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'Ukraine can and will stop Putin': President Biden

Detailed News On Page-08

Nasrallah urges Muslim solidarity with Gaza

A sister publication of **CENTRELINE & DNA News Agency**

Detailed News On Page-07



Shahid Afridi wants real surgery in team

Detailed News On Page-06



Decides to abolish 5 more ministries

Pakistan extends stay of Afghan refugees for 1 year

The development came a day after United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Filippo Grandi met top Pakistani officials including Prime Minister Shehbaz and appreciated the country for suspending the "Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan

Ansar Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has extended Afghan refugees legally residing in the country by another one year, according to an official statement issued following the cabinet meeting on Wednesday. In its meeting, the federal cabinet approved a one-year extension of Proof Of Registration (POR) cards for 1.45 million Afghan refugees legally residing in the country and whose \bar{POR} cards expired last month. The extension in the POR cards has been granted till 30th June next year. The development came a day after United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Filippo Grandi met top Pakistani officials including Prime Minister Shehbaz and appreciated the country for suspending the "Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan," according to a statement issued by the UNHCR. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has decided to abolish more ministries and departments, directing concerned officials to fast-track the implementation of austerity plan. Chairing a federal cabinet meeting which was held at PM House in Islamabad on Wednesday, Shehbaz Sharif sought a strategy within a week for abolition of more ministries as the cabinet endorsed wrapping up of PWD department. Institutional Reforms Cell officials briefed the president on abolition of five more ministries and their relevant institutions. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb informed the participants of the cabinet meeting about the right-sizing and reducing the ministries' strength. The prime minister sought recommendations from the five ministries within a week. According to the sources, Information Technology Ministry topped the list of five ministries from whom

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Nawaz wants

power relief

for masses

Dar also briefed the

PML-N supremo

about his recent

foreign visit

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD:Pakistan

Muslim League Nawaz

(PML-N) supremo and par-

ty president Nawaz Sharif

has sought relief for middle

class in the electricity bills.

According to sources, the

PML-N president in a meet-

ing with Deputy Prime Min-

ister Ishaq Dar, asked him

to control inflation and give

relief to the people in the

extraordinary inflated elec-

tricity bills. Dar also briefed

the PML-N supremo about

his recent foreign visits.

IPP agreements

reason behind

power crises

Says, Pakistan's

economy has come

to a standstill

ADIL SHAHEEN

RAWALPINDI: The Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Pakistan

opposed the federal gov-

ernment's agreements with Independent Power Produc-

ers (IPPs), terming them the main reason behind the

energy crisis in the coun-

try. Addressing a presser in

Rawalpindi, JI Naib Ameer

Liaquat Baloch lambasted

the government over its

'failure' to address inflation,

unemployment, and other

issues being faced by the

masses. He said that Paki-

stan's economy has come

to a standstill. Responding

to the recent budget, the JI

Naib Ameer termed it a "doc-

ument of national destruc-

tion". Ameer Liaquat Baloch

said that the government and its allies are 'oblivious' to the

suffering of the people, point-

ing to the massive increase in

electricity bills, which he said

left the common man disillusioned with their future.

No decision on wheat export: PM tells NA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday told the National Assembly that the government had made no decision for the export of wheat. "No decision has been made for the export of wheat. I want to bring it on record before the House that there is no such decision for the wheat export, he told the National Assembly responding to a point of order raised by a parliamentarian. However, referring to the PTI government's sugar and wheat scams, he recalled that it was also on record that in the past wheat and sugar were first exported and later imported and where the billions and trillions of rupees went was part of the history. The prime minister also appreciated National Assembly Speaker SardarAyazSadiq for showing "generosity" to give floor to the opposition leader which was not practiced during the speakership of AsadQaiser. Meanwhile, the House today passed "the State Owned En-

Continued on Page 06

Interfering judicial procedures Justice Jahangiri receives

to contact Justice Tariq Jehangiri at his office

COURT REPORTER

Justice Tariq MehmoodJahangiri has been targeted by suspicious calls and messag-

Fazl stresses deeper examination of root causes of terrorism

JUI-F chief says will comment on issue of SIC reserved seats after court has announced its verdict

SHAMIM SHAHID

has stated that he will comment on the alleged government-backed an independent and sovereign state.

Continued on Page 06

'suspicious' calls, messages

Sources say caller claiming to be the FIA DG tried

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court's (IHC)

es, it was revealed on Wednesday. Sources from the judiciary disclosed that the caller purported to be the Director-General of the FIA (Federal Investigation Agency). However, subsequent investigations determined that the FIA DG did not place any such call. The individual behind the suspicious com- DI KHAN: JamiatUlema-e-Islam-Fazl munication attempted to directly contact (JUI-F) chief MaulanaFazlurRehman Justice Jahangiri. In response, the top jurist has directed the court registrar to prompt- the issue of reserved seats after the ly inform the FIA, providing them with the court has announced its verdict. It mobile number associated with the incident. should be noted that the hearing on According to insiders, the suspicious call was the petition filed by the Sunni Ittehad directed to Justice Jahangiri's office at the Council (SIC) against the denial of Islamabad High Court just two days ago. Ad- reserved seats concluded Tuesday in ditionally, messages were sent to the judge's the Supreme Court, with the decision personal mobile number from the same sus- now reserved. Speaking to media at a picious source. Previously, the Islamabad gathering in DI Khan, Fazlur said the High Court (IHC) has decided to confront Pakistani government should think as

Continued on Page 06 **Khattak records his testimony** in 190m pounds reference

Pervez Khattak, in his statement, said "Shehzad Akbar informed that money from Pakistan was sent abroad illegally that was confiscated in Britain and that money would be returned to Pakistan"

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: The accountability court in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail has adjourned the hearing of the 190 million pounds reference against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi until July 13. Accountability court's judge Muhammad Ali Warraich heard the 190 million pounds reference in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail. During the hearing, Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi appeared before the court from jail. A witness in the reference, former federal minister Pervez Khattak, recorded his testimony during the hearing. Pervez Khattak, in his statement, said "Shehzad Akbar informed that money from Pakistan was sent abroad illegally that was confiscated in Britain and that money would be returned to Pakistan." Khattak in-

Continued on Page 06

Top court likely to announce verdict today

SIC reserved seats case

CJP holds consultations over order related to reserved seats with full court's member judges, say sources

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) is expected to announce a verdict on a case related to reserved seats of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) formed that this matter was not included in backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) on

Continued on Page 06



allowing ISI to tap phones challenged in LHC

Petition filed by citizen lists PM Shehbaz, the federal govt, and PTA as respondents

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE:The Lahore High Court (LHC) has received a petition contesting the government's decision to grant the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) the authority to tap phones. This follows the Shehbaz Sharif-led coalition government's justification of the controversial move under the banner of "national security." The petition, filed on Wednesday, by citizen Fahad Shabbir, lists the PM Shehbaz, the federal government, and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) among its respondents.

Continued on Page 06

Israel orders civilians to leave Gaza City

Strikes early Wednesday hit three houses in the Nuseirat refugee camp, killing 12 people including five children

News Desk

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Israeli airstrikes Wednesday killed early 20 Palestinians in central Gaza, including six children and three women, some of them inside a purported "safe zone" declared by the Israeli military, hospital authorities said. This second straight night of deadly strikes in the central town of Deir Al-Balah and nearby refugee camps came as US, Egyptian and Qatari mediators as well as Israeli officials came together in the Qatari capital, Doha,

Continued on Page 06

Establishment 'must

step back' to ensure transparent elections

Imran questioned why petitions on human rights and the February 8 case are not being heard in the SC

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) incarcerated and beleaguered founding chairperson Imran Khan emphasised the urgent need for the establishment to step back to ensure transparent elections in the country. "If we want to save the country, the establishment must step back to move towards transparent elections," the former premier asserted during an informal talk with media in the Rawalpindi's Adiala jail today.

The PTI supremo highlighted the drastic increase in national debt, stating that in 2021, it was Rs2.8 trillion, but within four years, it had surged to Rs8 to Rs9 trillion. He criticised the current government for failing the nation, saying, "The current government has destroyed Pakistan's hope; no one trusts this government anymore.' Imran pointed out the severe economic burdens on the common people, noting, "The poor who used to have a 2,000 rupees bill now face a 10,000 rupees bill."

Continued on Page 06

Four security personnel martyred in Peshawar IBO

During conduct of the operationthree terrorists including HVT, Terrorist Commander Abdul Raheem were sent to hell

SHAMIM SHAHID

RAWALPINDI: On 10 July 2024, a joint intelligence based operation was conducted by Security Forces and Police in general area Hassan Khel, Peshawar District on reported presence of a high profile terrorist. During conduct of the operation, after intense exchange of fire, three terrorists including HVT, Terrorist Commander Abdul Raheem were sent to hell. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from

Imran formally expresses mistrust on CJP

Objection submitted in response to appeals filed against SC's decision to annul NAB amendments

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has filed an objection against the involvement of Chief Justice QaziFaez Isa in his ongoing cases. The objection was submitted in response to intra-court appeals filed against the Supreme Court's decision to annul the National

Continued on Page 06



killed terrorists. Terrorist Commander Abdul Raheem was highly wanted by the Law Enforcement Agencies and Government had fixed Head money of PKR 6 Million on him, as he remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities, and was also responsible for Shahadat of Captain Hussain Jehangir Shaheed and Havildar ShafiqUllah Shaheed on 26 May 2024. Operation has avenged the heinous act and has brought the main perpetrator to justice. However, during intense exchange of fire,

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NATIONAL



Ahsan admires innovative spirit of young entrepreneurs

ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari highlighted several key initiatives under his leadership that benefited the business community

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry

and residents dique, President of the Young Entrepreneurs Club and ICCI Executive Member, Bakhtawari emphasized the Chamber's efforts to facilitate business operations, boost exports, and attract investments. He pointed



(ICCI), commended the innovative spirit of young entrepreneurs, highlighting ICCI's commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and a startup culture for the nation's economic prosperity. Speaking at a ceremony organized by Ameer Hamza Sid-

SCCI

president

holds

meeting

with federal

ministers

SIALKOT, Jul 10 (APP):

Sialkot Chamber of Com-

merce and Industry (SCCI)

President SCCI Abdul Gha-

Over Rs. 2m

released for

cops' medical

treatment

LAHORE: Inspector Gen-

eral of Police (IGP) Pun-

jab Dr. Usman Anwar has

ordered for releasing over

Rs 2 million for treatment

of ailing and injured po-

lice officers in Lahore and

other districts. The IGP issued Rs 1.4 million for

traffic warden of Lodhran

police, Muhammad Dildar, for leg operation and

treatment. Rs 0.2 million

were released for medical

expenses of injured Con-

stable Muhammad Muja-

hid of Faisalabad police.

Constable Zawar Hussain

was given Rs 0.16 million

for cancer treatment. Rs.

150,000 were released to

the injured Constable Ta-

jamul Hussain of Sialkot

police for medical expens-

es. Injured Constable Abdul

Khaliq of Faisalabad Police

was given Rs 150,000 for

medical expenses. –APP

foor Malik.-APP

out that ICCI acts as a crucial link between the government and the business community to ease the business environment in Pakistan. Bakhtawari also mentioned ICCI's initiatives to sign Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with various

universities to strengthen academia-industry partnerships, aiming to nurture the next generation of successful entrepreneurs. During the event, Bakhtawari highlighted several key initiatives under his leadership that benefited the business community and residents. Ameer Hamza Siddique, who hosted the Commonwealth dinner to honor successful young business people and promote youth entrepreneurship, stated that ICCI welcomes young entrepreneurs to seek guidance from seasoned business leaders. This initiative aligns with Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's youth program. Deputy Secretary PMYP, Dr. Muhammad Malik Ali, also graced the event with his presence and pledged unwavering support for the initiative, recognizing its potential to significantly impact the country's economic development. The event saw a large turnout of young entrepreneurs who expressed their appreciation for ICCI's proactive role, especially the efforts of President

Civil society praises NCHR's 2% minority quota implementation

The NCHR has directed all public sector universities to comply with the reserved 2 percent admission quota for minorities

emphasizing the Commis-

President Abdul Ghafooi SHAMIM SHAID Malik held a detailed meeting with Federal Minister PESHAWAR: The Civil Sofor Commerce Jam Kamal ciety Support Group has Khan and Federal Minisladed role of the National ter for Defence Khawaja Commission for Human Muhammad Asif. Multiple Rights (NCHR) in promotmatters of significance ing minority groups' equal importance particularly access to higher education. revival of the Final Tax The NCHR has directed all Regime (FTR), the launch public sector universities to of the new LTLD and DDT comply with the reserved Scheme, formation of the 2 percent admission quota EDF Board and the issufor minorities, following the ance of note verbale for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa gov-Sialkot Chamber's Brazil ernment's approval of the delegation were discussed quota in 27 public sector Both the ministers assured universities in 2021. of their full support on the issues presented by the

