



# Islamabad POST

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**Ursula re-elected EU president by large majority**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Govt can declare a party banned, says Rana sana**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Nadal leaves door open to US Open**

Detailed News On Page-06



## Plan to slap ban on PTI

# Govt defends ad hoc judges appointment

Azam Nazeer Tarar says issue of invoking Article 6 against PTI leaders could be brought into parliament for debate

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar has put his weight behind the recent government's plan to impose a ban on the Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the Judicial Commission of Pakistan's (JCP) proposal to appoint retired jurists in the Supreme Court as ad hoc judges, saying that the country's Constitution allows such appointments. Expressing his opinion in a statement on Thursday, the federal minister defended the JCP's proposal, saying the ad hoc judges should be appointed. The issue of invoking Article 6 against the Imran Khan-founded party's leaders could be brought in the Parliament House for a debate by lawmakers, he added. "There is a genuine case of Article 6 against the PTI leaders as the Constitution was violated by dissolving the [National] Assembly in the presence of a no-confidence motion." The decision to ban the PTI, the law minister said, was not taken last year only to maintain the political environment. Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa had nominated four judges — Justice (retd) Mushir Alam, Justice (retd) Maqbool Baqir, Justice (retd) Mazhar Alam Miankhel, and Justice (retd) Sardar Tariq Masood — as ad hoc judges in the Supreme Court. However, two judges, Justice Mushir and Justice Baqir, have so far declined the offer. However, he mentioned that the appointment of ad hoc judges to the apex court is in line with the law and that criticism is "baseless". Meanwhile, Justice (retd) Alam's letter addressed to the JCP chairman, states: "After careful deliberation, under present circumstances, it is with a heavy heart that I regret to inform you that I am unable to accept this esteemed appointment." The JCP, chaired by CJP Isa, is set to meet tomorrow (Friday) to consider the appointment of four retired apex court judges, according to the official note which describes the high pendency of cases as the reason for the appointment of ad hoc judges. However, the PTI termed the move as "dishonesty," as the party's chairman Gohar Ali Khan, in a statement on X on July 16 said: "There is a genuine apprehension that the move is aimed at PTI's reserved seats judgement and its standing as a party." Earlier today, PTI Secretary-General Omar Ayub Khan, in conversation with journalists in Islamabad, also said that hiring three or four judges won't address the issue of thousands of pending cases. "The motive behind the move is to appoint 'like-minded' judges to the Supreme Court. Political workers and the lawyers' fraternity reject the move," Ayub, the Leader of the Opposition in

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## Another retired judge declines ad hoc appointment

Justice (r) Maqbool Baqar turns down offer after severe criticism; govt defends move to appoint ad hoc judges

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Justice (retired) Maqbool Baqar on Thursday declined an offer to serve as an ad hoc judge of the Supreme Court, becoming the second judge to refuse the appointment following criticism. Days before his announcement, retired Supreme Court judge Mushir Alam had turned down the offer to work as an ad hoc judge for a three-year term. The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP), headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, is scheduled to meet on Friday to consider the appointment of four retired apex court judges. While the government strongly believes the need exists for additional judges to clear pending cases, the main opposition party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has termed the move as "dishonesty". Talking to Geo News, Justice (retired) Baqar said that he was deciding against becoming an ad hoc judge due to "personal reasons". However, he mentioned that the appointment of ad hoc judges to the apex court is in line with the law and that criticism is "baseless". Backing CJP Isa's decision, Baqar, who also served as the caretaker chief minister of Sindh, said that it was "crucial" to appoint ad hoc

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China and COAS General Asim Munir exchange pleasantries on the occasion of the 97th Anniversary of the founding of People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China hosted at GHQ. — DNA

## PLA's 97th founding anniversary

# Pakistan-China relations are exceptional: COAS

"Pakistani military has always been at the forefront of countering terrorism," says Chinese envoy

STAFF REPORT / DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) said Pakistan-China relations are exceptional and have always weathered the vicissitudes of strategic environment with mutual trust and unwavering belief in each other's support. Army Chief expressed it at the 97th Anniversary of the founding of People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China hosted at GHQ on Thursday. Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong was the Chief Guest on the occasion. Major General Wang Zhong,

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## Atta Tarar grieved over demise of 'autistic Palestinian'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar on Thursday joined the global condemnation call made to disapprove demise of Mohammed Bhar, a 24-year-old Palestinian with Down syndrome and

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## Briefs

**Azam records statement in 190m pound case**

Former PM advisor Shahzad Akbar brought a signed note for the cabinet's approval

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Imran Khan's principal secretary Azam Khan has submitted his statement to the court in the 190 million pound reference. According to the statement, he served as principal secretary to the prime minister from August 2018 to April 2022. He said that the PM's advisor Shahzad Akbar brought a signed note for the cabinet's approval. According to the statement, Shahzad Akbar said that the then PM had instructed to present this secret deed to the cabinet for approval.

## Mahathir hospitalised

Mahathir has history of heart problems and spent 53 days in hospital for unspecified infection earlier this year

FOREIGN DESK

KUALA LUMPUR: Former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad has been hospitalised in the country's capital city of Kuala Lumpur, Malay Mail reported. The 99-year-old ex-PM was admitted at the National Heart Institute (IHN) for coughing since July 15 and will remain in hospital for a few days, his spokesman, Sufi Yusoff said Thursday, without providing further details on his condition. Mahathir, who has been hospitalised multiple times and has a history of heart problems. He had also suffered from COVID-19 previously and was hospitalised for an unspecified infection earlier this year for 53 days.

## Watchdog warns US aid failures may have benefited militants

US remains largest aid donor to war-torn country; provided more than \$17.9 billion in aid since 2021 withdrawal

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Amid already existing concerns of arms and ammunition left behind in the United States' hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan being used by militants, a US watchdog has warned that Washington's aid might be benefiting terrorists in the war-torn country. A report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) said that two US State Department bureaus could not prove compliance with internal policies for vetting aid groups in Afghanistan that received \$293 million in funds. The revelation comes as the US remains the largest aid donor to impoverished Afghanistan nearly three years after the Taliban seized Kabul as the last US troops completed a chaotic pullout following 20 years of war. Ever since the its withdrawal back in August 2021, the country has provided more than \$17.9 billion in assistance to Afghanistan. "It is critical that the State knows who is actually benefiting from this assistance in order to prevent the aid from

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## Troops on streets as Bangladeshi students clash with police

AGENCIES

DHAKA: Mobile internet services were down, businesses closed, and public transportation was disrupted across Bangladeshi cities on Thursday, as authorities ordered troops on to the streets amid deadly clashes with protesting students. University students have been rallying to demand the removal of government employment quotas after the High Court reinstated a rule that reserves the bulk of jobs for descendants of those who fought in the country's 1971 liberation war. Under the quota system, 56 percent of public service jobs are reserved for

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## PM, President extend wishes for Biden's recovery

Wishing President Biden swift and complete recovery from Covid, says premier

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Asif Ali Zardari have extended their good wishes to United States (US) President Joe Biden following his positive Covid-19 diagnosis. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took to his official timeline to wish President Biden a swift and complete recovery, stating, "Wishing President Biden swift and complete recovery from Covid. Good wishes." In a separate statement, President Asif Ali Zardari conveyed his sincere hopes for President Biden's health and well-being. The President's House issued a statement expressing President Zardari's sentiments

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# PTI to move SJC against appointment of ad hoc judges

PTI stalwarts take aim at CJP for appointing ad-hoc judges

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar said on Thursday that banning the PTI would result in the ouster of this government. Speaking to media alongside PTI leaders Omar Ayub Khan, Shibli Faraz and Asad Qaiser after attending joint parliamentary party meeting of the PTI and Sunni-Itehad Council (SIC), the PTI chief said that they would move the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) against appointment of ad-hoc judges in the apex court. He said that the PTI was a party of 70% Pakistanis as it is present in every nook and corner of the country, adding that it should not be meted out a treatment like this at all forums. Slamming the decision of appointment of ad-hoc judges in the apex court, the PTI chief said that simultaneous appointment of four ad-hoc judges was tantamount to dent the freedom of judiciary. "This decision is based on mala fide intentions. This is not the time to take such decisions rather a time for listening to SC verdicts. We demand the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to immediately issue our notifications," he emphasised. Meanwhile, Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan has stated that no one could ban Pakistan

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## PPP affirms support for govt amid PTI ban

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The PPP secretary general on Thursday said that the party has decided to "stand with the federal cabinet's decisions", days after a few senior party members decried the government's announcement to ban the PTI. Earlier this week, the federal government announced that it had decided to ban the party and seek Article 6 proceedings against its founder Imran Khan, ex-president Dr Arif Alvi, and former National Assembly (NA) deputy speaker Qasim Suri. The move appeared to be an attempt to prevent the PTI from becoming the single largest party in the NA as the announcement was made on the heels of relief given to the party by the top court in the case of the reserved seats as well as to the party chief in the Iddat case. The announcement attracted flak from across the political spectrum, with stakeholders from

