leaders in the Congressional Black Caucus, spoke forcefully in support of Biden, as did Rep. Richard Neal of Massachusetts, the top Democrat on the powerful Ways and Means Committee. And several lawmakers appeared frustrated that leadership was not providing direction or a path forward, according to people familiar with the call. One Democratic lawmaker said regardless of the decision, the situation has to "end now," one of the people said. Neal said afterward that the bottom line is Biden beat Trump in 2020 and "he'll do it again in November." The upheaval also is testing a new generation of leaders, headed by Jeffries and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer. Both New Yorkers have refrained from publicly directing lawmakers on a path forward as they balance diverse opinions in their ranks. Behind the scenes is Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, who continues to field calls from lawmakers seeking advice about the situation, and is widely viewed as the one to watch for any ultimate decision on Biden's future because of her proximity to the president and vote-counting skills in party politics.



## UNHCR lauds Pak's hospitality to Afghan refugees

ISLAMABAD: UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi has appreciated Pakistan's hospitality and generosity for hosting millions of Afghan refugees for decades despite facing challenges on various fronts. He was talking to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Islamabad today. They discussed wide range of issues pertaining to the global refugee situation with a particular focus on Afghan refugees and longstanding cooperation between Pakistan and the UNHCR. The UN High Commissioner termed Pakistan's efforts and contributions in hosting Afghan refugees as a remarkable example of the country's hospitality. He briefed the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on UNHCR's ongoing projects and emphasized the importance of sustained engagement and cooperation between Pakistan and the UNHCR. The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister also shared Pakistan's perspective and priorities with regard to Afghan refugees. He underscored that the new humanitarian situations emerging around the world must not divert the global attention away from the needs of millions of Afghans. – DNA

## Macron refuses French PM Attal's resignation for 'stability'

NEWS DESK

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron refused the resignation of the country's prime minister, asking him on Monday to remain temporarily as the head of the government after chaotic election results left the government in limbo. French voters split the legislature on the left, center and far right, leaving no faction even close to the majority needed to form a government. The results from Sunday's vote raised the risk of paralysis for the European Union's second-largest economy. Macron gambled that his decision to call snap elections would give France a "moment of clarification," but the outcome showed the opposite, less than three weeks before the start of the Paris Olympics, when the country will be under an international spotlight. France's main share index opened with a dip, but quickly recovered, possibly because markets had feared an outright victory for the far right or the leftist coalition. Prime Minister Gabriel Attal had said he would remain in office if needed but offered his resignation Monday morning. Macron, who named him just seven

months ago, immediately asked him to stay on "to ensure the stability of the country." Macron's top political allies joined the meeting with Attal at the presidential palace, which ended after about 90 minutes. Attal on Sunday made clear that he disagreed with Macron's decision to call the surprise elections. The results of two rounds of voting left no obvious path to form a government for either the leftist coalition that came in first, Macron's centrist alliance, or the far right. Newly elected and returning lawmakers were expected to gather at the National Assembly to begin negotiations in earnest. Macron himself will leave midweek for a NATO summit in Washington. Political deadlock could have far-ranging implications for the war in Ukraine, global diplomacy and Europe's economic stability. Still, at least one leader said the results were a relief. "In Paris enthusiasm, in Moscow disappointment, in Kyiv relief. Enough to be happy in Warsaw," Prime Minister Donald Tusk, a former European Union Council head, wrote late Sunday on X. According to official results released early Monday, all three main blocs fell far short of the 289 seats needed to control the 577-seat National Assembly, the more powerful of France's two legislative chambers.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with the CEO of K-Electric Syed Moonis Abdullah Alvi and other executives. – DNA

## Govt stands firm on X clampdown citing 'national security'

Interior ministry says ban doesn't violate Article 19 as all "necessary legal prerequisites were satisfied"

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The federal government, in its response submitted to SHC over the suspension of services of social media platform X, has said that the move does not violate Article 19 of the Constitution as all necessary legal prerequisites were satisfied in this regard. "While Article 19 enshrines fundamental right [of freedom of speech and expression] it is subject to reasonable restrictions imposed by law and in the interest of public

order, morality and sovereignty and integrity of Pakistan," read the Interior Ministry's response submitted to the SHC on Monday. The government's response comes as various petitions have been filed in the SHC against the prevailing ban on the social media site along with intermittent suspension of internet services in the country. The constitutional petitions were filed as social media users have found it difficult to access X as well as other social media platforms in recent months owing to the government's decision to ban and limit access.

## Egypt, EU to continue joint efforts to halt Gaza war

CAIRO: Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdel Atty expressed his country's appreciation for the positive positions adopted by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell concerning the situation in the region, particularly the Gaza crisis. Abdel Atty held separate phone calls on Sunday with Borrell and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan. Borrell called Abdel Atty – also minister for emigration and Egyptian expatriates – to congratulate him on his new position. During the call, Abdel Atty and Borrell expressed their keenness to elevate relations between Egypt and the EU to the level of a strategic partnership. They welcomed the momentum and success of the Egypt-EU Investment Conference held on June 29-30, which was one of the first major events of the new strategic partnership. The conference sent

plemmenting the comprehensive partnership agreement between Egypt and the EU with its six pillars and accelerating the disbursement of the related financial packages. Both sides expressed an eagerness to continue consultation and coordination in line with the joint declaration on enhancing political dialogue between Egypt and the EU. The call touched on the developments regarding the Gaza crisis, said Ahmed Abu Zeid, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates. He looked forward to continuing joint efforts to halt the war in the Gaza Strip and facilitate the entry of humanitarian aid to address the catastrophic humanitarian situation facing Gaza's residents. Abdel Atty also urged Borrell to continue the EU's support for the Palestinian Authority to enable it to fulfill its responsibilities to the



Palestinian people. He emphasized Egypt's commitment to ongoing coordination with the EU to support stability and defuse the serious crises currently facing Middle East. – Agencies

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