Miss Yumna Aftab, Project Manager at Blue Veins, said that approximately 16 out of 27 public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have complied with the allocated 2 percent admission quota for minorities. She attributed this progress to the proactive support and efforts of the NCHR,

sion's significant role in this achievement. Members of the Civil Society Organization (CSO) Support Group, established by Blue Veins under the initiative "Faith in Action for Equal Rights Opportunities, praised NCHR's proactive approach towards addressing the issues faced by minority communities. The group also highlighted the need for a centralized database to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the quota system. The formation of the Sub-Committee on Minority Issues by NCHR, aimed at safeguarding the rights

of minority groups and ad-

dressing their challenges

in accessing education,

was lauded by civil socie-

ty members. They empha-

sized the importance of

proactive engagement by

duty bearers in addressing

social issues and its positive impact on societal development. The members reiterated that improving socio-economic conditions and uplifting diverse faith communities can only be achieved through collaborative efforts and ensuring equal opportunities for all societal groups. The recent directive by NCHR to the Governor Inspection Team to instruct universities to share their compliance reports further strengthens the support for this cause, ensuring the effective utilization of the quota by minority communities. The NCHR's commitment to expediting the implementation of this quota is seen as a commendable effort, as it not only enhances access to education for minorities but also ensures an inclusive and accessible educa-

Anjuman donates Rs 1mln for drug rehabilitation: SSP

QUETTA: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operation Quetta Muhammad Baloch on Wednesday said that the representatives of Anjuman Tajran have given funds Rs one million to the police for the rehabilitation of drug addicts which was admirable initiatives. He expressed these views while addressing a meeting regariding drug addicts. The meeting was attended by Focal Person for Narcotics DIG Ali Sher Jakhrani along with the President of Central Anjuman Tajran Registered Balochistan Abdul Rahim Kakar Dad shopping center and other officials. During the meeting, for the treatment of drug addicts in the rehabilitation center, the president of Anjuman Tajran, Abdul Rahim Kakar Dad the owner of the shopping center and other businessmen donated one million rupees for the treatment of drug addicts. On this occasion, the SSP said that just as the representatives of Anjuman Tajran have given funds to the police for the rehabilitation of drug addicts. Similarly, if the businessmen and other philanthropists of the province also cooperate, by ensuring the treatment of drug addicts from the society, such people can be made useful men of the society, he said. The shopping center owner assured the SSP operation that the rehabilitation and treatment of drug addicts would be continued and to play a role for the betterment of the city.-DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Igbal inaugurated the Seventh Agricultural Census 2024 at a ceremony held by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).—DNA

Banks to observe Ashura holidays on July 16, 17

DNA

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and all banks and financial institutions will remain closed on July 16 and 17, 2024 on the occasion of Ashura 1446 A.H. The central bank, in a statement issued here on Wednesday, informed that SBP will remain closed on July 16 and 17, 2024, (Tuesday and Wednesday) being public holidays on the occasion of Ashura (9th and 10th Moharram 1446 A.H). All the banks, Micro Finance Banks (MFBs), Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), and banking and non-banking financial institutions will also remain close on July 16 and 17 accordingly.

IESCO issues power suspension schedules

DNA

ISLAMABAD: According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/ areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: On 11 th July 2024, From 06:00 AM to 10:00 AM, Islamabad Circle, Sohdran Road, Ghori Garden, Sharifabad, Burma, Khanna Dak, Upper Topa, Patriata, TDCP, FSH Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Tench Bhatta, Shams Colony, Pindhoon, F-Block Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Zaraj-I, Zaraj-II, IST, Dhok Awan, Mohra Nagyal, Dhami-yal, UC Lakhan, Gulshan Saeed, Jail

Park-I Feeders, Attock Circle, Shakardara feeder and surrounding areas will remain closed. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work is completed ahead of time, the power supply can be restored even before the scheduled time.

Kisan Ittehad applauds PM's solarization of agri-tubewells

Chairman Kisan Ittehad thanked Chief Minister of Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti and the Prime Minister of Pakistan for their orders to convert thousands of tube wells to solar power

DNA

QUETTA: Chairman of Kisan Ittehad, Khalid Hussain Bath on Wednesday lauded Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's initiative of converting 28,000 tube wells to solar panels in Balochistan. Addressing a press con-

ference here at Quetta Press Club, he said shifting of tube wells to solar energy will pave the way for Balochistan's development and prosperity.

"Balochistan has fertile land and making agricultural lands cultivable can increase the country's resources," he said, urging that the province has around 40,000 tube wells, and an additional 16,000 tube wells should also be converted to solar energy.

thanked Chief Minister of Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti and the Prime Minister of Pakistan for their orders to convert thousands of tube wells to solar power. He requested Prime Minis-

The Chairman Kisan Ittehad

ter Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Balochistan to take measures to promote tourism in the province, ensuring the security of tourist areas to increase the province's resources.

He noted that last year's heavy rains caused significant damage to farmers, and stressed the need that the government should immediately compensate for their losses. He also called for taking precautionary measures to deal with the upcoming rains in order to minimize the losses to landowners.

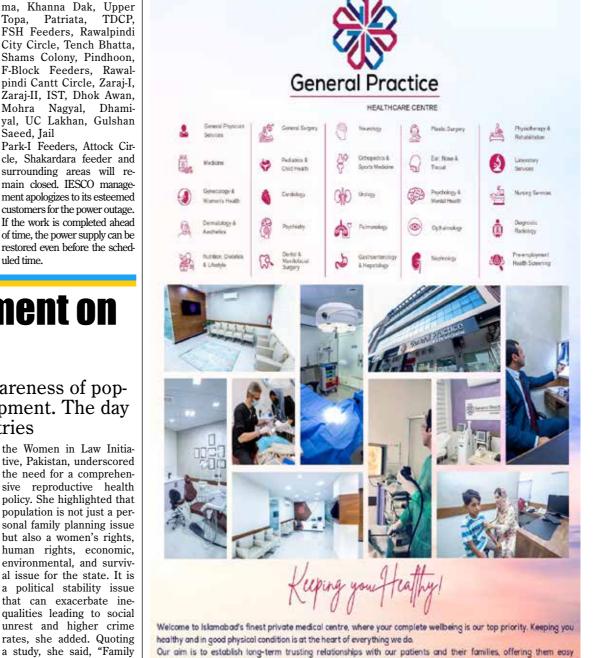
Minister highlights impacts of climate change

DNA

PESHAWAR Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Agriculture, Sajjad Barkwal on Wednesday highlighted the vital role water on human health, food security, basic needs and energy production and said that governments around the world are concerned about impacts of climate change

on water resources.He was addressing the opening session of a National Workshop on High Efficiency Irrigation System in a local hotel. Workshop was attended by Director General on Farm Water Management KP Hayat Khan, experts related to irrigation and agriculture, representatives of World Bank and FIO. The minister said that policy makers round the globe

are concerned about effects of climate change on water resources and lives of people. He appreciated performance of On Farm Water Management KP and the management is working day and night for timely completion of ongoing projects. He also urged participants and experts to guide by formulating suitable recommendations for timely achievement of the goals.



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Urgent call for population management on World Population Day

General Assembly decided to continue observing this day to raise awareness of population issues, including their relation to the environment and development. The day was first observed on July 11, 1990, in more than 90 countries the Women in Law Initia-

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: While observing World Population Day, the speakers urged the government to prioritize population control by focusing on four key components including women empowerment, resource mobilization, population management, and poverty alleviation. PODA, in collaboration with the Department of Social Work at the University of Punjab, Lahore, observed World Population Day at the university premises. The event saw participation from a diverse group including students, community members, academicians, government

officials from the social work and education departments, lawyers, media personnel, health workers, professionals, NGO representatives, and politicians. The observance is part of PODA's three-year project titled "Reduce Early Marriages to Enhance Gender Equality," funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad. World Population Day is marked annually on July 11. By resolution 45/216 of December 1990, the United Nations General Assembly decided to continue observing this day to raise awareness of population issues, including their relation to the environment and development. The day was first observed on July

11, 1990, in more than 90 countries.

Dr. Qais Aslam, Professor of Economics and Head of the Business School at the University of Central Punjab, emphasized the need to manage and balance the population according to existing resources. He highlighted the urgent need to provide skill-based education to both women and men so they can work together to improve their quality of life.

Tanveer Jahan, Executive Director of the Democratic Commission for Human Development, Lahore stated that reducing child marriage contributes to lower population growth by allowing girls to complete their

education and enter the workforce, leading to smaller, healthier families. This change fosters economic stability and improves the overall quality of life for future generations.

Prof. Javeria Q. Joyia, Director of Sustainability at UCP and International Climate Reality Leader, USA, discussed ways to adapt to climate change effectively by utilizing available resources and emphasizing the importance of donating unused items and recycling. She stressed the need for innovation and entrepreneurship to utilize resources efficiently while generating livelihoods for others. Nida Usman Chaudharv.

Advocate and Founder of

the need for a comprehensive reproductive health policy. She highlighted that population is not just a personal family planning issue but also a women's rights, human rights, economic, environmental, and survival issue for the state. It is a political stability issue that can exacerbate inequalities leading to social unrest and higher crime rates, she added. Quoting a study, she said, "Family planning alone, without improving the low status of women and girls around the world, will likely have only a limited impact on broader economic and social development."

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada

National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentine Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

> July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

July 30/Morocco National Day

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency



..9281092



Hospitals

| - | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| CMH | 5611111 |
| MH | 561116 |
| Cantt Hospital. | 9270907-11 |
| DHQ | 5556311-4 |
| RGH | 9290301-7 |
| Holy Family | 9290322-7 |
| PIMS | 9261170-79 |
| Polyclinic | 9218300-09 |
| Shifa International 4603666 | |



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Massive fire engulfs over 300 stalls at Sunday market

Chief Commissioner Randhawa forms committee to probe fire incident in H-9



ISLAMABAD: Vendors try to save their belonging from their shops after a massive fire erupted at H-9 Sunday weekly bazaar in the Federal Capital, More than 100 shops were gutted in the fire that broke out in Sunday weekly bazaar. —ONLINE

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: A massive fire erupted at Islamabad's Sunday Bazaar on Wednesday, engulfing over 300 stalls, with police saving an investigation into the cause of the fire is underway. The incident occurred at the capital's I-9 open-air market, where vendors set up stalls each week to sell a wide variety of goods. 'The process of putting out the fire is currently underway, while due to a shortage of fire brigades in Islamabad, help has been sought from Rawalpindi rescue teams and the firefighting team of the Pakistan Navy," the correspondent said. He added that no casualties have so far been reported, however, goods worth millions of rupees stored in the stalls were reduced to ashes, prompting vendors to voice their grievances to the market's administration. Meanwhile.





the Islamabad Police said that the entire area surrounding the market has been cordoned off and

evidence is being collected from the scene to ascertain the cause of the fire. "A full investigation



carried out [while] all arrangements have been made to maintain flow of traffic around the area," the capital police wrote on the X platform. "Citizens are requested not to form unnecessary gatherings and cooperate with the police," it added. Last month, a fire broke out in Peshawar's Nauthia Phattak area, destroying at least 80 shops mostly selling used goods and injuring three people. Rescue 1122 officials said the fire start-

ed in a small makeshift

railway line, spreading to nearby shops and engulfing wooden cabins and a power transformer. Chief Commissioner (CC) Muhammad Ali Randhawa visited the H-9 Sunday Bazaar on Wednesday after a fire broke out around 11 am and formed a committee to investigate the incident. He also reviewed the fire extinguishing efforts. Talking to media persons, the Commissioner, accompanied by the Inspector General (IG) of Police, said, "The fire



brigade was dispatched right away. Our team was already active due to the rain, so 31 fire engines and several water tankers were promptly reached on the site. Over 250 rescuers are involved in the operation." On the occasion, Randhawa said that he called the IGP and the area had been sealed off to prevent further incidents. He assured that any damage would be repaired. He said that the aim of cordoning off the area was to stop the fire from reigniting. Randhawa ac-

knowledged that this isn't the first fire at the bazaar. To determine the cause and find prevention measures, a joint committee of district and police officials would be formed. This committee is expected to submit its report within seven days. The Chief Commissioner said that steps would be taken to avoid these incidents in the future. Relaying the incident details, he said that out of 2,743 shops, 500 have been damaged. Authorities have urged people not to risk their lives to retrieve goods.