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# Speakers highlight Mandela's legacy of hope, determination

He further highlighted that Nelson Mandela was given Pakistan's highest civilian award, "Nishan-e-Pakistan," in 1992

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : The Centre for Afghanistan Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized an event to commemorate Nelson Mandela International Day. The event was moderated by Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA. The speakers on the occasion included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Mr. Philip Riley, Acting High Commissioner of South Africa to Pakistan; Mr. Aftab Hassan Khan, High Commissioner of Pakistan to South Africa; and Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG, ISSI. In his remarks, Ambassador Sohail

and emphasized the importance of aligning mutual endeavours with his vision of Pakistan-South Africa relations. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood recalled Mandela's admiration for Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah's constitutional struggle against British colonial rule after reading Stanley Wolpert's book during his imprisonment days, and his vow to himself to visit Pakistan as the first country after getting freed to pay homage to Jinnah. He highlighted Mandela's two visits to Pakistan in 1992 and 1999 including his visit to the ISSI on 3 October 1992, affirming the strong bonds between Pakistan and South Africa. He further highlighted that Nelson Mandela was given Pakistan's highest civilian award, "Nishan-e-Pakistan," in 1992, while he addressed the Joint Session

Mahmood recalled that Mandela also raised his voice for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute and in support of the Palestinian cause. He emphasized that Mr. Mandela's life and work serve as a beacon of hope and a reminder of the power of determination and the impact of individual efforts on society. As we celebrate Nelson Mandela International Day, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood urged everyone to honour his memory by continuing to strive for a better world characterized by equality, justice, and the dignity of all human beings. Ms. Amina Khan emphasized that amidst global inequality, racism, and conflicts like Gaza, Mandela's life demonstrates the need to raise voice against injustice and embrace forgiveness. His words, "To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others," guide us toward freedom, justice, and respect for all. She highlighted Mandela's appreciation for Pakistan's support during apartheid and acknowledged Pakistan's resilience and commitment to peace and development, reflecting Mandela's teachings in promoting equality and justice. . Phillip Riley stated, "Nelson Mandela International Day 2024, celebrated under the theme: 'Combating poverty and inequality is in our hands,' unites millions in the spirit of 'Ubuntu,' embracing human dignity and unity in diversity." He highlighted Mandela's resilience and commitment to justice despite nearly three decades of imprisonment. As South Africa's first black President, Mandela envisioned a 'Rainbow Nation' where all could pursue their aspirations. Riley emphasized the need to combat poverty and inequality, especially in places like Palestine, calling for an end to genocide and justice for the responsible.



Mahmood described Nelson Mandela as one of the most iconic figures of our times, whose epic struggle against apartheid and relentless efforts for equality, justice, and peace inspire many. He highlighted Mandela's special affinity for Pakistan

of Parliament in 1999. During the address, Mandela expressed "great appreciation to the Government and people of Pakistan for their enduring and unfaltering support for the ideal of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist South Africa." Ambassador Sohail



FAISALABAD: Labourers packing freshly harvested maize into sacks for transport to factories and market in the city.—APP

## Azerbaijan, Pakistan join hands to beautify capital

DNA

ISLAMABAD : In a landmark initiative to enhance the beauty of the Federal Capital, Chairman Horticulture Experts Team of Azerbaijan recently met with CDA Chairman, Mohammad Ali Randhawa, to kick-start the implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Baku and Islamabad. Under this collaboration, horticulture experts from Azerbaijan will initially focus on renovating and landscaping four key locations including Srinagar Highway, Shakar Pariian, Saidpur Village, and Melody Food Park. This effort is part of a larger plan by the CDA's environment teams, which are already carrying out landscaping work in various other areas of the city. Randhawa, emphasized the urgency of the project, directing that work on the Islamabad beautification plan should commence immediately. He stressed that horticulture work should be conducted simultaneously at all sites across the city to ensure a cohesive and swift transformation. In addition to the landscaping efforts, the Engineering Wing of Baku will provide expert technical advice and support, enhancing the project's overall efficiency and effectiveness. Azerbaijan will also gift various horticulture tools and machinery to Pakistan, significantly boosting the local capability for such endeavours. Moreover, the horticulture experts from Baku will establish a nursery in Islamabad, further contributing to the city's green initiatives. Chairman Randhawa highlighted the importance of setting clear timelines for the renovation of all targeted areas, ensuring that the project proceeds smoothly and punctually.

## Rubina urges int'l skill training program

Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized that this initiative aims to facilitate the poverty graduation of beneficiary families, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to the national economy

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD : Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid has underscored the importance of introducing a quality, international-standard skill training programme for BISP's beneficiaries and their family members. During a meeting with a delegation from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) led by Sofia Shakil, Director of Human and Social Development, Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized that this initiative aims to facilitate the poverty graduation of beneficiary families, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to the national economy. The meeting, held at the BISP Head-

quarters on Thursday, included notable participants such as Co-Mission Leader/Principal Social Protection Specialist, Xin Long and Senior Social Protection Officer, Omer Bin Zia. Senator Rubina Khalid also highlighted the critical need for human resource development, emphasizing the skills and certifications that are in high demand internationally, such as healthcare and hospitality management. "By equipping our beneficiaries with these skills, we aim to open up employment opportunities abroad, thereby enhancing their socio-economic prospects," she stated. Sofia Shakil acknowledged the significance of skill development, praising BISP's dynamic and institutionalized mechanisms. She expressed ADB's commitment to expanding its support on the supply side and looked forward to enhancing collaboration with BISP on education, health and nutrition particularly at the provincial level. Earlier, the ADB's fact-finding mission also met with Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmad, to discuss the modalities for additional financing of the Integrated Social Protection Programme. Principal Public Sector Specialist, Laisiasa Toru gave a detailed briefing on the programme. Secretary BISP emphasized the importance of utilizing the BISP's National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) database and expansion of the Adolescent Girls' Programme.

## AIOU launches programs for skilled workforce

ISLAMABAD : Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice Chancellor Allama Iqbal Open University has instructed all the four faculties of the university to introduce programs that produce a skilled workforce in line with market demands, aiming to secure honourable employment for students upon graduation. According to the AIOU, this directive aligns with his vision and mission to modernize the university's educational programs and introduce job-oriented programs. In response to these instructions, the Faculty of Sciences has introduced new programs for the Autumn Semester 2024 admissions, including BSc (Honors) Agriculture, BS Physics (with a Data Science minor), BS Health and Physical Education, and BS Information Technology.—APP

## IGP Sindh focuses on police hospital upgrades

The Sindh Police chief emphasized that police hospitals and dispensaries should be upgraded and equipped with better facilities for first aid, medical advice, and medicines

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI :Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Ghulam Nabi Memon, chaired a review meeting to discuss the improvement and upgrading of facilities in Sindh Police hospitals and dispensaries. During the meeting, detailed briefings were provided by DIGP Hyderabad, SSP Sukkur, and the Medical Superintendent of Police Hospital Karachi on the current status of medical facilities and medicines available in these hospitals.

It was reported that the Karachi Police Hospital serves 600 patients daily, while the Hyderabad Police Hospital serves over 250 patients daily. The IGP Sindh directed that steps be taken to further enhance outpatient department (OPD) facilities in police hospitals. He announced that, soon, police personnel and their families would be able to access indoor treatment facilities up to Rs one million through a health insurance scheme. The Sindh Police chief emphasized that police hospitals and dispensaries should be

upgraded and equipped with better facilities for first aid, medical advice, and medicines. He also instructed that a survey be conducted to identify police personnel suffering from blood pressure and diabetes, and that a three-month supply of medication be provided to these patients. The meeting was attended by the Citizens Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) Chief, Additional IGP Welfare, DIGPs from various departments, and other police officers. DIGP Hyderabad and SSP Sukkur participated via video link.

## Pak's engineers' performance excellent despite limited resources

Funds lapse for development projects due to delayed release near the end of the financial year is a critical issue that requires comprehensive reforms

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



Pakistan engineers are renowned worldwide for their exceptional performance despite limited resources. A significant challenge for engineers in Pakistan is the lack of adequate resources. Executive Engineers often have to work with vehicles in poor condition, and Sub Divisional Officers (SDOs) and Sub Engineers frequently lack vehicles altogether. This hampers their ability to visit sites regularly to ensure the quality and progress of development projects. Insufficient provision of fuel and maintenance funds for the vehicles they do have exacerbates the problem. Financial constraints are another major hurdle. Funds are seldom released as per the agreements for the construction and completion of development projects. This delay in funding leads to projects taking twice as long to complete, which in turn inflates costs and reduces the efficiency of resource

use. The lack of timely release of funds disrupts project schedules and undermines the morale of the engineers working under these conditions. A critical issue affecting the execution of development projects is the government's decision to entrust project supervision to commissioners and deputy commissioners. These officials, being non-technical persons, lack the necessary expertise to oversee technical projects effectively. The supervision of development projects should be the purview of technical experts who understand the intricacies of construction and development work. Assigning this responsibility to non-technical personnel results in inefficiencies and a wastage of government resources. Political interference in the transfers and postings of engineers creates additional hurdles. Such interference disrupts the continuity of projects and often leads to the placement of engineers in roles for which they are not best suited. This not only hinders the progress of ongoing projects but also demotivates engineers who are committed to their professional responsibilities. The hiring of consultants for development projects is often seen as a futile exercise. Engineers employed by consulting firms frequently lack field experience and do not possess the necessary skills to prepare project documents effectively. This results in poorly managed projects and increased costs, as the money spent on consultants adds an extra burden on the national exchequer without delivering commensurate benefits. The role of secretaries in construction departments is crucial. Currently, these positions

are often filled by members of the DMG (District Management Group) who do not have the technical background needed for such roles. They spend significant time understanding the department's functions, and just as they begin to gain some proficiency, they are transferred to another department. Promoting Chief Engineers to the role of Secretaries in Construction Departments could solve many of these problems. These professionals possess the technical knowledge and experience required to manage and improve the quality of development projects effectively. Engineers often face blackmail from individuals who make false applications against development projects. These false claims, encouraged by investigative departments, cause considerable stress and distraction for engineers. Implementing strict legal measures against false claimants and demanding solid proof for allegations can help mitigate this issue. This would allow engineers to focus more on their work without the constant fear of baseless accusations. Introducing project allowances in all development projects could significantly improve the situation. Such allowances would provide engineers with the financial support needed to execute projects more comfortably and efficiently. By addressing their financial concerns, engineers can be more focused and motivated to deliver high-quality work. Rulers and policymakers who seek votes based on promises of development projects must take an active interest in resolving the challenges faced by engineers. Their support is crucial in implementing the necessary reforms and ensuring that engineers have

the resources and conditions needed to perform their duties effectively. Addressing these issues would not only improve the execution of development projects but also contribute to the overall development and progress of the country. Funds for development projects are often released towards the end of the financial year. This late release provides insufficient time for the necessary processes, such as tendering and initiation of project execution, leading to the lapsing of these funds. The tendering process for development projects is typically lengthy, involving various steps such as advertisement, bid submission, evaluation, and awarding of contracts. Following this, the actual execution of the project involves mobilizing resources, obtaining necessary permits, and starting the work. These steps collectively require significant time, often more than the remaining period before the financial year ends. Executive Engineers face legal challenges if they attempt to expedite the process by making advance payments. Such actions can be scrutinized as financial irregularities, leading to legal and administrative complications for the officials involved. This is not a one-time problem but a recurring issue. Each year, funds allocated to construction and development departments across the country lapse due to the aforementioned reasons. The most straightforward solution is to ensure the timely release of funds. By disbursing funds well before the end of the financial year, there is ample time for the entire process from tendering to execution, reducing the risk of lapsing funds.

## KP govt to take action against illegal societies

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Local Government Arshad Ayub Khan Thursday said that heavy fines will be imposed on illegal housing societies and notices will be issued to them, if they still do not register themselves, then such societies will be sealed. He expressed these views while presiding over the meeting, Secretary Local Government Dawood Khan was also present. Speaking on the occasion, the provincial minister directed for framing a comprehensive policy for the regularization of illegal housing societies, NOC and other legal requirements should be fulfilled, otherwise such housing societies should be sealed.

## Training for excellence of Anti-Terrorism Courts started

PESHAWAR, A three-day specialized training for excellence of Anti-Terrorism Courts commenced at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy on Thursday. 26 participants including Judges of Anti-Terrorism Courts, District and Sessions Judges, Prosecutors, Police Officers, Investigators and other stakeholders connected with the performance of Anti-Terrorism Courts are participating in the training program. Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim, Chief Justice Peshawar High Court/Chairman BoG, graced the inaugural ceremony as the chief guest. — DNA

## Court Notice

کوٹہ نوٹس  
بعد ازاں جناب محمد عمران اکرم صاحب سول جج راولپنڈی دہلی استغراق وراثت نامہ عنوان مقدمہ سید زید زبیر لیاقت محمود ملک ساکن مکان نمبر ZA-272 جی نمبر 39 محلہ نئی آبادی ڈھوک سکال راولپنڈی نام عوام الناس ہر گاہ مقدمہ عنوان بالا میں بذریعہ اخبار شہرہ آفاق ان اس کو مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اگر کسی کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ اصالتاً دکان نمبر 19 بجلائی 2024ء بوقت 8 بجے صبح حاضر عدالت آویں ورنہ کارروائی حسب ضابطہ میں لائی جائے گی

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(TENDER NO. IESCO/PMU/CIVIL/NCB-182/2024-25)  
1. IESCO invites sealed bids from the contractors Registered with Pakistan Engineering Council and renewed for the year 2023-24 along with up-to-date registration in Provincial Revenue Authority for the purpose of Sales Tax on services & Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) (whichever is applicable) on National Competitive Bidding (NCB) basis under Single Stage - Single Envelope (SSSE) Bidding Procedure in accordance with Provisions of PPRR Rules-2004 amended up to date.  
CONSTRUCTION OF 01 NO. LINE BAY AND EXTENSION OF SWITCH YARD AT 132 KV GRID STATION TALAGANG FOR SECOND CIRCUIT CHAKWAL TALAGANG INCLUDED IN IESCO 7TH STG PROJECT UNDER IESCO OWN RESOURCES (ESTIMATED COST = PKR. 9,480,538/-)  
ELIGIBILITY:  
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b. The bidder/JV must have to demonstrate at least five years' experience in the field of construction as per registration categories of PEC.  
c. A Bidder/JV must be a natural person, private entity, or government-owned enterprise or any combination who is active tax payer.  
d. The bidder/JV shall have to furnish income tax returns for last three years duly verified by FBR.  
e. Bidder / JV must demonstrate at least two (02) No. of contracts that have been successfully completed within last ten (10) years similar to the proposed work. The aggregate value of Contract Agreements / Work Orders will be equal to Rs. 09 Million. However, none of the work order should be less than 30% of Rs. 09 Million. For the purpose, the bidder/JV shall provide relevant Work Order / Contract Agreement & Completion Certificates etc. The Bidder(s) /JV (s) must also demonstrate satisfactory performance of previous completed works.  
f. The Bidder/JV shall demonstrate at least the following financial criteria for last three (03) years duly verified from audited financial statements from reputable chartered accountancy firms.  
Description Million Rs.  
Average Annual Turn Over (AATO) 58  
Financial Resources/Cash Flow 5  
Terms & Conditions  
3. The completion period of the project is 90 days.  
4. National Competitive Bidding (NCB) will be conducted in accordance with Single-Stage, Single-Envelope (SSSE) method.  
5. A complete set of bidding document may be purchased by the interested bidder (s) on submission of a written application to the office of Chief Engineer (Development) IESCO, on any working day during office hours upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Rs. 5,000/- (Rupees Five Thousand only).  
6. The Bidding document (s) will be issued to the authorized representative holding the Authority letter of the firm (s).  
7. All the bids must accompany Rs. 285,000/- as Bid Security in the shape of Bank Guarantee/CDR/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank for this tender in favor of Chief Engineer (Development) IESCO, Islamabad. Bid security shall be valid for 28 days beyond bid validity and bid shall be valid for 90 days.  
8. Bid must be delivered to Chief Engineer (Development) IESCO Street No. 40, Sector G-7/4, Islamabad on or before 06.08.2024 at 11:00 Hours and Bids will be opened at 11:30 Hours in the office of Chief Engineer (Development) IESCO Headquarters Street No. 40, Sector G-7/4 Islamabad on the same date in the presence of participants or their authorized representative(s) who choose to attend (bearing Authority letters).  
9. No conditional bids or bids received through email shall be accepted.  
10. This advertisement is also available on Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) www.ppra.org.pk & IESCO www.iesco.com.pk websites.  
11. IESCO reserves the right to reject the bids as per Rule-33 (1) of PPRARules-2004 (amended to date)  
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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### JULY

July 01/Japan  
Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore  
Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada  
National Day

July 01/Somalia  
Independence Day

July 04/USA  
Independence Day

July 05/Algeria  
Independence Day

July 09/Argentina  
Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia  
Revolution Day

July 14/France  
National Day

July 15/Brunei  
Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium  
National Day

July 20/TRNC  
Independence Day

July 23/Egypt  
National Day

July 26/Cuba  
National Day

July 26/Liberia  
National Day

July 30/Morocco  
National Day

## Hotels & Restaurants



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Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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# Accord signed to boost trade between Pak, Romania

Mr. Eduard Preda, Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Romania, and Sohail Shamim Firpo, Chairman of Pakistan Romania Business Council (PRBC), signed the protocol

DNA

ISLAMABAD: - The Pakistan Romania Business Council (PRBC) and the Embassy of Romania have taken steps towards enhancing and strengthening bilateral relations. According to details, the Pakistan Romania Business Council and the Embassy of Romania to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have signed a protocol agreement to enhance economic cooperation and bilateral trade. This agreement recognizes PRBC's outstanding services in promoting bilateral trade since 2011 and acknowledges the recent expansion of PRBC through the formation of its North Chapter, led by Ahmad Ikram Lone as President. Atif Farooqi, who has shown 24 years of dedication to promoting trade relations between Pakistan and Romania, has been appointed as the sole point of contact between PRBC and the Embassy of Romania.