Country facing shortage of nurses at national level: Tarar

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, and Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar Wednesday said the country is facing shortage of nursing staff at the national level as the country required a 0.9 million more nurses to cater the growing needs of the population by 2030. The minister was replying to the calling attention notice moved by Member National Assembly

invite attention of the Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination to the matter of shortage of doctors and nurses in Islamabad, causing grave concern amongst the public. Tarar informed that there was no shortage of doctors in the hospitals of the federal capital, but rather that of nurses. "At present, 100,000 nurses are serving whereas there are 589 nursing schools and colleges operating across the country out of which 375 are

(MNA) Sehar Kamran to

private and 214 are public institutions," he said. He added that it was an important service and evening classes policy was being introduced and imposed since 2018. Since, there were more females opting for this profession, there were efforts underway to manage their hostel and other needs and nursing colleges were encouraged to increase their seats to accommodate increasing number of aspirants, he said. The minister underlined that some 20,000 doctors were entering the service

system per year which was satisfactory and as per the WHO guidelines to cater the population of the country. However, he said concerns were emerging in the service ratio of those doctors in rural and urban areas. He assured that the number of doctors in PIMS, Polyclinic, and Basic Health Units (BHUs) was satisfactory, whereas 77 positions for Poly Clinic Hospital were allocated awaiting the Federal Pub-Service Commission (FPSC) approval for recruitment.

Inclusivity key to national development, prosperity: Ayaz

The speaker acknowledged the importance of addressing demographic challenges, ensuring equal access to family planning, and promoting gender equality to ensure a sustainable future

Mehtab Pirzada

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah on Wednesday emphasized adopting inclusive approach for wider development and prosperity of nation. They said introducing and implementing non-discriminatory policies to provide basic rights to all would lead Pakistan on the path of development. They also emphasized taking proactive measures for addressing the challenge

of over population. They

expressed these views in their separate message on World Population Day, Which is commemorated around the globe with the theme "leave no one behind, count everyone". The speaker acknowledged the importance of addressing demographic challenges, ensuring equal access to family planning, and promoting gender equality to ensure a sustainable future. He stressed that it is a collective responsibility to align development priorities with population growth and provide quality education, healthcare, and employment opportunities to the growing population.Avaz Sadiq also

underscored the importance of increasing awareness and education among the masses, particularly in rural areas, to effectively tackle the issue of population growth. He stressed that by working together, we can ensure a brighter future for our generations to come and achieve sustainable economic growth, social prosperity, and environmental protection. The speaker expressed his concern that the rapidly growing population is exerting immense pressure on Pakistan's limited resources, infrastructure, and public services, and if left unchecked, it could lead to

severe consequences, including food and water scarcity, unemployment, and social unrest. He warned that the country's healthcare, education, and housing systems are already overstretched, and the increasing population would further strain these services, compromising the quality of life for millions of Pakistanis. Moreover, the speaker noted that the population growth rate is also having a devastating impact on the environment with increased pollution, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity, ultimately threatening the very survival of the planet. He urged the need for swift and collective action to address this critical issue.



Briefs

President condoles deaths in jeep accident in Neelum **Valley**

DNA

ISLAMABAD : President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday expressed grief over the deaths after a jeep plunged into a river in Neelum Valley of Azad Kashmir. The president prayed to Allah Almighty for peace for the departed souls, sympathised with the bereaved families and also prayed for strength to them to bear the loss. According to media reports, as many as 10 people died and another three were injured when a jeep plunged into River Neelum after the driver lost control of the

Tunisia's Consul calls on Rana Mashhood

ISLAMABAD: Consul of the Republic of Tunisia, Ammad Rasheed called on Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth gramme (PMYP) Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Wednesday. The two sides held a productive meeting which discussed various initiatives undertaken by the Prime Minister's Youth Programme. They explored avenues of cooperation between Pakistan and Tunisia in youth development, said

a news release. During the meeting, Consul Ammad Rasheed expressed his admiration for the Prime Minister's Youth Programme initiatives highlighting their significant impact on empowering the youth of Pakistan. He specifically commended Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan for his dedicated efforts in spearheading these initiatives to foster socio-economic development and promote vouth entrepreneurship across the country. Rana Mashhood expressed gratitude for the Consul's appreciation and assured him of the Programme's commitment to further enhancing bilateral relations with Tunisia. He emphasized the Programme's ongoing efforts to create opportunities for the youth, enabling them to contribute effectively to Pakistan's progress and prosperity. Tunisia Consul and chairman PMYP reaffirmed their commitment to continue collaboration and mutual support in promoting youth-centric initiatives between both countries.-APP

Death anniversary of Nadeem Qasmi being observed

ISLAMABAD: The 18th death anniversary of renowned Pakistani poet, journalist and literary scholar Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi is being observed on Wednesday. He was born on November 20, 1916 in village Anga of Khushab District. Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi worked as a script writer for Radio Pakistan. He also worked as an editor and publisher of a literary magazine 'Funoon' and newspaper editor for 'Imroze' as well. He wrote around 50 books on poetry, journalism, fiction and art and also wrote for national newspapers. He wrote both ghazals and nazms. He published collections of his most renowned works, including poetry volumes such as Shola-i-Gul, Kisht-i-Wafa, and Jalal-o-Jamal, along with short story collections like Anchal, Chopaal, Sannata, Bagolay, Kapaas ka Phool, Ghar se Ghartak, Tal-o-Gharoob, and Sailab-o-Gardab. He was given Pride of Performance, Pakistan Academy of Letters' lifetime achievement award, as well as the country's highest civil honour, Sitara-i-Imtiaz to honor his great achievements. He died at the age of 89 on July 10, in 2006 in Lahore.-APP

Ahsan, Chinese Envoy discuss CPEC-2 progress

Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal emphasized Pakistan's eagerness to advance to the next phase of CPEC

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday met with Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong to discuss the ongoing and upcoming initiatives under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Phase 2. During the meeting, he underscored the government's unwavering commitment to ensuring the

timely implementation of CPEC projects, said a news release. The minister emphasized Pakistan's eagerness to advance to the next phase of CPEC, which includes the operationalization of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) aimed at facilitating Chinese investment in Pakistan. Ahsan Iqbal is scheduled to visit China to attend the high-level forum on the Action Plan for Global Development and a Shared Future, organized by the China International Development Cooperation Agency. This visit follows up on the agreements reached during the recent visit of Pakistan's Prime Minister to China. The follow-up meeting will focus on mutually agreed projects, with special attention to agriculture scholarships, IT training programs, the ML-1 railway project, and the Karakoram Highway (KKH) Phase 2 (Thakot-Raikot Section). Ambassador Jiang Zaidong extended a warm welcome to Minister Iqbal, noting that this

marks the fourth visit to China by the Planning Minister since the new government assumed office. The minister assured the Chinese Ambassador that government is implementing the understanding reached between leadership of the two countries to enhance economic cooperation and also taking stringent measures to ensure the safety of Chinese nationals following the tragic Dasu incident. The Chinese Ambassador expressed his full support for Pakistan's

counter-terrorism efforts. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen the strategic partnership between both countries through continued cooperation and mutual support through speedy implementation of understanding achieved during PM Sharif's China visit. The minister will leave tonight for a six days visit of China in which he will hold consultations with senior Chinese leadership and Chinese businessmen to review progress on CPEC phase 2.

10 private member

ISLAMABAD: As many as 10 private member's bills landed in the National Assembly here on Tuesday during the seventh meeting of the 14th Assembly session. The Bills included the South City University Bill, 2024, the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (Amendment Bill 2024), the Pakistan Psychological Council Bill, 2024, the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the National Commission for Minorities Bill, 2024, the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 to amend its Article-51 and 106, the Nippon Institute of Advanced Sciences (NIAS) Bill, 2024, the High Courts (Establishment) (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the Christian Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the Christian Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2024 as passed by the Senate for further amendments to the Christian Marriage Act, 1872, the International Institute of Technology, Culture, and Health Sciences Bill, 2024 and moved the amendment Bill to amend the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 2007. The Bills were moved by the Members National Assembly Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah, Sehar Kamran, Riaz Fatyana, Asad Qaiser, Naveed Aamir Jeeva, Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti, Sohail Sultan, Ahmed Raza Maneka and Nafisa Shah. Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq referred the Bills to the committees concerned on not opposing from the treasury benches. Meanwhile, MNA Nawabzada Mir Jamal Raisani of PPPP tabled the motion to express resolve for unity counter-terrorism and pay homage to the martyrs of the terrorist attack occurred in Kanak area of Mastung that also left his father Nawabzada Siraj Raisani martyred among over a hundred other martyrs. The motion was adopted unanimously by the House. The House was adjourned to meet again on July 10th (Tuesday) at 1400 hours.

bills landed in NA

River Kabul continues to flow in low flood

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that river Kabul continues to flow in low flood at Warsak-Nowshera reach while all other major rivers Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej run normal. According to daily FFC report on Wednesday, combined live storage of the country's major reservoirs including Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma stood at 8.137 million feet of water (MAF). According to Flood Forecasting Division (FFD) Lahore, Westerly Wave's trough earlier over northern parts of Pakistan lies over Kashmir and adjoining areas which is likely to move away during the next 24 hours. Another fresh trough of Westerly Wave is now over northwestern Afghanistan. The wind pattern over Southwest Asia indicates moderate moisture incursion from the Arabian Sea, with directional convergence over the upper part of Pakistan upto 3000 feet. The moisture influx from the Arabian Sea is expected to strengthen during the next 24 hours. Furthermore, monsoon trough is beginning to re-establish with its axis extending from the seasonal low to the Bay of Bengal. The FFD has forecast scattered thunderstorm of moderate intensity over upper catchments of rivers Indus and Jhelum besides isolated light rainfall in the catchments of rivers Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej during the next 24 hours. Scattered thunderstorm of moderate intensity may occur over Islamabad, Punjab, (Rawalpindi, Sargodha and Gujranwala Divisions) and Khyber-Pakhunkhwa province besides isolated thunderstorms of light intensity over Punjab (Lahore, Multan and DG Khan Divisions), Southern & Southeastern Sindh and Balochistan (Zhob & Kalat Divisions) during the same period. -DNA

IRSA releases 310,100 **cusecs water**

ISLAMABAD :Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 310,100 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 345,800 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1518.52 feet and was 120.52 feet higher than its dead level of 1.398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 179,700 cusecs and 150,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1193.00 feet, which was 145.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 33,000 cusecs and 27.000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa , Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 188,900, 180,000, 131,200 and 70,000 cusecs respectively. -APP

ICT admin tackles city waterlogging

ISLAMABAD: The Islama-bad Capital Territory (ICT) administration sprang into action after heavy rains in the federal capital.

Waterlogging on roads became a major issue, and in response, district administration officers were on the ground working to manage the situation. Drainage operations are underway, supported by teams from MCI and CDA. Various drains are being closely monitored to prevent flooding. Deputy Commissioner

(DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, has directed an acceleration drainage process. He also praised the pre-monsoon preparations, noting that no major flooding has been reported. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized that the cleaning of drains was helping maintain the water flow.—APP

CDA fetches record revenue of Rs 52bln

ISLAMABAD: In an unprecedented achievement, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has recorded a revenue of 52 billion rupees for the financial year 2023-24, exceeding target by 23 per cent. Under the leadership of Chairman CDA Mohammad Ali Randhawa and the strategic direction of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, innovative steps were implemented to boost revenue generation, its spokesman said on Wednesday.-APP



ISLAMABAD: Jul10-Commuters on their way at Faisal Avenue after heavy monsoon rains in the Federal Capital.— ONLINE PHOTO

Romina promotes gender equity, climate resilience

The Coordinator highlighted the opportunity to reflect on the implications of population growth and demographic trends, particularly in relation to climate change

MEHTAB PIERZADA

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Wednesday has emphasized the need to address gender equity and population management to reduce emissions and build climate resilience. In a message on World Population Day to be observed on Thursday, tomorrow, Romina Khurshid Alam stressed the importance of understanding the intersections between population dynamics and climate change. She noted that this intersection was vital for developing effective strategies to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of a warming planet. She

the challenges posed by climate change, population growth and gender inequality. The Coordinator highlighted the opportunity to reflect on the implications of population growth and demographic trends, particularly in relation to climate change. She said as the global population grows, there is greater demand for energy, food, and resources, which leads to higher emissions from the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial activities. Romina Khurshid Alam noted that demographic changes like aging populations and urbanization could also exacerbate or mitigate climate impacts, but the primary

change disrupting food production, especially in regions like South Asia, which may lead to food insecurity and malnutrition. The PM's aide also emphasized that promoting gender equity and managing population growth in vulnerable countries is essential for implementing a potential climate resilience strategy.

She urged for a collective effort to address these critical issues and develop sustainable solutions to combat climate change. She said climate-related disasters like droughts, floods and extreme heat put more people at risk, especially those living in poverty with limited resources to adapt. Highlighting the need for

said this day is a timely driver of climate change is effective population manreminder of the need for emissions. She expressed agement strategies to mitiurgent action to address concerns about climate gate climate impacts, Romina Khurshid Alam said the increasing population has far-reaching consequences on various aspects of sustainability, including environmental conservation. water efficiency, energy conservation and tree plantation programs.

She said larger populations heighten the number of individuals vulnerable to climate-related catastrophes such as floods, droughts, and severe weather events, rendering disaster management more complex.