Mr. Eduard Preda, Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Romania, and Sohail Shamim Firpo, Chairman of Pakistan Romania Business Council (PRBC), signed the protocol at a ceremony held at the Embassy of Romania in Islamabad. On this occasion, Chairman



PRBC Sohail Shamim Firpo said, "This agreement marks a significant milestone in our partner-

ship, paving the way for increased trade and economic cooperation between our nations."

The Embassy of Romania reaffirmed its full support for PRBC's efforts to promote bilateral trade,

further solidifying the partnership between the two nations.

## Ahsan reviews implementation status of CPEC-related decisions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal presided over a meeting on Thursday to review the implementation status of the decisions regarding CPEC projects, especially those made during Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China. "There is complete agreement between the leaderships of China and Pakistan on the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, also known as CPEC 2.0," he said while chairing the meeting. The minister said his visit to China last week was a continuation of the PM's discussions

with the Chinese President and Prime Minister, which focused on the strategic implementation of these decisions to ensure the success of CPEC 2.0. Mentioning the global interest in China's economic development model, he said world leaders were keen to benefit from China's innovative approach. "As of 2018, Pakistan was the biggest beneficiary of China's economic model and open market due to CPEC," he remarked. However, he said, progress slowed down after 2018, leaving Pakistan behind while other regional corridors completed their projects. Despite these setbacks, Ahsan Iqbal stressed the continued importance of CPEC due to Pakistan's strategic geographical position.

He urged the Ministry of Railways to expedite the documentation and preparatory steps for the ML1 project. "During my recent visit to China, we agreed to convene an early meeting of the Joint Financing Committee for the ML1 project, which will take place within a month," he announced. He stressed the need for full preparation by the Ministry of Railways and other concerned departments for this critical meeting. "Given CPEC's unique status, there are ample growth opportunities. To capitalize on these opportunities, we must be serious about completing the projects included in Phase 2.0," he added. The minister also called for a collaborative effort from

all relevant ministries and institutions to ensure the timely completion of CPEC projects. "The governments of China and Pakistan have agreed to start work on the ML1 project soon. The duration and stages of completion will be determined in the upcoming meeting of the Joint Financing Committee." Additionally, he urged the Railway and National Highway Authority (NHA) to prepare a comprehensive master plan for road construction across the region. "The master plan should outline how CPEC and Pakistan can play a pivotal role in connecting the entire region and serve as an engine of global economic growth," he stressed.

## CDNS set an annual target of Rs 1650 billion for FY, 2024-25

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has set an annual target of Rs 1650 billion for the current Fiscal Year, 2024-25, which will promote the saving culture in the country. Similarly, the CDNS has set a target of Rs 170 billion investment in Islamic finance for the Current Fiscal Year, which will lead to growth in the Islamic economy in the country, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Thursday. Replying to a question, he said that the

CDNS has realized a target of Rs1.742 trillion in fresh bonds and exceeded 100 percent of the annual target in the last fiscal year 2023-24, from July 1 to June 30th. The National Savings has set an annual target of Rs 1.7 trillion for the year 2023-24; it is encouraging that this year, "We surpassed the 100 percent of the annual target." The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the previous fiscal year 2022-23, he said. He said this was

an Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country, he said, adding that given the current market trend in the country the ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further.—APP

## Shaza chairs PSEB board meeting

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja Thursday chaired the 60th Board of Directors meeting of the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB). Secretary IT Captain (Retd) Muhammad Mahmood was also present, said a news release. Chairman of the Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), Muhammad Zohaib Khan, attended the meeting via video link. The meeting discussed the mandate and functions of the Pakistan Software Export Board.—APP

## 'Ashura' processions provided foolproof security cover: CPO

RAWALPINDI: City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani has said that foolproof security arrangements were finalized for 'Ashura' and over 6000 cops were deployed in Rawalpindi district. He said, 6000 cops with 1000 Traffic Wardens were deployed to guard 65 'Zuljinnah' and mourning processions and 113 Majalis of Ashura. The contingents of Army and Rangers were also deployed in sensitive areas of the city besides police personnel to make security arrangements foolproof. Six big 'Tazia', 'Alam' and 'Zuljinnah' processions were taken out here under stringent security measures. The 'Ashura' processions of the city including processions of Ashiq Hussain Imambargah of Taili Mohalla and Imam Bargah Hifazat Ali Shah Bohar Bazar, first gathered at the Imambargah Maqbool Hussain and after passing through traditional routes of the main procession culminated at the 'Qadeemi' Imambargah. Syed Khalid Hamdani said, strict security measures were adopted for the security of the main mourning procession which passed through the traditional route. Over 2900 police personnel were deployed to ensure security of the main mourning processions. Security officials were deployed on the rooftops of nearby buildings and along roadsides to avoid any untoward incident. Besides air surveillance during Zuljinnah processions, 6000 police personnel were deployed in the district for the security of the processions and worship places already declared 'highly sensitive' on Ashura. Special checking of the routes was completed before start of the processions and bomb disposal squad cleared the routes. The route of the main procession of Ashura was sealed completely and streets on the route of the processions were also barricaded. The main Zuljinnah processions of the city were given a 'box formation' security. Police personnel, including Elite Force commands, special branch personnel, bomb disposal experts, women police personnel and Dolphin Force were deployed for the security of Ashura processions. The entry of the participants of the processions was allowed through walk-through gates while no vehicle was permitted entry into the processions. Parking of vehicles was allowed 200-meter away from the processions and imambargahs. Mobile phone service and Metro bus service remained suspended on Ashura. Mobile service restored after the Ashura main procession culminated. According to CPO, a special central control room was set up to monitor the processions and coordinate with the police deployments. He informed that senior police officers and experts of law enforcement agencies remained present in the control room and monitored the city situation. Meanwhile, the City Traffic Police had chalked out a separate traffic plan to facilitate the mourners and Ashura processions. A control room was also set up at the traffic headquarters.—APP

## Pakistan's relations with neighbor countries much better

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM Rana Ihsan Afzal on Thursday said that Pakistan's ties with all neighbors have improved significantly compared to previous times as his government was trying its level best to create "a balance in relations with all countries" in line with national interests and the prerequisites for peace. Talking to a Private news channel, he said Pakistan always played an active role in peace and stability in the region, adding, that Pakistan believes in maintaining a "balanced" relationship with all "friendly countries. He also urged the world countries to work jointly to meet the challenges of climate change, poverty and resolution of conflicts for the restoration of peace. "We want to resolve all outstanding issues with India through dialogue", he said, adding, we need a continued and uninterrupted dialogue to resolve the Kashmir issue which is our only way forward". Responding to a query, he said that the Prime Minister is trying his level best to strengthen trade and economic relations with Central Asian States, adding, that the government needs to take concrete action to take the friendship of friendly countries to new heights in terms of trade and economic relations.—APP

## Railways collect over Rs 76 mln from ticketless passengers

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has collected an amount of over Rs 76 million from ticketless passengers in a crackdown during the last six months with the help of railway police and train staffers. "Around 59,143 passengers found travelling without tickets in different trains and collected the said amount from them, which is deposited in the official bank account of the department," sources in the Ministry told APP. They said that it was not the first time that action was taken on a large scale against ticketless passengers, adding that these types of crackdowns had taken place daily. The sources said that ticketless travelling was illegal, and those who were caught without a ticket were charged a ticket price for the whole journey of the train besides the penalty. Those who do not pay are handed over to the railway police. To a question, they said that Pakistan Railways Police claimed to have arrested a total of 43,84 accused due to their involvement in violations of rules and laws and also registered some 3,803 cases against them in eight Railways divisions in one and half year. "Around 688 cases were registered in Peshawar Division, 584 in Rawalpindi, 11,03 in Lahore, 369 in Mughalpur workshops, 378 in Multan, 238 in Sukkur, 365 in Karachi, and 78 in Quetta Division," they added.—APP

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## Briefs

**"Chinese Bridge" summer camp held in Ganzhou for Pakistani students**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 2024 "Chinese Bridge" Summer Camp for Pakistani students kicked off at the Jiangxi University of Science and Technology (JXUST) in Ganzhou, marking the beginning of a two-week immersive experience for 20 Pakistani educators and students. It was part of an effort to further strengthen the friendship and cultural exchange between China and Pakistan, Gwadar Pro reported.