Romina Khurshid Alam underscored the importance of a comprehensive approach to build a more resilient and sustainable

the arrest of habitual crim-

SHOs directed to ensure presence at police stations

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) operations, Islamabad, Sved Ali Raza on Wednesday directed the station house officers (SHOs) to ensure their presence at police grievances effectively. The DIG chaired a meeting

to review crime situation in the federal capital. SSP Investigation, Zonal SPs, SP Investigation, SDPOs, SHOs, and in-charge Car Cell attended the meeting. DIG Raza directed to intensify efforts to arrest individuals involved in serious crimes, including murder, robbery, and vehicle theft. To combat the narcotics. He ordered a stringent crackdown on drug dealers, stressing the need for expedited actions against organized and active gangs.

kite-selling and kite-flying, which pose significant risks to human lives. In an effort to curb corruption, the DIG mandated that all cases be investigated with merit and transparency. He underscored the importance of timely FIR registrations and ensuring that investigations are conducted fairly. The DIG reiterated the commitment to maintaining peace and security during Muharram, ensuring the protection of citizens' lives and property by utilizing all

PR plans smart railway cars on multiple routes first transport policy in the

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Pakistan Railways (PR) was informed on Wednesday that Pakistan Railways would introduce four smart railway cars on routes between Lahore-Islamabad, Lahore-Faisalabad, Lahore-Multan, and Karachi-Hyderabad at a cost of approximately \$45 million under public-private partnership. "The Pakistan Railways is committed to moving towards public-private partnerships and is planning to introduce four smart railway cars for routes between Lahore-Islamabad, Lahore-Faisalabad, Lahore-Multan, and Karachi-Hyderabad at a cost of around \$45 million," stated Secretary of the Ministry of Railways, Sved Mazhar Ali

Shah, during the meeting. He noted that under this public-private partnership, private parties will contribute a portion of the profit to maintain the tracks. The meeting, chaired by Senator Jam Saifullah Khan, was attended by Senators Saifullah Sarwar Khan Nyazee, Kamil Ali Agha, and Dost Ali Jessar, along with Secretary Syed Mazhar Ali Shah and other senior officials. Syed Mazhar Ali Shah briefed the committee on the operations and performance of the ministry, said that railways were 62% safer and 72% more environmentally friendly than roads. He highlighted that railways can economically contribute by lowering the oil import bill. Despite its potential, the

country was only formulated in 2018, aiming to provide safe, affordable, efficient, durable, and environmentally friendly transport. Currently, Pakistan Railways was working towards self-reliance by increasing its market share from 8% to 30%, but financial constraints were hindering progress. The Secretary noted that 95% of the railway budget was spent on pensions, pay, and fuel, leaving only 5% for maintenance. For the financial year 2024-25, the liabilities related to pensions amount would be around Rs 62 billion. Pakistan Railways has taken measures to minimize operational costs and requested the federal government to include railway pensioners in the national account. Responding to Senator Kamil Ali Agha's query, the Secretary informed the committee that a double electric line did exist between Lahore and Lodhran but has unfortunately been dismantled. Discussing the ML-1 project, the Secretary explained that ECNEC has approved the ML-1 upgradation project at a cost of around \$6.68 billion. The first phase will upgrade the railway track from Karachi to Multan, followed by the track from Multan to Peshawar in the next phase. The committee decided to hold an exclusive session on the ML-1 project and to visit the Islamahad and Lahore railway workshops.



Vassalise allies

PEACEFUL and prosperous Asia? Think about it, there is no upside in that for the United States. This is especially so because there is no scenario in which that doesn't also mean a more stable, prosperous and, therefore, even more powerful China. For the US to contain China must also mean impoverishment and instability for its neighbours, intentionally or as collateral damage. That is the real meaning behind the hatefest currently taking place at Nato's 75th anniversary summit in Washington. For an alliance that has "North Atlantic" in its name, it's extraordinary that it now spends as much time fretting about China as Russia, against which it is waging a hot proxy war. The purest expression of this US strategy in Asia has been Australia's costly deal for nuclear-powered submarines under the Aukus security partnership with the United Kingdom and the US. In a new book, Australian investigative journalist Andrew Fowler has delivered the proverbial smoking gun, courtesy of David Gould, former British undersecretary for defence hired by Canberra as consultant for a programme to replace the country's ageing submarines. "Gould revealed for the first time what has long been suspected: one of the submarine's most important requirements would be to work with the Americans in the South China Sea," Fowler wrote in Nuked: The Submarine Fiasco that Sank Australia's Sovereignty. "He explained that the submarine would need 'to get through the archipelago to the north of Australia and into the South China Sea and operate in the South China Sea for a reasonable period of time and then come back again, without docking, or refuelling or anything. That's what it needs to do." That was in fact the criticism of Paul Keating, former Labor prime minister, from day one. The original contract for much-cheaper conventional submarines, which would have been adequate for the defence of the continental homeland, was unilaterally broken by the Liberal government of Scott Morrison. The book quoted Gould as saying the submarines would work alongside the US and Japan in an "integrated system", which had become "even more pertinent with China". The revelation, of course, undermines Canberra's claim that the new submarines would be used to defend Australia and protect its shipping lanes. The argument is, of course, ludicrous. Why would Australia need to defend sea lanes against China, its best customer and biggest trading partner that had, until recently, helped boost its economic growth over two decades? It is at the same level of absurdity as Brussels and Washington's claim that the Nord Stream pipelines, blown up in September 2022, was the work of the Russians, who built them to supply oil to Germany and beyond. But you can always count on the stenographic mainstream news media in the Anglo-American sphere to duly repeat the absurd propaganda. Across the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, it's the same story. A little more diplomatic finesse could have considerably eased tensions. But then, Washington would neither be able to sell expensive but obsolete weapons to the island, nor justify deploying massive naval hardware to the region. Taiwan's secessionist forces are only too happy to play along. "Today Ukraine, tomorrow Taiwan" - that has been the argument Nato and the US have been using to justify an increasingly aggressive Western posture. It is not that Beijing wants to go against the island, but Nato and Washington want it to do precisely that or at least threaten the island enough to justify Western intervention.

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Israel and Europe's far right

HE surprise victory of an alliance of leftist parties, the New Popular Front, in France's parliamentary elections on Sunday has rattled the country's far right, which had won the first round of the snap elections a week before and was hoping to repeat its gains and form a government for the first time since the Second World War. Such a victory would have unsettled the political landscape of Europe, threatened the unity of the EU and sent an ominous message to millions of immigrants in the continent and beyond. While populist ultranationalist parties across Europe expressed shock at the result, they were joined by the Israeli political establishment, which was hoping for a far-right victory. The head of the conservative and right-wing political party YisraelBeiteinu, Avigdor Lieberman, said after Sunday's results that "the victory of a radical leftist party in France means the rise of hatred against Israel and a spike in antisemitism, and I call on Jews in France to immigrate to Israel." Lieberman said that Jean-Luc Melenchon and many members of his France Unbowed party show pure antisemitism, as he put it. The head of the party in the French National Assembly had said that Paris would recognize the state of Palestine in the coming two weeks. Liberman's reaction points to the controversial ties between Israel and Europe's farright parties. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his extremist coalition partners have been cheering for Europe's far right despite its notorious antisemitic legacy. For years, Netanyahu has been courting populist European figures such as Santiago Abascal, the leader of Spain's far-right Vox party, and Serbia's ultranationalist President Aleksandar Vucic. He has links with other European populist leaders, including the staunchly anti-Islam Geert Wilders of the Netherlands, the young French far-right leader Jordan Bardella and Hungary's ultranationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban. The meteoric rise of far-right parties in many European countries, as indicated by the results of the recent European Parliament elections, should worry Israel's leaders. But it does not. Netanyahu has been able to find common ground with these parties, such as Islamophobic, fear-mongering rhetoric and the apparent need to preserve a shared Judeo-Christian culture against foreign intruders, especially Muslims. Netanyahu has portrayed Israel's onslaught on Gaza as a war on behalf of the West, saying that Israel's victory would be the West's victory. He has underlined that Israel's ability to thwart an Iranian invasion would guarantee the stability of countries like Egypt, the collapse of which would lead to millions of illegal migrants heading to Europe, in his view. In response, many of Europe's far-right parties have muted their antisemitic rhetoric, despite a rise in antisemitism in the West in recent years. Anti-Israel sentiments had spiked in many Western countries as a result of the war on Gaza. Still, Israel has been successful in calling on Western governments, such as Germany and the US, to equate anti-Zionism with antisemitism. Far-right European parties and politicians have come out in support of Israel's war against Hamas, saying that Israel had the right to self-defense and that "Islamist terrorists" - a term that Netanyahu uses a lot - were seeking to destroy Israel. Some have gone as far as rejecting any move to recognize a Palestinian state or even support a twostate solution, identifying completely with Israel's far-right parties and government.

Competition for influence in the Red Sea

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Furthermore, there are concerns that Russia may collaborate with the Houthis to deploy sea mines, disrupting maritime traffic and potentially coercing ships to seek safety under Russian jurisdiction. Additionally, Russia might forge alliances with various factions in the Horn of Africa to evade international sanctions, facilitating illicit trade in oil and grain, which could alleviate energy and food shortages exacerbated by U.S. sanctions related to the conflict in Ukraine. Russia has also employed "grain diplomacy," supplying significant amounts of grain to several African nations, including Somalia...

ECENT TEPOLATION nese Armed Forces and the Russian government are on the verge of finalizing a strate-ECENT reports indicate that the Sudasignificant military and economic agreement. This potential deal underscores Russia's strategic interest in gaining access to ports along the Red Sea, a move aimed at bolstering its naval capabilities and expanding its geopolitical influence in the region. Moreover, Russia seeks to forge stronger political and military alliances across Africa, using partnerships with countries like Sudan to enhance its global stature, counter Western influence, and explore new economic opportunities.Lieutenant General Yasir al-Atta confirmed in late May the nearing conclusion of negotiations between the Sudanese Armed Forces and Russia. The proposed agreement would allow Russia to establish a naval support facility on the Red Sea, marking a pivotal step in their bilateral relations. In exchange, Sudan would receive weapons and ammunition, reflecting Sudan's strategic maneuvering amid dissatisfaction with Western Nations for their perceived inaction against external support to their adversariesparticularly the Rapid Support Forces involved in Sudan's civil conflict. Initially slated for completion since February 2023, progress on the agreement was hindered by Sudan's internal strife. Russia's motivation also lies in strengthening ties with African nations facing sanctions from Western powers. However, regional tensions, notably involving the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar concerning Sudan's conflict, as well as ongoing issues in the Red Sea, have complicated matters. These complexities have impeded effective responses to challenges like the Houthis' attacks, highlighting the geopolitical intricacies influencing both the agreement and regional stability. Simultaneously, Russia and China are intensifying efforts to consolidate their positions in the Red Sea area. Russia, in collaboration with Eritrea, is advancing plans to establish a naval facility at Massawa port, a development affirmed by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov during his visit to Eritrea in January 2023. This move underscores Russia's ambition to secure additional strategic ports in the Red Sea beyond Sudan. Meanwhile, China's presence near the

Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a critical maritime route for closer ties with China, potentially influence linking the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, is expanding. With a military base in Djibouti, China has expanded its naval operations, exemplified by the presence of an Iranian spy ship nearby, signaling deepening military engagement in the region. These concerted efforts by Russia and China to enhance their influence in the Red Sea area are viewed as challenges to the policy objectives of the Biden administration in Africa. As both powers assert their presence through strategic partnerships and military expansions, they are reshaping the geopolitical landscape, potentially altering traditional spheres of influence and global power dynamics in Africa

Critics, such as Senator James Risch, argue that the current U.S. approach is ineffective. Risch proposes strengthening ties with Somaliland as a countermeasure against China and Iran's growing influence. The recent maneuvers by Russia and China underscore the strategic significance of the Red Sea in terms of both military dominance and economic control. Russia, leveraging attacks by Houthi rebels on commercial vessels, seeks to bolster its influence by offering safe pas-

sage to ships under the Russian flag. Furthermore, there are concerns that Russia may collaborate with the Houthis to deploy sea mines, disrupting maritime traffic and potentially coercing ships to seek safety under Russian jurisdiction. Additionally, Russia might forge alliances with various factions in the Horn of Africa to evade international sanctions, facilitating illicit trade in oil and grain, which could alleviate energy and food shortages exacerbated by U.S. sanctions related to the conflict in Ukraine. Russia has also employed "grain diplomacy," supplying significant amounts of grain to several African nations, including Somalia, and forgiving substantial debts, such as \$684 million owed by Somalia. This assistance is particularly appealing to Somalia, grappling with financial constraints exacerbated by the ongoing conflict with al-Shabaab. As tensions escalate between Somalia and Somaliland, especially ahead of Somaliland's upcoming elections in November, Somalia may increasingly turn to Russia and China for support. Notably, opposition leader and former Russian ambassador AbdirahmanIrro advocates

ing Somalia's foreign policy decisions. There are growing apprehensions that Russia may interfere in Somaliland's electoral processes or disrupt its agreements, such as the strategic port deal with Ethiopia, in order to gain access to the port of Berbera. Africa's vulnerability to heightened Russian engagement is compounded by perceived U.S. policy gaps in the region.