Representing institutions including the Punjab University (PU), Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Alama Iqbal Open University (AIU), and the Aitchison College in Lahore, the participants gathered in Jiangxi to embark on a journey of language learning and cultural discovery. The summer camp, a program under the auspices of the Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban) and supported by the Center for Language Education and Cooperation (CLEC) of the Ministry of Education, China, offers a unique opportunity for the Pakistani students and teachers to learn Mandarin Chinese, decipher the intricacies of Chinese characters, and delve deep into the rich tapestry of Chinese culture. The two-week program is designed to be a comprehensive experience, blending intensive language classes with cultural workshops, traditional Chinese art classes, and excursions to iconic historical sites across China, and providing participants with firsthand experiences of China's heritage. Additionally, the camp facilitates a two-way cultural exchange: Participants will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the daily life of the Chinese people and they are encouraged to share their own rich culture and heritage. The foundation empowers local girls with mining education Islamabad, July 18 (): In a groundbreaking initiative for women empowerment in rural Sindh, Thar Foundation has begun providing education to local girls to become mining professionals. The foundation has enrolled 13 female students in its Diploma of Associate Engineering (DAE) in Mining Program at the Government Polytechnic Institute (GPI) Mithi. For the first time, 13 girls are among the 50 students now enrolled in our DAE Mining program at GPI - Mithi. According to Gwadar Pro, this initiative is a testament to our dedication to empowering women and nurturing local talent," announced Thar Foundation on May 15, coinciding with World Youth Skills Day. The official statement highlighted, "By fostering quality education and gender equality, we're building a stronger, more sustainable community aligned with UN SDG goals 4 and 5."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting of Committee regarding National Drug Survey.

**New INTERPOL IBMS system helps recover missing children**

The FIA spokesman said, under the newly established INTERPOL system IBMS, Islamabad Airport witnessed a crucial rescue operation initiated by the FIA (Federal Investigation Agency). The children, Mohammed Haseefa and Ahmed Amees Abid, who had been reported missing by Punjab Police and registered under a case at Burki police station in Lahore, were successfully located upon their arrival

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a major operation at Islamabad Airport, the FIA safely recovered two missing children upon their arrival from Bishkek, and the placement of newly introduced INTERPOL's Integrated Border Management System (IBMS) was appreciated by the aggrieved family. This significant achievement marks a pivotal moment in enhancing airport security and combating international child abduction cases, the FIA spokesman said. The FIA spokesman said, under the newly established INTERPOL system IBMS, Islamabad Airport

witnessed a crucial rescue operation initiated by the FIA (Federal Investigation Agency). The children, Mohammed Haseefa and Ahmed Amees Abid, who had been reported missing by Punjab Police and registered under a case at Burki police station in Lahore, were successfully located upon their arrival. This operation highlighted the seamless coordination between INTERPOL Islamabad and FIA Immigration Islamabad, facilitated by the system's advanced capabilities. The system, which linked the emigration database with INTERPOL's global database, proved instrumental in identifying missing children, as well as

tracking stolen passports and apprehending suspects wanted for serious crimes worldwide. The implementation of the INTERPOL Find System earlier this year marked a significant milestone in Pakistan's efforts to bolster airport security and combat transnational crime. Director General FIA, Ahmed Ishaq Jahangir, commended the team for their swift action and effective collaboration, emphasizing the system's role in ensuring prompt responses to international alerts. "This successful operation underscores the critical importance of our enhanced border security measures," stated a spokesperson from FIA.

"By leveraging INTERPOL's advanced tools, we can now swiftly identify and intercept individuals linked to global criminal activities upon their entry into Pakistan." The children, upon being taken into custody, were promptly handed over to the local authorities, reflecting the coordinated efforts between law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of minors involved in such sensitive cases. The seamless integration of technology and operational expertise played a pivotal role in the operation's success, setting a precedent for future collaborations in combating cross-border crimes. The FIA remained com-

mitted to further strengthening its partnership with INTERPOL and other international agencies to expand the reach and efficacy of the newly implemented system. The recent recovery of missing children at Islamabad Airport showed commitment to leveraging advanced technology in enhancing national security and responding effectively to international law enforcement challenges. As efforts continue to evolve, the integration of INTERPOL systems promised to play a pivotal role in safeguarding communities and ensuring justice for victims of transnational crimes worldwide, he added.

**Pakistan registers \$2.56 bln in exports to China for FY 2023-24**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports to China surged to \$150.3 million in June, concluding the fiscal year 2023-24 with a total of \$2.56 billion. Gwadar Pro stated quoting the latest report from the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP). In June alone, Pakistan's global exports reached \$2.529 billion, marking a 7.34% increase from the \$2.356 billion recorded in the same month of the previous fiscal year. Overall, Pakistan's exports for FY 2023-24 totaled \$30.65 billion, representing a 10.54% increase from \$27.72 billion in the previous year. Despite this growth, Pakistan faces a significant trade deficit. The country's imports for FY 2023-24 amounted to \$54.73 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of \$24.09 billion. Pakistan is strategically targeting the Chinese market to expand its export footprint. The Minister of Planning and Development, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, recently emphasized the importance of leveraging China's vast import market. He directed ministries to focus on areas where China has significant expertise, aiming to enhance Pakistan's innovation, technology transfer, and capacity building.—APP

**Man dies in police custody; CPO takes notices**

RAWALPINDI, Jul 18 (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Hamdani here on Thursday took notice of an incident in which a suspect was killed in police custody and sought a comprehensive report from Superintendent of Police (SP) Saddar. According to a police spokesman, CPO took notice of the death of a citizen in Gujar Khan police custody. The spokesman informed that the accused namely Zeeshan, who was a record holder criminal, wanted in a robbery case was arrested by Gujar Khan police. When the accused was being shifted to police station, he was moved to the hospital due to a deteriorating health condition where he died during medical treatment. SSP Operations suspended all the eight officials involved in the incident and issued a charge sheet.—APP

**PMD DG urges citizens, tourists to take extra monsoon precautions**

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Director General Mehar Sahibzada Khan Thursday said the citizens and tourists to adopt precautionary measures in view of continuing the prediction of rainfall of Monsoon season till July 21 and asked to make a conscious effort to stay away from land-slide areas. Talking to PTV news channel, he said that citizens should keep children away from water-logged areas, electrical wires, and poles, adding, that the safety of citizens' lives and property is our highest priority. He said in recent rainfall Jehlum city had experienced the highest rainfall of 53 millime-

ters, adding, that Islamabad records 10 mm in Thursday morning and in the evening more rainfall is expected too. Meanwhile, officials of the concerned departments including NDMA, PDMA, and other district administrations have been asked to remain alert during the current spell of rain to avoid any untoward incident, he mentioned.

All four provinces including the AJK and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) regions will experience new spells of rain-wind and thundershowers from under the influence of the weather system, he added. Meanwhile, the masses have been advised to take precautions to prevent flooding and to ensure their safety from lightning strikes, avoid going outside during bad weather, and keep a

safe distance from electrical poles and wires, he stressed. Moreover, to alert local communities, tourists, and travelers in the areas at risk, departments have been instructed to perform their designated duties. Locals and tourists have also been advised to avoid unnecessary travel. Landslides may disrupt roads in the vulnerable hilly areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Murree, Galliyat, Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan during the spell, he added. Replying to a question, he said the PDMA control room was monitoring weather conditions 24 hours a day and the public had been urged to comply with government instructions to ensure safety, adding, that PDM is fully focused on real-time data for any weather forecasts.