The Horn of Africa, encompassing the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, holds immense strategic importance for global maritime trade and security. Control over this region confers significant geopolitical advantages, making it a focal point for competing military and economic powers. Russia's expanding presence in Africa spans military cooperation, arms sales, and economic investments, filling voids left by diminishing U.S. engagement. The prospect of Russia militarizing the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden raises considerable concerns, potentially destabilizing an already fragile region and extending repercussions to global security, including the Middle East. Such developments could precipitate an arms race and exacerbate existing conflicts.

To mitigate these risks, the Biden administration must adopt a robust response, revisiting initiatives like the Somaliland Partnership Act. This proposed legislation advocates for the formal recognition and support of Somaliland, praised for its stable governance and strategic positioning. By collaborating with Somaliland, the U.S. could effectively counterbalance Russian and Chinese influence in the region, while securing a crucial ally in the Horn of Africa. Moreover, enhanced collaboration with the Department of Defense is imperative. A comprehensive military strategy, encompassing joint exercises, security assistance and infrastructure development, would fortify regional stability and dissuade adversarial incursions. The evolving dynamics in the Horn of Africa demand proactive U.S. engagement to preserve equilibrium and prevent unilateral dominance by any foreign power. By strategically aligning with stable regional partners like Somaliland and bolstering military cooperation, the U.S. can safeguard its interests while promoting peace and security in this pivotal maritime corridor.

The daily struggles of life under attack

Iman Abo Qamar



My children used to enjoy eggs every morning. However, for prolonged periods, eggs were simply unavailable in the markets. When they finally became available again, they were very expensive and often spoiled. The lack of meat and chicken has led us to depend on canned food, marking a significant change from our diet before the war

YEARN for the life I used to lead before this genocide. War transcends mere bombings, missiles and destruction; it encompasses economic, social, environmental and psychological devastation. I've lost touch with my sense of womanhood, feeling much older than my years. Even my appearance reflects this. My daily routine, previously centered around caring for my children, making breakfast, ensuring they got to school before starting my work, has been completely shattered. I've forgotten the simplicity of life before the war, including my food preferences and principles for raising my children. Every day, I eagerly await the moment I can return home and reclaim my former lifestyle. I long for the simple pleasure of sitting on my bed with my kids after a shower. Now, even having a shower is hard work. Securing warm water requires gathering wood from specific locations after fetching water from distant sources. Eight months have elapsed without electricity. Before the genocide, we were accustomed to eight hours of power daily. However, since then, Israeli forces have targeted Gaza's only power plant as well as solar panels across the Gaza Strip. I've regressed to washing

clothes by hand, cooking and baking over our diet before the war. firewood. There are shortages of gas, fuel and flour. The washing machines and refrigerators in those houses that have not been reduced to rubble serve as mere decorations or, in some cases, a sanctuary for children during their games of hide-and-seek. Even basic activities such as charging our phones or connecting to the internet have turned into monumental challenges. We traverse long distances to find working solar panels. Life in makeshift tents and crowded schools lacks even the most basic necessities. Days can pass without access to clean drinking water. We try to avoid unhygienic public bathrooms where queues are interminable.

An ordinary day: My children have suffered immensely during the war. They've had gastrointestinal issues and diarrhea due to displacement and unsanitary conditions. We've all lost weight since nutritious food is scarce. My children used to enjoy eggs every morning. However, for prolonged periods, eggs were simply unavailable in the markets. When they finally became available again, they were very expensive and often spoiled. The lack of meat and chicken has led us to depend on canned food, marking a significant change from

Both my husband, a software engineer, and I, a writer and translator, have lost our jobs and livelihoods due to the internet blackout. We used to work from home with high-speed internet, which allowed me to work from my bed and quickly perform my tasks.

The war has deprived my children of their playtime and weekly visits to their grandfather's house. Every Friday, they used to go to his house, where there was a garden, a swing and lemon, olive, orange and guava trees. They used to gather with their cousins, play in the sand, have fun, water the trees and eat their fruit.

Israeli warplanes targeted their grandfather's house in Beit Hanoun, leaving nothing for the children to do there now, except gather firewood. Just like that, their childhood disappeared and their games vanished. All they care about is for this genocide to end. Playgrounds and family gatherings are replaced by the harsh realities of displacement and scarcity. I pray for an ordinary day spent with my children at home. Yet, in Gaza City, a city plagued by perpetual conflict, the pursuit of normalcy remains an elusive dream.

- Iman Abo Qamar is a content writer and translator in the Gaza Strip.



Briefs

Pakistan extends stay of Afghan...

From Page 01 Other ministers are Kashmir Affairs, SAFRON Ministry, Industry and Production Ministry and Health Services Ministry, said the sources. The five federal ministries have started work to answer eight questions forwarded to them by the PM House about their possible abolition. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also sought role of the ministries which had been transferred to the provinces. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, warning against any laxity in the implementation of the government's downsizing agenda, asked the ministries to work hard for making a difference and meeting the nation's expectations. Addressing the federal cabinet meeting, PM Shehbaz Sharif said "I will not allow my time to waste and I am sure you will not allow your time to be wasted. The only thing that will make the difference is action and implementation. Roll up your sleeves as this is a matter of country, its resources and resolution of its issues." Apprising the members of his visits to Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, he referred to his interactions with world leaders particularly Russian President Vladimir Putin, and said he had formed a committee under Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal for follow-ups.

No decision on wheat export...

From Page 01

According to the statement of objects and reasons, the bill is aimed at reconstituting the boards of SOEs to better align them with the reform initiatives for restructuring and the transformation as well as privatization of certain entities. Besides, "The Pakistan Citizenship (Amendment), Bill, 2024 was introduced in the House today. Earlier, The House offered fate-82,500 MetLife Stadium ha for the departed soul of and as in their 2022 World Captain Osama bin Arshad Cup triumph they look to and others embraced Shabe peaking at the perfect hadat in South Waziristan. moment. Canada, who sur-The House also prayed for prised many by reaching the victims of the Neelum the last four in their first Valley incident. Copa America appearance,

Khattak records his testimony...

From Page 01

the cabinet's agenda and included as an additional item. Documents related to money were presented in the sealed envelopes in the cabinet meeting, he added. Imran Khan responded to Pervez Khattak's state-"Nawaz ments, stating, Sharif's flats in London must be handed over to Pakistan." However, former minister Zubaida Jalal and former principal secretary Azam Khan couldn't appear before the court during the hearing. As many as 31 witnesses have recorded their statements while cross-examination of 30 witnesses has been concluded. Consequently, the court adjourned the 190 million pounds reference hearing until July 13. It is pertinent to mention that IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mahmood Jahangiri approved bail of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi in this case.

Top court likely to announce...

From Page 01

Thursday (tomorrow) Geo News reported citing sources. A special session of the apex court's 13-member full bench was held under the chair of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) QaziFaez Isa today, the sources added. The important consultative session was summoned by the top judge to hold a discussion over the order related to the reserved seats' case. It is noteworthy to mention here that the Supreme Court reserved the verdict on the SIC's appeals yesterday, against the Peshawar High Court's (PHC) verdict that upheld the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision denying them the reserved seats.

PCB relieves Wahab Riaz, Abdul Razzaq as selectors

Players supported by Wahab ,Razzaq turned out to be the ones who didn't perform and were in fact opposed by other members

LAHORE: The repercussions of the Pakistan team's early exit from the T20 World Cup 2024 continue to flow as it has been revealed that star pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi has been found misbehaving with the coaches and management staff, sources told on Wednesday. Sources say that a probe is underway over why managers who are responsible for maintaining team discipline - didn't take any action against the left-arm pacer despite Shaheen's attitude. The revelation comes against the backdrop of ongoing measures being taken by the board, the latest of which was the sacking of Wahab Riaz and Abdul Razzaq from the selection committee, following the team's poor performance and early exit from the T20 World Cup 2024, Razzag was a member of both the men's and women's selection committees, whereas Wahab remained the face of the men's seven-member selection committee even after he was removed as panel chief earlier this year. In a statement today, the PCB confirmed notifying the duo that their services were no longer required. With senior manager Wahab out of the picture, the board has



also removed team manager Mansoor Rana from his post. Both the Wahab and Razzag, the sources have claimed, extended undue favours to certain players and PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi decided to oust the duo only after the culmination of the investigation into the said matter. The players supported by Wahab and Razzag turned out to be the ones who didn't perform and were in fact opposed by other members of the selection committee as well. Moreover, the board is also probing players who have lobbies and the benefit that is being gained from it.

Sources have further said that the team's coaches have complained to the PCB chairman about the non-seriousness of players and disciplinary violations in re-

cent tours. Lamenting that players talk against each other, the coaches have also taken up the issue of players' families and the effect on their ability to focus on the game. Wahab dismisses pressurising selection committee Meanwhile, reacting to the board's confirmation of his removal, Wahab has dismissed the reports suggesting that he had pressurised the selection committee. "I don't agree with the statements being discussed about adding pressure to the members of the selection committee," the former pacer said in a post on his X account. Questioning that how can one vote dominate six, as the selection committee comprised of seven members, he stressed that everything was documented on record in the minutes of the meeting. Wahab then announced that he will be issuing a statement in the evening today. It is to be noted that the board has retained Mohammad Yousuf, Asad Shafiq and Bilal Afzal in the selection panel which also includes the captain and head coach. Sources claim that a senior official had advised Wahab to accept the responsibility for players' selection and resign but he was sacked after he refused to step down.

Four security personnel martyred..

From Page 01 four brave sons of soil; Sepoy Muhammad Idrees (age: 34 years, resident of Swabi District), SepoyBadam Gul (age: 34 years, resident of Kohat District) of Pakistan Army and Sub Inspector Tajmir Shah, (age: 38 years, resident of: Peshawar District) & Assistant Sub Inspector Muhammad Akram (age: 34 years, resident of Mansehra District) of CTD KPK, having fought gallantly, embraced Pakistan's Shahadat. Security Forces stand shoulder to shoulder with other law enforcement agencies to ensure peace and stability across of Pakistan and such sacrifices of our brave men further strengthen our resolve.

Decision allowing ISI to tap...

From Page 01

The petition claims that a notification issued by the government permits the ISI to intercept citizens' phone calls, despite the absence of established rules under the PTA Act's relevant section. 'The Constitution of Pakistan upholds the privacy and freedom of expression of its citizens," the petition argues. The beefed-up powers given to ISI have arrived on the heels of a high court judge's slap on the wrist over "the criminal act" of phone surveillance, which has sparked a firestorm of criticism amid concerns of misuse of powers and violation of fundamental rights. The petition filed in LHC also references a ruling from the Indian Supreme Court, declaring phone tapping a breach of constitutional rights. The petition requests the court to invalidate the notification and suspend its enforcement until a final verdict is delivered. It also calls on the government to draft rules under Section 56 of the PTA Act. While the ruling coalition has dug in its heels, staunchly defending the move to legitimise ISI's beefed-up powers, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) have come out swinging, condemning the notification that grants sweeping powers to the spy agency under the guise of national security.

Argentina see off Canada to reach Copa America final

Messi was on target as world champions Argentina turned on the style to beat Canada 2-0 on Tuesday and reach Copa America final

RUTHERFORD, United States: Lionel Messi was on target as world champions Argentina turned on the style to beat Canada 2-0 on and reach the Copa America final where they will look for a third straight major title. The defending Copa champions will face the winners of Wednesday's semifinal between Uruguay and Colombia in what will be a highly anticipated final in Miami on Sunday. The 15-times Copa champions produced their best display of the tournament in front of a capacity crowd at the

can take great credit for

their run in the tournament but Messi and company were simply a step too far. Jesse Marsch's side had progressed by hitting teams with high-energy football straight out of the gate but after an early opening for left-winger Jacob Shaffelburg, who fired wide after cutting in from the flank, the South Americans took control and never gave it up. Angel Di Maria, the veteran wide-man playing in his final tournament for his country, was seeing plenty of the ball down the right and he offered an early warning of his threat when he picked out Messi with a ball inside which the forward flashed just wife of the post. But it was Rodrigo De Paul who was to create the breakthrough in the 22nd minute, picking the ball up on the half-way line, taking a quick glance up and then

lofting the ball over the top to Julian Alvarez. The Manchester City for-

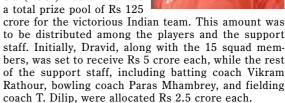
ward, recalled to the starting line-up ahead of Lautaro Martinez, delivered a deft first touch that took him away from Moises Bombito and gave him just enough room to drive the ball home. The classy triangle of Di Maria, Messi and De Paul, was a constant source of danger for Canada's back line and the former threatened a second with a chip from the right which floated over the bar. The assuredness of Argentina's build-up play reflects the confidence of coach Lionel Scaloni's team, a well-drilled unit but one that never allows their organizational solidity dominate over their creativity. Two minutes before the break, former Real Madrid winger Di Maria provided a slide-rule pass to Messi, who worked himself space

for a shot on his right-foot, but he was narrowly wide of Max Crepeau's right-hand post. Canada's American coach Marsch had plenty of work to do at the interval if he was to find a way of getting his team back on level terms and any strategy went out of the window when the world champions doubled their lead, just six minutes

after the restart. The excellent De Paul pulled the ball back from the byline to Enzo Fernandez and his side-foot shot was directed home by Messi in front of goal. For a moment Canada had hope that Messi may have been offside but the VAR review showed that defender Derek Cornelius had played him onside. The two-goal cushion established, Argentina were content to sit back and preserve their energy and invite the Canadians

Rahul Dravid rejects BCCI's bonus

NEW DELHI: Rahul Dravid, the outgoing head coach of the Indian cricket team, refused an additional Rs 2.5 crore bonus following India's T20 World Cup triumph. Dravid, known for his integrity and team-first approach, opted to ensure that the entire support staff received equal rewards for their contributions to the historic victory. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had announced



ed the board to reduce his bonus to Rs 2.5 crore, aligning his reward with that of his support staff. This selfless gesture was aimed at recognizing the collective effort that led to India's World Cup victory. The distribution of the prize money was overseen by BCCI Secretary Jay Shah and President Roger Binny, who handed over the awards during a grand victory parade in Mumbai on July 4th. Captain Rohit Sharma praised Dravid's decision and highlighted his pivotal role in the team's recent successes. Under Dravid's guidance, the team not only clinched the T20 World Cup but also secured the Asia Cup in 2023 and reached the finals in both the ODI World Cup and the World Test Championship 2021-23. - Agencies

However, sources revealed to India Today that Dravid request-

Israel orders civilians...