**ANF recovers 8.8 kg drugs in four operations**

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations managed to recover 8.8 kg drugs and arrested four accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that 55 ice-filled capsules were recovered from a passenger going to Qatar at Islamabad Airport. 2.6 kg ice and 235 grams heroin were recovered from a passenger going to Saudi Arabia at Lahore Airport. In third operation, 3 kg heroin was recovered from two accused arrested in Ferozepur Road Kasur.—APP

**COMSTech-MSTF announces 'Young Scientists' Fellowship Program'**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Mustafa (Peace Be Upon Him) Science and Technology Foundation (MSTF) and COMSTech have announced the Young Scientists' Fellowship Program (YSFP) to support young scientists from Islamic countries. According to an official of COMSTech, the fellowship program will be conducted at the Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran. The YSFP has been initiated to support talented youth with the cooperation of prestigious scientific institutes and reputable Research and Development centers. The fellowship program has been announced in the research areas of Mechanical Engineering, Renewable Energy and Turbines, IOT and ICT, Water and Environment, Oil and Gas, Earthquake,

Electronics, Nano Bio-chemistry, Transportation, Data Science and AI, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Biotechnology and Biomedical Engineering. The initiative has been launched with the aim of capacity building and nurturing the young generation for the development of science, technology, and innovation in line with the values and needs of Islamic society. The program provides short-term fellowships to young scholars, technologists, and faculty members under 40 years of age. About the eligibility, the official informed that the applicants must hold at least a master's degree. The duration of fellowships in this program is 6-12 months, which can be more or less depending on the conditions and requirements, with the agreement of the host. The fellowship opportu-

nity will help the fellows get acquainted with novel scientific and technological achievements in the Islamic world; share capacities and exchange new findings through networking and streamlining, and strengthen international relations to help develop science and technology. The initiative is also aimed at deepening and institutionalizing international communications and collaborations; improving the quality of researchers' studies, expanding the border of knowledge, and helping to solve important scientific and technological challenges of the Islamic countries through the achievements made by international cooperation. About the application and evaluation process, the official informed that the applicants can apply online through the website [ysfp.mstfdn.org](http://ysfp.mstfdn.org). The primary evaluation

of applicants is based on the information provided in the application form and attached documents, including education, research, teaching, grants, awards and honors, academic and professional activities, achievements, etc. The applicants, who have a background of cooperation with Mustafa (peace be upon him) Prize Laureates as well, and winners of the KANS Scientific Competition, shall benefit from an extra score in the evaluation. The applicants are ranked taking into account all the indicators and scores, the top of whom pass the secondary evaluation and a short list of eligible applicants is provided to the host for final review and selection. The application deadline for applying to the program is August 10 and the candidates can apply online through the website [www.ysfp.mstfdn.org](http://www.ysfp.mstfdn.org).

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## Banning cleaning supplies in Gaza

After more than nine months of the Israeli genocidal war, Palestinians in Gaza face numerous forms of suffering that extend beyond killing, displacement, and starvation. In their daily lives, which have been turned upside down, challenges and problems accumulate, making it increasingly difficult to live in the tents of displacement that have become the hallmark of the current Palestinian catastrophe. Since the start of the genocide war in Gaza 286 days ago, the Israeli occupation forces have deprived Gaza residents of many basic necessities, food, and various essential items for their daily lives. The crisis of unavailable cleaning supplies is one of many problems troubling Palestinians, who are accustomed to high levels of personal and household cleanliness. This crisis has opened the door to serious health repercussions. For weeks, the Israeli occupation forces have prevented the entry of all types of cleaning materials into Gaza, aiming to spread diseases among the population who are already suffering from numerous epidemics and diseases due to repeated displacement, overcrowding, and water shortages. After hours of wandering through Deir al-Balah market, the largest market in Gaza currently, as the city has become a refuge for hundreds of thousands of residents and displaced people, citizen Suad Abu Atiyeh's attempts to find soap or shampoo were unsuccessful. Abu Atiyeh told the Palestinian Information Center (PIC) correspondent that she has been searching for days for shampoo or even soap for washing, but to no avail. Nearly everything in the market has run out, worsening the overall cleanliness situation, which has already deteriorated due to water shortages and the accumulation of waste while living in tents. She pointed out that the water shortage makes the need for cleaning supplies even greater, especially given the necessity of communal living in tents, shelters, and shared bathrooms. She confirms that the lack of cleaning supplies and water has led to the spread of many diseases and epidemics. As a result of the occupation's bombing of tens of thousands of homes, coupled with Israeli displacement orders, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians live in tattered tents set up in empty spaces in Deir al-Balah and Mawasi Khan Yunis, in UNRWA schools, and in universities that have been turned into shelters, with each classroom now housing several families. Hundreds of displaced people are forced to use shared bathrooms amid a near-total lack of cleanliness and health standards. The PIC correspondent observed that the Deir al-Balah market is completely devoid of all types of cleaning supplies. According to traders, the occupation army has been preventing the entry of cleaning supplies into Gaza for a long time, leading to their depletion from the markets. Citizen Muath al-Halabi from Khan Yunis, who lives in a tent, told the PIC correspondent that he has resorted to using alternatives, such as washing cooking utensils with sand. He added that he and his children bathe infrequently using only water, without any shampoo or soap. He wonders about the reasons, but there are no answers other than the Israeli determination to exterminate Palestinians on all fronts.



## US election and China issue

Recently, there has been significant progress in the restoration of contact and dialogue between China and the US, as well as in managing the risks of conflict. However, we also regret to see an increase of the voices calling for a headline stance toward China within the US. Both parties in the US are competing to manipulate the China issue, and the so-called "policy plans" to contain China that each party has put forward are becoming more and more absurd. Although some of these "plans" are not feasible and will not become reality, the damage to bilateral relations is real. Although China and the US have different historical cultures, social systems, and development paths, many emotions are shared between the people of both countries. The book Hill-billy Elegy by J.D. Vance, Donald Trump's vice-presidential running mate, has stirred sympathy in Chinese society for the "Rust Belt" of America. However, at the same time, there are some misconceptions about China in American society. China and the US should have a correct understanding of each other. Making an issue of China for election purposes is a disregard and hijacking of the huge common interests between China and the US. For US presidential candidates, it accumulates a deficit in the development of relations with China for the next US government. This approach seriously undermines the atmosphere of bilateral cooperation, and is also not conducive to world peace and stability. China will never seek hegemony, has no intention to change America, nor does it have any interest in interfering in US elections. It also opposes the US constantly bringing up China in discussions. Creating an atmosphere of "fearmongering" toward China in the US won't help solve US problems, but will make things worse. Raising or promising to raise tariffs on Chinese goods has been seen as a "life-saving straw" by US presidential candidates to win voters, with both parties engaging in a "bidding war" on the issue of tariffs on China. Linking the rescue of American manufacturing to China is a serious misguidance of the American people. For example, the lack of competitiveness in the manufacturing industry in the "Rust Belt" of America is due to factors such as labor, land costs, and technological updates. Relying solely on raising tariffs will not enhance the competitiveness and efficiency of the manufacturing industry, but will only result in American businesses and consumers bearing the burden of tariff costs, further disrupting the normal operation of international production and supply chains. The current consensus narrative among American politicians from both parties is to blame various domestic problems on economic globalization and the so-called "unfair competition" from China, with the aim of shifting attention and attempting to "cure internal diseases by external means." Targeting China, setting up trade barriers, and even staging a show of "comprehensive confrontation" with China to rekindle the "American spirit" can only be self-deception. Joseph Nye, a famous American political scientist, wrote an article this year specifically discussing the "sense of decline" among Americans, mentioning that anxiety about decline leads to protectionist policies that do more harm than good.

## Banning PTI: A knee-jerk reaction

Qamar Bashir



This troika meeting occurred after a previously summoned and then canceled PML(N) top leadership meeting, leaving the nation guessing about the agreement or disagreement on the government's intention to file the impugned reference. As expected, this knee-jerk reaction mirrored the sudden and shocking announcement made by the Prime Minister to launch the extremely important operation Azm-e-Istehkam. The operation was mishandled