From Page 01 for talks trying to push through a long-elusive deal for a ceasefire and hostage release. Israel and Hamas had appeared to narrow the gaps in recent days, but obstacles remain. Strikes early Wednesday hit three houses in the Nuseirat refugee camp, killing 12 people including five children, said authorities at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, where the casualties were taken. An Associated Press reporter counted the bodies. The camp, like others around Gaza, was originally erected to house Palestinians driven from their homes during the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation. It has grown into an urban neighborhood in the decades since.

Justice Jahangiri... 'Enough chances for Babar'

From Page 01

social media campaign targeting its judges, particularly Justice Tariq Mahmood Jahangiri, with a robust institutional response. IHC on July 8 started contempt proceedings against the people allegedly running a smear campaign against IHC judge Tariq MehmoodJahangiri on social media platforms and issued notices to three journalists-Gharidah Farooqi, Ammar Solangi and Hasan Ayub. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq formed a 7-member bench comprising all IHC justices excluding Justice Jahangiri to hear the case. He said the smear campaign against judges is intolerable and questioned if the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) were unaware of it. The Islamabad advocate general told the bench that the government would take action based on the judges' response. "Are judges left to respond to such questions? Should we also hold press conferences? We are not afraid of accountability, but we will not tolerate campaigns against judges. Whoever is found responsible will not be spared and will spend their summer in Adiala Jail," responded Justice Farooq. At the start of the full court hearing, Chief Justice Aamer Farooq stated that the court had explained many times, but no one learned a lesson, adding that the contempt of court proceedings are an institutional response to the social media campaign. Since May last year, IHC judges have been facing the heat for resisting the alleged interference by executive agencies in their judicial duties.

Shahid Afridi wants real surgery in team

Ex-captain of Pakistan's national team says whatever "surgery" is needed, it must be done once and for all

KARACHI: Shahid Afridi, the former captain of Pakistan national cricket team, has said that he was unable to "comprehend" the recent removal of Wahab Riaz and Abdul Razzaq from Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) selection committee. The removal of Riaz and Abdul Razzaq comes after a disappointing performance from the national team during the T20 World Cup 2024 as the PCB management had lost confidence in the duo and their opinions had not been taken into account for some time now, according to sources. While speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Afridi, 47, broke his silence over the recent removal of the former cricketers from the selection body as part of PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi's much needed "surgery" for the body. Afridi, who is currently participating in the World Championship of Legends 2024 in England as part of Pakistan Champions, told reporters that he did not understand PCB's latest move when asked about it. He emphasised that Riaz and Abdul Razzaq are not the only members of the selection committee and there are several other people involved as well.

"I just found out that they sidelined Abdul Razzaq and Wahab Riaz," he said. "I don't understand this kind of 'surgery'." Afridi also said that whatever "surgery" is needed, it must be done once and for all. He added that whoever is brought forward now must be given ample time to improve their captaincy skills. While discussing the performance of Babar Azam, Pakistan's current T20 captain, Afridi highlighted that the 29-year-old cricketer has been given many chances to prove his captaincy skills. "As far as Babar is concerned, no captain has been given such open chances (to prove their captaincy)," Afridi told reporters, highlighting that Azam had played in several international tournaments. However, he did not seem impressed by Azam's captaincy skills despite the "incredible" opportunities he had. About the removal of Riaz, 39, and Abdul Razzaq, 44, sources stated: "Their influence was significant in the selection of the T20 World Cup squad and they showed more support to players who did not perform well." Meanwhile, Mohammad Yousuf, Asad Shafiq and Bilal Afzal are still part of the seven-member panel which also includes the captain and head coach. - Agencies

Yamal shines as Spain sink France to reach Euro final

Three-time champions Spain became the first team to win six games at a Euros

SPORTS DESK

MUNICH, Germany: Lamine Yamal, 16, became the tournament's youngest ever goalscorer as Spain came back to beat France 2-1 in Munich on Tuesday and reach the Euro 2024 final. Trailing after Randal Kolo Muani headed in a Kylian Mbappe cross in the ninth minute, Spain turned the match around in a four-minute period, scoring twice against a side who had only conceded once in five previous games in this tournament. Yamal, who turns 17 a day before Sunday's final against either the Netherlands or England in Berlin, equalized with a superb strike from outside the box, curling a long-range effort into the top corner and past the fingertips of an airborne Mike Maignan. Spain took the lead on 25 minutes, Dani Olmo expertly gathering a loose ball and firing a low shot into the net with the aid of a deflection off Jules Kounde. Masters of midfield game management, Spain shut up shop after taking the lead, frequently holding possession rather than attack on the counter, controlling the match and claiming the win. Three-time champions Spain became the first team



to win six games at a Euros and are one game away from a record-breaking fourth crown. Finalists in three of the past four major tournaments, questions will be asked of how France failed to click up front despite boasting enviable attacking riches. France had only scored three goals heading into the match, none of which were scored by a French player from open play and coach Didier Deschamps reacted, benching forward Antoine Griezmann for Ousmane Dembele. Yamal created the first chance of the match four minutes in, lofting a curling cross to an unmarked Fabian Ruiz, who headed over from point-blank range. Four minutes later, Mbappe skated down the left flank and sent in a carbon copy of Yamal's cross, but Kolo Muani's header was on target to give France the lead.

While the pre-match doubts focused on

Spain veterans Jesus Navas, 38, and Nacho, 34, who replaced suspended duo Dani Carvajal and Robin Le Normand, the younger Aymeric Laporte and Marc Cucurella were at fault for Kolo Muani's opener. France's strike seemed to take the wind out of Spain's sails but it was the youngest player on the pitch who produce a piece of sublime brilliance to level the scores. Collecting the ball well outside the box, Yamal cut inside, took one look at the goal and unleashed a perfect curling strike into the top left corner. The goal made Yamal, who already has three assists at Euro 2024, the youngest scorer in the competition's history, beating the previous record by a year and a half. Lamal's goal, 13 minutes after France's opener, ignited Spain's attack and La Roja took the lead four minutes later through Olmo. Olmo leapt acrobatically to collect a cleared cross, shed a defender and smashed goalwards, his shot taking a deflection off Kounde before bouncing in. France's best chance to force extra time fell to their captain with five minutes remaining, but Mbappe blasted well over with only goalkeeper Unai Simon to beat.

Imran formally expresses...

From Page 01

Accountability (NAB) amendments, Khan's petition argued that individuals who engaged in past corruption used laws and parliament as their shield, eroding public trust in the legal system. He emphasised that laws should serve the people, not protect specific individuals, and urged the Supreme Court to remain vigilant to the facts. In his petition, Khan specifically requested that Justice Isa refrain from hearing his cases, citing concerns over impartiality. He referenced a precedent set by a five-member larger bench headed by former Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed, which supported his stance. Khan expressed that past rulings should guide current proceedings to ensure justice is served. His appeal is part of a broader legal strategy to challenge validity of NAB amendments and uphold ac-

countability standards.

Business / World



Briefs

Commemoration of Srebrenicca genocide

BOSNIA: Today, July 11, 2024, marks the 29th commemoration of the Srebrenica Genocide, the worst atrocity on European soil since the World War II in which over eight thousand mainly Bosniak Muslim men and boys were systematically murdered just in the town of Srebrenica simply because of their identity, close to one hundred thousand people were killed across the whole country, over two million and two hundred thousand people were displaced and over thirty thousand women were raped as part of the systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing and genocide. On May 23, 2024, the United Nations General Assembly officially proclaim July 11 the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica. This United Nations resolution is further recognition of the victims and survivors and their pursuit of justice, truth and guarantees of non-recurrence. The International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica is an occasion to remember innocent victims and to contribute to the promotion of human rights and foster the personal responsibility of citizens in demosocieties.—Agencies

Establishment 'must step back' to...

From Page 01 In a previous media talk,

Imran emphasised that

the IMF cannot solve the country's issues, asserting that the solution lies in fair and transparent elections. He expressed concern that Pakistan, which once led until 1990, is now being surpassed by other nations. He blamed the elite for stashing their wealth abroad and accused the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) of "historic" rigging in the February 8 general elections. "Everyone knows the ECP conducted fraudulent elections," he accused. Referring to the judiciary, Imran mentioned that the CJP Isa is sending his party to the ECP for justice, despite knowing the commission's credibility issues Imran also questioned why their petitions on human rights and the February 8 case are not being heard in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. He criticized the trial of civilians in military courts, questioning, "In which democracy do civilians get tried in military courts?" Addressing media suppression, he claimed there are plans to curb the media. "Congress is saying that fraudulent elections took place in Pakistan," he added. In response to a journalist's question about the establishment's role, Imran said, "The establishment is running the country; the SIFC is running the country." When asked about a former cabinet member testifying against him, Imran brushed it off, saying, "I'll talk about it later; he hasn't said anything significant." On the topic of his hunger strike announcement, Imran confirmed, "l will definitely go on a hunger strike; I am waiting for some decisions." On July 4, Imran expressed his lack of confidence in the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice QaziFaez Isa, and declared his intention to go on a hunger strike in jail. Imran highlighted objections raised by his legal team regarding the judge's repeated presence, indicating a growing belief within his camp that justice may not be impartially served

Fazl stresses deeper examination of root causes of terrorism

under these circumstances.

From Page 01 Regarding the Operation Azm-e-Istehkam, Fazl said that if this operation had been the first of its kind in the country, people would have reacted differently, highlighting that people had already been displaced from

Swat to Waziristan. Fazl urged a deeper examination of the root causes of terrorism and extremism issues, emphasising that those affected by previous operations continue to face difficulties today without receiving compensation

Sayyed Nasrallah urges Muslim solidarity with Gaza

If the majority of the world remains silent about supporting Gaza and instead supports 'Israel', it does not imply that this stance is right or even morally justified: Nasrallah

News Desk

Tehran Hezbollah's Secretary General stated that the organization's unwavering decision to defend the oppressed Palestinians, including opening a support front in Lebanon, remains irreversible, despite the sacrifices endured. During an Ashura sermon on the third eve of Muharram, his eminence delved into the religious interpretation of this year's slogan, "Are We Not on the Righteous Path?" underscoring the Muslim duty to uphold righteousness, speak out against injustice, and resist oppression. Hezbollah's leader echoed the powerful words of

Imam Hussein (A.S.), addressing the prevalence of falsehood in the world: Don't you see that the truth is ignored and falsehood prevails? The situation is so dire that a believer longs to meet Allah (i.e., to die). Today, I see death as a blessing and living under tyrants as nothing but disgust and disgrace." Speaking of the courage required to take the righteous path, Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah stated, "What matters is not the majority, but the pursuit of truth, whether it aligns with the majority or the minority. If the majority of the world remains silent about supporting Gaza and instead supports 'Israel', it does not imply that this stance is right or even



morally justified." S. Nasrallah Calls Upon Muslim Nation In his speech, Sayyed Nasrallah highlighted the support fronts in Lebanon, Yemen, and Iraq, along with political backing

Macron to call on the biggest

parliamentary group to form

a government, but nothing in

the constitution obliges him

to do so. Options include a

broad coalition and a minor-

ity government, which would

pass laws in parliament on a

case by case basis, with ad

hoc agreements. Phones are

ringing constantly, political

sources have said, with some

centrists now hoping they

from Syria and Iran, painting a positive contrast to the disappointing stances of the Arab and Islamic nations toward atrocities in Gaza. "For weeks, aid has been unable to enter the Gaza Strip, exacerbating threats of famine, epidemics, and diseases. Is it reasonable for this situation to persist?" His eminence pointedly queried. "Every sane Muslim will be questioned about his or her support for Gaza. Is it believable that the Arab and Islamic nations are incapable of supporting Gaza?" Sayyed Nasrallah added. "We, Hezbollah, firmly believe we are fulfilling our duty, with martyrs falling daily-including our elite brothers and commanders. We honor

them with pride and will stead fastly continue on this path until we achieve our goal," stressed Hezbollah's leader. ing both allies and adversaries, Sayyed Nasrallah underscored that "the actions of the Islamic Resistance since October 8 are irreversible. We will persist until we achieve our goal. Despite the sacrifices of martyrs, destroyed homes, or the looming threat of war, we remain resolute in our commitment." In a direct appeal to two billion Muslims, Sayyed Nasrallah posed a poignant question, asking, "Where is Muslim money being spent today, while two million Muslims in Gaza suffer from hunger and significant resources are allocated for tanks, planes, and other military capabilities.