The government, in utter frustration and uncalled-for haste, without applying its mind or consulting its allies, party leaders, or supporters, announced its intention to ban the PTI as a political party. The origin of this decision is unclear. Neither a political, formal, nor constitutional body framework was used to evolve the decision nor a formal process was followed. Even those who initially directed our poor Information Minister to make the announcement, whether willingly or unwillingly, appeared to have done minimal homework. The only consultative process which the nation witnessed was a meeting on their TV screens, showing a silent and embarrassed Prime Minister, a downcast Chief Minister of Punjab, and an unconcerned, detached, and aloof Nawaz Sharif at a meeting in their Murree residence. This troika meeting occurred after a previously summoned and then canceled PML(N) top leadership meeting, leaving the nation guessing about the agreement or disagreement on the government's intention to file the impugned reference. As expected, this knee-jerk reaction mirrored the sudden and shocking announcement made by the Prime Minister to launch the extremely important operation Azm-e-Istehkam. The operation was mishandled like an immature endeavor, creating avoidable controversy and opposition from the very beginning. The timing of the decision, which coincided with the verdict of the 8-member Supreme Court Larger Bench to restore PTI as a party and allocate reserved seats for women and minorities, made the matter worse. This government's intention directly conflicted with the court's decision, which declared PTI a bona fide political party. The court's ruling declared the Election Commission's decision ultra vires and unconstitutional, which had prevented PTI from participating in the elections as a political party. The Supreme Court corrected this constitutional anomaly and restored PTI's status to its position before the Election Commission's misinterpretation of the Supreme Court verdict and relevant constitutional provisions that had unlawfully stopped PTI from taking part

in the election as a political party. All those PML(N) and PPP leaders who are criticizing the Supreme Court for granting unsolicited relief to PTI show a lack of their understanding of the Supreme Court's proceedings. All points being raised by them were thoroughly discussed by the SC. This shows that all of them not only failed to follow the court's proceedings but also did not wait for the detailed judgment before committing to filing a review petition and announcing their intention to file a reference against PTI. Having diligently followed the proceedings of the SC in the impugned case, I can confidently say that once the government will peruse the detailed judgments, they may decide to withdraw their review petition and will desist from sending a reference to the SC for banning PTI instead they may realize the futility of both exercises. Futility of this exercise became even more obvious when during an interview with a leading TV channel, the Information Minister outlined points which, according to him, would be sufficient for the Supreme Court to ban PTI as a political party. One point was the dissolution of the National Assembly when the no-confidence motion was in the field against the then sitting prime minister Imran Khan. This he touted as the number one reason for filing the reference not knowing that this decision was subsequently reversed by the Supreme Court, restoring the constitutional order, as actions that have been corrected by the judiciary cannot logically or legally serve as a basis for a ban. The second charge was related to the incidents of May 9. This does not provide any solid basis either, as most of the accused are facing the cases in several courts across the country, with very few convictions but a lot of relief. The third charge was the Toosha Khan case, which the prosecution has miserably failed to establish, resulting in the accused being granted relief. The fourth charge was a cypher case, which is also sub-judice at different levels and the accused have been granted relief. In these cases the principle of individual responsibility applies, meaning collective punishment of a political party for the actions of some members or supporters is not justified under the law. An-

other charge was the alleged hiring of a lobby firm in the USA by PTI, which succeeded in convincing 368 members of the US Congress to declare the 2024 election results highly rigged and demanded an independent inquiry to investigate the allegations and provide justice. Perhaps the information Minister in the rush of emotion forgot to appreciate that hiring a lobby firm is not a crime, and the resolution passed by the US Congress does not constitute an official condemnation or actionable legal finding against the state. These issues do not constitute grounds for labeling such actions as treason or banning a political party under Pakistani law. The next charge was a letter written to the IMF, sensitizing them over election rigging and ensuing political instability while negotiating the Stand-by Arrangement. Raising issues about election integrity, even on international platforms, falls under free speech and political advocacy and these actions do not violate any laws that would justify a party ban. Above all these individual actions do not demonstrate that PTI as a party has engaged in activities that fundamentally violate the constitution. Individual misconduct or poor judgment does not equate to a systemic threat by the party. Moreover, there are sufficient legal frameworks to address individual actions through criminal or civil proceedings. These laws provide for punishment and retribution for specific illegal activities without necessitating the extreme measure of banning a political party. It is, therefore, in the greater interest of the government, PML(N), and its allied parties to have heart and patience, wait for the detailed judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, consult its allies and like-minded parties, conduct deep research and brainstorming, develop the pros and cons of any decision taken and its implications, and thereafter develop an agreed-upon response before finally deciding to file a review petition against the SC's short verdict(s) and sending a reference to the Supreme Court for banning the PTI.

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## The dangers of mixing CO2 with LPG: A critical warning

Imran Ghaznavi



At the forefront of these risks is the peril to human health. CO2, a colorless and odorless gas, becomes a silent menace when inhaled in high concentrations. It can induce a range of symptoms from mild respiratory distress and dizziness to severe outcomes like loss of consciousness. The situation is further compounded when CO2 is mixed with LPG

In the realm of industrial safety, few warnings are as stark and consequential as the dangers of mixing carbon dioxide (CO2) with liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). This seemingly innocuous combination harbors the potential for catastrophic outcomes, threatening human health, environmental stability, and the integrity of critical equipment. The imperative to understand and heed these dangers cannot be overstated.

**Health Risks**  
At the forefront of these risks is the peril to human health. CO2, a colorless and odorless gas, becomes a silent menace when inhaled in high concentrations. It can induce a range of symptoms from mild respiratory distress and dizziness to severe outcomes like loss of consciousness. The situation is further compounded when CO2 is mixed with LPG. LPG, known for its high flammability, undergoes a perilous transformation in the presence of CO2. This altered combustion process often leads to incomplete combustion, a scenario that gives rise to carbon monoxide (CO). CO is a deadly gas, infamous for its insidious ability to cause poisoning even at low levels. The symptoms of CO poisoning are often mistaken for other ailments—headaches, nausea, and confusion—but in severe cases, the outcome is fatal. The insidious nature of CO poisoning makes it a particularly grave concern, as victims may be unaware of their exposure until it is too late.

**Environmental Impact**  
The environmental ramifications of mixing CO2 with LPG are equally dire. LPG leaks

are hazardous in their own right, but when CO2 is introduced into the equation, the environmental impact is magnified. The combined leakage can result in the release of significant quantities of greenhouse gases, exacerbating the already critical issue of climate change. Moreover, the incomplete combustion of this gas mixture doesn't just produce CO; it also leads to the emission of other noxious pollutants that degrade air quality. These pollutants can have a cascading effect on ecosystems, harming wildlife and contributing to broader ecological imbalances.

**Equipment Hazards**  
From an operational perspective, the introduction of CO2 into LPG systems is a recipe for disaster. LPG systems are meticulously engineered for a specific gas composition, and any deviation from this design can lead to serious consequences. CO2, with its corrosive properties, accelerates the wear and tear of equipment components, leading to increased maintenance costs and operational downtimes. More critically, the presence of CO2 can cause malfunctions that may result in explosions or fires. These incidents not only endanger lives but can also lead to colossal losses in terms of property damage. The potential for such catastrophic events necessitates a rigorous adherence to safety protocols and standards.

**A Call to Action**  
The grave risks associated with the mixing of CO2 and LPG demand immediate and unwavering attention. This is not merely a

technical issue but a profound public safety concern. Regulatory bodies and law enforcement agencies must intensify their efforts to monitor and curtail such dangerous practices. Vigilance and strict enforcement of safety regulations are essential to safeguarding human lives and protecting the environment. In light of these dangers, it is imperative for all stakeholders—industry professionals, safety regulators, and the general public—to recognize and act upon the critical need to prevent the mixing of CO2 with LPG. The health risks, environmental impact, and equipment hazards associated with this practice present a compelling case for stringent oversight and proactive measures. The combination of CO2 and LPG is a perilous mix, one that we can ill afford to ignore. By adhering to established safety standards and fostering a culture of vigilance, we can mitigate these risks and ensure a safer, more sustainable future. In conclusion, the mixing of CO2 with LPG is a dangerous practice with far-reaching consequences. It poses significant health risks, threatens the environment, and jeopardizes the safety and functionality of equipment. It is imperative to avoid such practices and adhere to safety regulations to protect lives and maintain operational integrity. Law enforcement agencies need to vigilantly monitor and curb such dangerous and unsafe activities to ensure the security of the general public.

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## Briefs

## Govt defends ad hoc judges...

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the National Assembly, said. In the same statement, Law Minister Tarar dismissed reports about an extension in the tenure of CJP Isa, saying that the debate about the extension of the tenure of government employees arose because of the high pension bill. He further said that in late April or early May, there was a meeting with the Chief Justice regarding the Judicial Commission in which he said that he was not interested in extending the tenure.

## Another retired judge...

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judges in light of the backlog of cases. The development comes after PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub, in conversation with journalists in Islamabad, said hiring three or four judges won't address the issue of thousands of pending cases. "The motive behind the move is to appoint 'like-minded' judges to the Supreme Court. Political workers and the lawyers' fraternity reject the move," Ayub, the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, said. Ayub also requested that the ad hoc judges, when appointed, should not be allowed to hear cases relating to PTI.

## PTI to move SJC against...

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Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), reaffirming the Supreme Court's stance that PTI is a political party and will remain so. Speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail on Thursday, Ayub and other PTI leaders shared insights from their recent meeting with the incarcerated PTI founder, Imran Khan. "The fight for true freedom will continue," Ayub quoted the founder. He criticised the government, calling its members "naïve". "You imprisoned our leader, but our party remains unbroken," he asserted. Ayub highlighted the Supreme Court's declaration that PTI's political status is unchangeable. He also addressed the nation's economic challenges, noting the rising prices of gas, petrol, flour, lentils, and sugar. He accused the current administration of profiting from wheat imports during Mohsin Naqvi's tenure and hinted at upcoming privatisation deals aimed at generating substantial revenue.