BD suspends

job quotas after student protests DHAKA: Bangladesh's top court on Wednesday temporar-

ily suspended quotas for coveted government jobs after thousands of students staged nationwide protests against what they call a discriminatory system, lawyers said. The quota system reserves more than half of well-paid and massively over-subscribed civil service posts, totaling hundreds of thousands of government jobs, for specific groups including children of liberation heroes. Students launched protests earlier this month, demanding a merit-based system, with demonstrations on Wednesday blocking highways and railway lines. "We will not return to classrooms until our demand is met," protest leader Rasel Ahmed of Chittagong University said. The quota system was abolished in 2018 after weeks of protests, but reinstated in June by Dhaka's High Court, sparking fury from students. The Supreme Court on Wednesday suspended that order for a month, said lawyer Shah Monjurul Hoque, who represents two students seeking to end the quota system. Hoque said that Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan had also requested that students return to class. Despite the call, student groups continued to block key highways and railway tracks, bringing traffic movement in much of the capital Dhaka and several major cities to a halt. "This (court) order is temporary. We want a permanent executive order from the government. saying that the quotas are abolished, except some quotas for the disabled and minorities," said Parvez Mosharraf, a student at Dhaka University. He was among dozens of students who laid timber logs on a railway track at Dhaka's Karwan Bazar, forcing the halt of train services connecting the capital to northern Bangladesh. The quota system reserves 30 percent of government posts for children of those who fought to win Bangladeshi independence in 1971, 10 percent for women, and 10 percent for residents of specific districts. Students said only those quotas supporting ethnic minorities and disabled people – six percent of jobs – should remain. "We don't also want the job quotas for women because women are no longer lagging behind," female student Meena Rani Das, 22, said. "Women are creating obstacles and snatching our rights."-APP

Le Pen blames Macron for French govt gridlock

Le Pen condemned pre-election deals she said kept her National Rally (RN) party from power

WEB DESK

PARIS: France's left-wing alliance and President Emmanuel Macron's centrist bloc battled to put together rival bids to form a government, as far-right leader Marine Le Pen said on Wednesday that blame for the political impasse lay squarely with Macron.

The unexpected outcome of Sunday's snap election, in which the leftist New Popular Front (NFP) benefited from a surprise surge but no group won an absolute majority, has plunged France into uncertainty, with no obvious path to a stable government.

further complicate things, leaders within each camp disagreed on who to reach out to in order to try to cobble together a deal. Internal tensions within parties also grew as members jostled for influence in rebuilding a political landscape blown apart by the snap ballot. And any government – of the left, from power. Macron, whose

Samsung union in

S. Korea declares

indefinite' strike

SEOUL: A union representing tens of thousands of work-

ers at Samsung Electronics in South Korea said it would

extend a three-day strike indefinitely in a bid to force man-

agement to negotiate. The strike is the biggest labour ac-

tion in the tech giant's history and steps up pressure on the

chipmaker's management, who last week predicted a huge

second-quarter operating profit increase. "(We) declare a

second indefinite general strike from July 10, after learn-

ing that the management has no willingness to talk," the

National Samsung Electronics Union said in a statement.

More than 5,000 members stopped working Monday for

what was meant to be a three-day strike, part of a long-run-

ning battle over pay and benefits. The move follows a one-

day walkout in June, the first such collective action at the

company, which went decades without unionisation. The

union has more than 30,000 members more than a fifth of

the company's total workforce. Samsung told AFP Wednes-

"Samsung Electronics will ensure no disruptions occur in

the production lines," a spokesperson told AFP, adding the

company "remains committed to engaging in good faith

negotiations with the union". But the union said it had con-

firmed "clear disruption in production", and added that the

longer the strike went on "the more the management will

suffer". "Eventually, they will kneel and come to the negoti-

ation table. We are confident of victory," it added in a state-

ment, urging more workers to participate. argest memo-

ry chipmaker Samsung Electronics is the world's largest

memory chipmaker and accounts for a significant chunk

of the global output of the high-end chips used in genera-

tive AI. But as semiconductor factories are highly automated

with low demand for actual manpower, it is likely the strike will

not have a major impact, Avril Wu, an analyst at Taipei-based

research group TrendForce, told AFP. "Even if the strike is

extended, the current assessment is that there will still be no

significant impact," Wu said. The first effective labour union at

Samsung Electronics was formed in 2019.-DNA

day that the strike would not affect production.



center, or a broader coalition – could quickly fall victim to a confidence vote from the opposition if it has not secured sufficient solid support. "Today, we find ourselves in a quagmire since no one is able to know from what rank the prime minister will come, or what policy will be pursued for the country," far-right leader Marine Le Pen told reporters as she arrived in parliament. Le Pen condemned pre-election deals she said kept her National Rally (RN) party

term ends in 2027, called the parliamentary ballot after his party was trounced by the far right in EU elections last month, had said it would clarify the landscape — which has not happened. "To say the least, this is not a great success for Emmanuel Macron," Le Pen quipped. Amid warnings from rating agencies, financial markets, the European Commission and France's euro zone partners are all watching closely to see whether the impasse can It would be customary for minister.

can reach a deal with the conservative The Republicans and edge the left out. "I think there is an alternative to the New Popular Front," Aurore Berge, a senior lawmaker from Macron's Renaissance group told France 2 TV. "I think the French don't want the NFP's platform to be implemented, I think they don't want tax increases." "We are the only ones who can extend (our base)," she said. Meanwhile, leftist leaders also took to the airwaves to stress that, having topped the election, they should run the government. But without a deal yet on who could be prime

Indian universities establish ties with Israeli institutions

Indian universities have engaged in over twelve meetings, workshops, and agreements with Israeli universities and weapons companies, the report revealed

NEW DELHI: Indian universities have strengthened research collaborations with Israeli academic institutions and military companies amid Western universities reconsidering their partnership with Tel-Aviv after pro-Gaza protests around the United States and Europe called for Israeli disinvestment. A Monday report by the Middle East Eye has revealed that Indian universities have recently expanded collaboration in defense, robotics, and artificial intelligence (AI), with Israeli universities suspected to be involved in the ongoing Gaza war. Ever since the International Court of Justice (ICJ) found that Israel may be committing genocide in Gaza, Indian universities have engaged in over twelve meetings, workshops, and agreements with Israeli universities and weapons companies, the report revealed. Experts suggest that these agreements may be a strategic move by Israel to tap into India's university system in order to meet its increasing demand for military equipment and technological advancements. This also allows Israel to broaden its network of partnerships, especially in light of calls for boycotts and divestments from Israeli institutions and conflicts. After Israel launched its genocidal war in Gaza on October 7, India emerged as among the first supporters of Israel's military actions in Gaza. The growing cooperation comes as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has come back to office for his third term. Under his leadership, India-Israel relations saw an unprecedented boost in trade and partnership in various spheres. Following his trip to the Palestinian occupied territories in 2017, a significant boost was seen in institutional ties. Several MoUs were also signed between different Indian and Israeli academic institutions during the Indian president's visit in 2015. The efforts to establish academic connections have been under way ever since. Israel's ongoing bilateral endeavors to enhance academic collaboration involve the advancement of studies on India and Israel as fields of study at different universities, as well as the promotion of institutional connections through collaborative research initiatives, scholarships, student enrollment, and faculty/student exchange programs. Israel's attempts to enhance academic collaboration come as the regime's ongoing brutal war on the Gaza Strip has taken a heavy toll on the territory's education sector, raising calls for divestment of any companies that were benefiting financially from the war in Gaza that began last October. "You can't destroy the entire educational system in Gaza and then expect to have normal academic exchanges," Nandini Sundar, a Delhi-based sociologist professor, told MEE. "Any university, institution or individual who partners with Israel at this time should be considered complicit in the genocide,' Sundar added. Palestinians have long contended that Israeli universities have been instrumental in the continuation of the Israeli occupation, particularly by promoting the regime's military strategies and technology. A new report reveals that an Indian conglomerate has exported Hermes drones to Israel, very similar to those extensively used in Israel's military campaign in Gaza, which have resulted in the death of over 28,300 people, including at least 12,300 children. Among the Indian universities partnering with the apartheid regime are some which have begun collaborating with Israeli military firms or Indian companies believed to have supplied arms to Israel. During March, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), a significant manufacturer of military and commercial aerospace and military systems in Israel, and a complicit in the Israeli bombardment of Gaza, entered into an agreement with IIT-Delhi, which was characterized as "a strategic partnership" between the two entities, at a time when the death toll in Gaza had surpassed 32,500.- DNA

Greek PM hails ties improvement with Türkiye

Mitsotakis noted that while some fundamental Turkish positions regarding the Eastern Mediterranean remain unchanged amid the thaw in the relations

Foreign Desk

ATHENS: Amid unconfirmed reports that he may meet President Recep Tayyip Erdo an in the United States, the Greek prime minister acknowledged that relations with Türkiye have improved significantly since last year. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, like Erdo an, is in Washington D.C. to attend a NATO summit. Speaking at a public debate with former U.S. Ambassador Daniel Speckhard held at the Council on Foreign Relations, a Washington-based think tank, the Greek leader said that after three years of turbulent bilateral relations, things have improved between the two NATO allies. Mitsotakis noted that while some fundamental Turkish positions regarding the Eastern Mediterranean remain unchanged amid the thaw in the relations, "We are cooper-

ating better in addressing irregular migration. We reached an agreement that allows Turkish citizens to travel to (some) Aegean islands through a visa facilitation scheme. These are among the positive steps."

After a long period of tensions marked by disputes over irregular migration, the Cyprus dispute, energy exploration and territorial sovereignty in the Aegean, Türkiye and Greece have been taking confidence-building steps for a fragile normalization of their relations, which moved into a new chapter with President Recep Tayvin Erdo an's landmark visit to Athens in December. Erdo an later received Mitsotakis in Türkiye. During the visit, the sides announced a friendship declaration, visa facilitation for Turkish citizens for 10 Greek islands in the northern Aegean for up to seven days and the decreased flow of irregular migrants to Greece. While

officials on both sides have expressed commitment to maintaining the positive climate, the issues are longstanding and deep-rooted, and neither side expects the process to be without turbulence, particularly in the Aegean where Turkish and Greek jets often scuffled until very recently. Earlier in January, both Ankara and Athens reached respective deals with Washington for fighter jets, raising concerns of fresh skirmishes in the region. Ankara has repeatedly warned its neighbor against entering an arms race with Türkiye, particularly on building a military presence on the disputed Aegean islands since the 1960s, in violation of postwar treaties. Greece's purchase of F-35 fighter jets from the U.S. and the upping of defense budgets are meant to counter the protection of Turkish interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. Greece says it

needs to defend the islands against a potential attack from Türkiye, but Turkish officials said continued militarization of the islands could lead to Ankara questioning their ownership. After their meeting in Ankara, Erdo an stated that there were no "unsolvable" problems between the two countries, and the two leaders hailed the state of relations while pledging to further enhance bilateral ties. "We had a constructive and positive meeting and discussed problems in Türkiye-Greece relations. We will solve problems through dialogue," Erdo an said at a joint news conference with Mitsotakis back then. Erdo an said that Ankara and Athens are committed to resolving issues via "cordial dialogue, good neighborly ties and international law" as outlined in last year's Athens Declaration on Friendly Relations and Good-Neighborliness.

Northern **India bus** crash kills

NEW DELHI: A bus crash in northern India has killed at least 18 people, including a child, in the latest deadly road accident on the country's congested highways. The collision took place early on Wednesday in Uttar Pradesh state, where the bus heading to the national capital, New Delhi, slammed into the back of a tanker carrying milk. The force of the crash threw people out of the vehicle and onto the road, reported Indian broadcaster NDTV, citing local police. Bodies were strewn on the ground along with broken glass and mangled wreckage. In addition to the 18 killed, 19 others were injured and taken to a hospital. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Aditvanath called the accident "heart-wrenching" and ordered officials to ensure those injured receive proper care. State Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak told the ANI news agency an investigation would be conducted to determine the reasons for the accident. Prime Minister Narendra Modi relayed his condolences on social media and announced state compensation for victims and their loved ones. Relatives of the deceased will receive 200,000 rupees (\$2,400) while those injured will get 50,000 rupees (\$600).**–APP**

Japan provides Ukraine with demining machines

TOKYO: Japan has provided Ukraine with large demining machines as the war in the country drags on for more than two years. "Prior to this equipment provision, initial operational training program on the large demining machine was conducted in Japan" for Ukrainian personnel, said Japan's Foreign Ministry in a statement on Wednesday. The large demining machines are still being manufactured, and further provisions are planned by the end of this year, it added. Four such machines were handed over to Ukrainian Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko by Japanese ambassador Matusuda Kuninori. Members of State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU) have been receiving training in Japan to operate the machines. "The removal of mines and unexploded ordnance is not only essential in ensuring the safety and security of residents, but is also a prerequisite for recovery and reconstruction that is indispensable for rebuilding livelihoods, agriculture, and industry," said the ministry. Over the weekend, Tokyo had announced the launch of Japan-Cambodia Landmine Initiative in Phnom Penh during the visit of Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa.-DNA

climate change hits Nepal's honey hunters

LAMJUNG, NEPAL: 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. But the skilled craft is now beset with extra challenges, many driven by the increasing effects of a heating planet. Honey hunters say shifting weather patterns and environmental threats are impacting their remote forested valleys.—APP



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Briefs

Pezeshkian to be sworn in as Iran president on July 30

TEHRAN: The swearing-in ceremony of the Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian is slated for July 30. The news was announced by MojtabaYouse-fi, a member of the Iranian Parliament's presiding board, on Wednesday.

Along with senior Iranian officials who will attend the ceremony, some foreign guests from various world countries are to participate in the important event, the member of the parliament told IRNA. Based on the planning, the ceremony will be held after the Supreme Leader formally approves the president. Pezeshkian, 69, was elected as the ninth president of Iran after the votes of the July 5 presidential runoff counted. Pezeshkian, a heart surgeon, won 16,384,403 votes while Jalili stood behind him with 13,538,179 ballots. - Agencies

NAB chief visits grave of watchdog's victim

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Lieutenant General (retd) Nazir Ahmed Butt, the chairman of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), recently visited the grave of brigadier (retd) AsadMunir. who had taken his own life several years ago. Asad, a retired brigadier known for his integrity, had pointed to harassment by NAB as the sole reason for his suicide in his note which he wrote before taking his own life, hoping to prevent others from enduring similar treatment "for the crimes they had not committed".

Three years after his death, an accountability court acquitted Asad. Last month, a representative from the Nazir's office contacted Asad's widow, Saeeda, and sought permission for his superior to visit her. She declined to meet with the NAB chairman but he insisted.

Butt had been intrigued by Asad's suicide note and, while he wanted to express his condolences to Saeeda, he also wanted to know more about his last note. In response, the family agreed to meet. Nazir told Saeeda and Asad's brother, Khalid, that the NAB was in the process of drafting Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for investigating government officers.

He also wanted to learn what Asad went through, so that it was not repeated. He was also keen to know why NAB went after Asad without a solid reason. The family was not very aware of the motives. Saeeda, who was initially reluctant to meet him, was appreciative of his gesture. "I found him to be a very nice person," she said.

ISSI welcomes Estonian delegation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised a Roundtable Discussion with the visiting Estonian delegation led by Ambassador Kristi Karelsohn, Director General of the Department of Asia, the Pacific, Middle East and Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Estonia. Mr. Vaino Reinart, Estonian Ambassador-designate to Pakistan based in Ankara, and Ms. Grete Vahter, Desk Officer for Pakistan were also part of the Delegation. The discussion focused on a range of geopolitical and security issues impacting both regions. In his welcome remarks, Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the extremely friendly and cordial relations between Pakistan and Estonia, recent high-level bilateral exchanges, and the growing trajectory of mutual cooperation across various fields.

NATO marks 75th anniversary

'Ukraine can and will stop Putin,' says Joe Biden

Kicking off three days of events for the 32-nation alliance with a celebration Tuesday evening, Biden announced a new air defense system for Kyiv



FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: As NATO leaders gather for their 75th anniversary in Washington, they aim to increase support for Ukraine amid escalating Russian attacks and growing political uncertainties in the West. US President Joe Biden announced a new air defense system for Kyiv and emphasized unity against Russian aggression, while Ukrainian President VolodymyrZelensky urged for further assistance to defeat Russia. NATO leaders meet Wednesday for their 75th anniversary, seeking ways to ramp up support for Ukraine as deadly Russian strikes and political uncertainties

in the West stir new concerns. With the pomp of a summit in Washington, President Joe Biden is aiming to rally the West and also reassure US voters amid intense pre-election scrutiny on whether at 81 - six years older than the alliance - he remains fit for the job. Kicking off three days of events for the 32-nation alliance with a celebration Tuesday evening, Biden announced a new air defense system for Kyiv and urged unity against Russian President Vladimir Putin, who launched the Ukraine invasion in 2022. "Make no mistake. Ukraine can - and will - stop Putin," Biden said forcefully to applause. On the eve of the summit, Russia fired a barrage of missiles on Ukraine, killing dozens, including in Kyiv where a children's

hospital was reduced to debris. Biden has invited Ukrainian President VolodymyrZelensky to the summit as well as the leaders of four key Pacific partners - Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand - as he seeks to increase NATO's role in managing a rising China. But the US president himself is facing a tough election challenge from Donald Trump, who has loudly questioned the utility of NATO and mused on forcing a peace deal in which Ukraine would surrender land to Russia. Zelensky in Washington thanked Ukraine's backers for the promise of new air defenses - and urged the United States and others to go further to help defeat Russia. NATO's outgoing secretary general, Jens

US Congress forced a delay of months in approving new weapons for Ukraine. "Ukraine has shown remarkable courage and NATO allies have provided unprecedented support. But let's be honest - not even our support for Ukraine has been a given," Stoltenberg said. "Remember - the biggest cost and the greatest risk will be if Russia wins in Ukraine. We cannot let that happen." Other leaders attending the summit include Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, one of Putin's closest partners in the West, who ahead of Washington went to Ukraine, Russia and China on a self-described peace mission criticized by Brussels and Washington. Another Asian partner of the US, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, met Putin on the eve of the NATO summit and is not part of the Washington talks. Leaders on Wednesday will formally convene the alliance's North Atlantic Council inside downtown Washington's convention center. Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Llovd Austin will later welcome their counterparts for gala dinners around the Washington area, which is in the throes of a searing heat wave. One new NATO leader is British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who is visiting days after taking office in a landslide victory by his Labour Party. He will meet both Biden and Zelensky and is expected to confirm Britain's strong support for Ukraine. Ukraine has been seeking firm assurances that it will one day join NATO, which considers an attack on any member an attack on all. Ukraine's membership enjoys wide backing from Baltic and Eastern European nations still haunt-

question marks, after Trump's allies in the

NATO's outgoing secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg of Norway, acknowledged the Stace Syria and Saudi Arabia resume Arabia resume regular flights and freedoms regular flights and regular flights

DAMASCUS: Regular flights between the Syrian capital of Damascus and Saudi Arabia resumed Wednesday for the first time in more than a decade as part of a thaw in relations between the countries, Syrian state media reported. Syria and Saudi Arabia had severed ties in 2012 over President Bashar Assad's brutal crackdown on anti-government protesters at the start of the civil war. But most Arab countries have restored diplomatic ties with Damascus, which was readmitted to the 22-member Arab League I ast year. Syria's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Ayman Soussan, said the resumption of flights was "an additional step in the process of development in relations between the two brotherly countries," state news agency SANA reported. In May, Syrian pilgrims traveled on a direct flight to Saudi Arabia for the annual Islamic Hajj pilgrimage, but Wednesday's Syrian Airlines flight to Riyadh marked the return of regular commercial flights. Syria's 13-year civil war is now largely frozen, with the central government in Damascus having reasserted control over most of the territory, while much of the northwest is still controlled by a patchwork of opposition groups and northeast by Kurdish forces. - Agencies

Yemeni forces strike vessels linked to US, Israel

SANA'A: The spokesman for the Yemeni Armed Forces says the country's naval forces and missile units have carried out three operations against vessels linked to the US and Israel off the nation's coast, in solidarity with Palestinians amid the ongoing Israeli onslaught on Gaza.

Speaking at a televised press briefing broadcast live from the Yemeni capital city of Sana'a on Tuesday night, Brigadier General Yahya Saree said the country's forces targeted the American Maersk Sentosa container ship in the Arabian Sea with several ballistic and winged missiles.

Sarea added that Yemeni naval units targeted the Marathopolis ship in the Arabian Sea, and the MSC Patnaree ship in the Gulf of Aden with a number of drones. He stressed that the three operations achieved their goals successfully, and the hits were direct and accurate.

Saree noted that his country's forces will continue their anti-Israel operations until a permanent ceasefire is enforced in Gaza, and all restrictions on supplies of humanitarian aid for its residents are lifted. – **Agencies**

Rs10bn approved for CM Punjab's Kisan Card

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Wednesday approved Rs 10 billion for the Chief Minister Punjab's Kisan Card. In the meeting of the Provincial Development Working Party, 23 schemes were approved. The funds were approved in the fourth meeting of the financial year 2024-25. A total of Rs77 billion were approved for 23 schemes in the agriculture and roads sectors.

Planning and Development Board Chairman Barrister Nabil Awan presided over the meeting. Rs 1.25 billion were approved for the establishment of model agriculture malls in Punjab, and Rs67 billions were approved for 21 development schemes of roads sector in various districts of Punjab.

South Sudan peace talks face collapse over a new security law

Web Desk

JUBA, South Sudan: South Sudan peace talks that almost reached completion faced a stumbling block with opposition groups demanding a newly passed bill allowing the detention of people without an arrest warrant scratched out in order to sign a proposed agreement. Kenya has been hosting the high-level meetings since May between government representatives and rebel opposition groups who were not part of a 2018 agreement that ended a five-year civil war, leaving about 400,000 people dead and millions displaced. Despite the agreement, violence often erupted in the country of 9 million. Pagan AmumOkiech, negotiating on behalf of the South Sudan Opposition Movement Alliance, told the Associated Press Tuesday night that it would be "meaningless to sign any agreement if the draconian National Security Act is signed into law by the president." Last week, parliament voted in favor of the 2015 bill and President SalvaKiir will have to approve it within 30 days for it to become a law. This comes ahead of the country's first-ever election on Dec. 22.

of South Sudanese citizens, it eliminates civic and political space," Amum said. "There can be no peace or democracy under such a law." Attending the peace talks is the executive director of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, a non-profit that engages university students and fresh graduates. Edmund Yakani criticized the security bill and said it "created a negative spirit for the negotiations." Human Rights Watch has also called on Kiir to reject the controversial bill saying that it will further undermine human rights and strengthen national security agencies that have a history of longstanding rights abuses. The talks - dubbed Tumaini, Swahili for hope - have resulted in a draft agreement proposing to extend the country's transitional period and postpone the coming election to allow finishing up the country's constitution and electoral laws, as well as set up constituency borders and a unified security force as proposed in the 2018 peace talks. Some Western envoys also recommend delaying the poll "to guarantee a free and fair election." Kiir has been adamant about having the election in December and called out the envoys.

"This law violates the fundamental rights and freedoms

At least 15 dead as jeep plunges into Neelum River Jeep carrying 17

people tumbles down onto bank of Neelum River as rescue teams transport bodies to hospitals

MUZAFFARABAD: At least 15

people lost their lives and two were injured when a passenger jeep tumbled down from the Leswa Bypass Road near Devlian village onto the bank of the Neelum River on Wednesday while they were travelling from LawatBala to Muzaffarabad, AJK. Though police and rescue teams rushed to the accident site, their efforts faced certain difficulties due to the occurrence of rain, according to Rescue 1122. They added that the bodies were sent to the District Headquarters Hospital, whereas, the wounded passengers were taken to the Muzaffarabad Combined Military Hospital. Additionally, a woman cutting grass and two children were also injured at the scene. They were also admitted to the hospital. Notably, at least 17 passengers were travelling in the jeep including the driver; out of which six men, four women, and three children could not survive the accident. Additionally, two other passengers were announced dead when they reached the hospital, as per the rescue officials. Apart from the police and rescue teams, local people and youth also volunteered and took part in the rescue efforts. As the possible causes behind the accident are still being determined, Muzaffarabad Deputy Commissioner Nadeem Ahmed Janjua told Geo News: "Apparently, there

is no obvious cause for the car

accident. - Agencies