## PPP affirms support for govt amid...

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different parties terming the move "undemocratic." Several senior PPP leaders also opposed the move, with former senators Raza Rabbani and Farhatullah Babar openly criticising the idea. On the other hand, PPP stalwart Khurshid Shah said the party's leadership – despite being part of the ruling coalition – was not taken on board regarding the decision.

## US aid failures may have...

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being diverted to the Taliban or other sanctioned parties," said the SIGAR report. The report falls in line with the concerns raised by Pakistan which has time again complained of US weapons being used by banned outfits, including TTP and BLA. It is to be noted that the Pentagon itself has confirmed that out of the 427,300 weapons that Washington had provided to the Afghan forces, around 300,000 weapons were "left behind" when its forces withdrew from the war-torn country in August 2021. The SIGAR report said that the Afghan Taliban have tried to obtain US aid funds "through several means, including the establishment of humanitarian organizations."

## ICC incurs huge losses for hosting T20 WC in USA

ICC has reportedly incurred losses of approximately USD 20 million for hosting the T20 World Cup 2024 matches in the United States of America

## SPORTS DESK

LONDON : The International Cricket Council (ICC) has reportedly incurred losses of approximately USD 20 million for hosting the T20 World Cup 2024 matches in the United States of America, according to media reports on Thursday. This is expected to be a major topic of discussion during the ICC Annual Conference, which commences on Friday in Colombo. Although the topic is not included in the nine-point agenda of the Annual General Meeting (AGM), it will be addressed as part of a "post-event report". A significant portion of the tournament was held in the USA, including the highly anticipated match between India and Pakistan, which took place in New York. Another major topic to be discussed during the AGM is BCCI secretary Jay Shah replacing Greg Barclay as the ICC chairman. According to an ICC source, one of the main areas of interest for everyone at the ICC is when Shah will assume the leadership of the world body. "It is not about how but when, as he still has one year left



as BCCI secretary before his cooling off period in the Indian board starts in 2025 as per the constitution. However, if he has to take over in 2025, then Barclay can't complete his third term of

two years from December 2024 to December 2026," the ICC source told Press Trust of India (PTI). "There is a school of thought that what if ICC's chairmanship term changes from three terms of two

years each to two terms of three years, so the cumulative term can remain six years." It is widely believed that if Barclay's current term extends to three years, Shah can complete his six years

as BCCI secretary and assume the role of ICC chairman in 2025 for a three-year term during his cooling-off period from the media. Then, in 2028, he can return and take over as board president.

## McGregor may leave UFC to compete in new sport

LONDON : Conor McGregor has hinted he may leave the UFC for bare-knuckle boxing after just two more fights in the cage. McGregor is presently awaiting a new date for his highly anticipated bout with Michael Chandler, which could now be scheduled for UFC 310 on 14 December. The Irishman would then have only one more fight remaining on the contract he signed prior to his defeat by Khabib Nurmagomedov in 2018. Having invested in Bare Knuckle FC earlier this year, McGregor has as-

serted that he will make his BKFC debut in the future. "For me, I've got a bit of business left with the Ultimate Fighting Championship, two fights left on my contract. But for sure we have three lightweights up here and I have my eye on all of this. I'm not here up here just as an owner, player-manager I'd title myself on this." "Make no mistake about it, this is a viable option and in my opinion it's the only option. I don't want to see, nor do I give a f\*\*\*, about UFC fighter going to PFL or another promotion.

You need to break it up, you need to mix it up and come and try something new to try and break into that next level of superstardom, of respect, of money and of power. We have all that at BKFC. "BKFC is the No.1 in the space by a mile. We are different, we are not like anyone else in the space. Although the UFC is at its peak and the mega-company it is and the No.1 in its category, we are the No.1 in our category. It's apples and oranges; we lend ourselves well to each other and that's what I really like about it. For

me BKFC right now is No.1 in the space and there is no one close to it." McGregor was scheduled to face Chandler at UFC 303 in June but withdrew from the fight with just two weeks' notice after breaking his toe during training. Prior to that announcement, the Dubliner disclosed he was in discussions with the UFC about a new contract. "I have two fights left on my UFC contract. We're currently in negotiation stage with the UFC. Let's see what happens. Let's see what takes place," he said. —DNA

## Ireland announce squad for Test against Zimbabwe

DUBLIN : Ireland Cricket announced the squad for their first-ever Test against Zimbabwe which is set to be played at Stormont in Belfast from July 25 to 29. With the familiar faces of Andrew Balbirnie, Mark Adair and others, Matthew Humphreys and Gavin Hoey are also included in the squad to play the match against Zimbabwe. "Humphreys made his Test debut in Sri Lanka and found the going difficult against good players of spin out in the subcontinent. He'd admit himself that he went through a period of a loss of form and maybe a loss of confidence, but he's worked extremely hard to come back into the reckoning," Ireland's National Men's Selector Andrew White said. "Hoey is a talented leg spinner, and his ability to spin the ball both ways gives us a strong wicket-taking option. Again, he's a player that's been on the radar for a while and can play across all three formats." Earlier in March 2024, Ireland recorded their name in the history books by registering first-ever win in red-ball cricket since achieving full Test status as they defeated Afghanistan in UAE by six wickets. This will be the first time a Test match will be held in Northern Ireland and just their second home red-ball match in about seven years.—APP

## Modric extends Real Madrid contract until 2025

LONDON : Luka Modric signed a new one-year deal with Real Madrid which will keep him at the Spanish capital till 2025, confirmed the club in a press release on Wednesday. Modric, 38, will continue his journey with the European Champions for one more year after winning La Liga and the Champions League with Los Blancos last season. "Real Madrid CF and Luka Modric have agreed to extend the contract of our captain, who will be linked to the club until 30 June 2025," Real Madrid said in a presser. "Modric arrived at Real Madrid in 2012, and in his twelve seasons representing our shirt he has become a Real Madrid and world football legend." After arriving at the club in 2012, Modric made his debut under the leadership of former head coach Jose Mourinho. He soon became an important player for the club and has been contributing greatly ever since. "He has won 26 titles with Real Madrid: 6 Champions Leagues, 5 Club World Cups, 4 European Super Cups, 4 Leagues, 2 Copas del Rey and 5 Spanish Super Cups. Modric is one of only five players to have won 6 European Cups and has the most titles in the history of our club," the club added. "On an individual level, Modric won the Ballon d'Or, the FIFA Player of the Year Award and was named UEFA Player of the Year in 2018. He has been part of the FIFA FIFPro World XI 6 times and has been voted the Champions League's Best Midfielder twice. He has won 1 Ballon d'Or and 1 Silver Ball at the Club World Cup. With the Croatian national team, he won the Golden Ball at the 2018 World Cup and the Bronze Ball at the 2022 World Cup." It is worth mentioning that Modric's extension with Madrid is crucial as the Whites lost one of their key midfielders, Toni Kroos who announced that he is retiring from football at the age of 34.—Agencies

## Rafael Nadal leaves door open to US Open return

PARIS : Rafael Nadal made a winning return to singles after beating Leo Borg 6-3, 6-4 at the Swedish Open and confirmed his intentions to participate in the last Grand Slam of the year, the US Open. He also teamed up with Casper Ruud in doubles and recorded a win. Back-to-back wins are a great confidence booster for Nadal, who has been struggling greatly with injuries since last year. Great feelings. It's true that there have been some on and off conditions in terms of weather, but we are lucky that we have been able to play the whole match without rain today. I'm happy for that," Nadal said about his feelings in only his sixth tournament of 2024. Before this year, Nadal last played in Bastad in 2005 when he also won the singles title. The 22-time Grand Slam champion joked about defending the title this year. "I'm defending the title," joked Nadal. "Playing in front of a full crowd like this means a lot to me. It gives me energy to keep practicing every day. Even in the tougher moments, I have been able to keep going with the help of the team. "The fans have a huge impact on that. They give me an amazing energy. Today, I have to say thank you very much to the Spanish followers here, but especially the Swedish, since I haven't been able to play here since a long time ago." After his straight sets win in the Swedish Open, Nadal appeared in the US Open entry list with his protected ranking of No. 9. Nadal last appeared at the US Open back in 2022 when he lost to Frances Tiafoe in the fourth round of the tournament. Nadal, alongside compatriot Pablo Carreno Busta, Denis Shapovalov, Reilly Opelka, Soonwoo Kwon and Dominic Stricker, is one of six men's singles players currently in the US Open main draw via a protected ranking. Meanwhile, Rafael Nadal is backing Carlos Alcaraz to become "one of the best in history" after the 21-year-old clinched Wimbledon after beating Novak Djokovic in the final. Alcaraz, 21, has now four Grand Slams – two Wimbledon, one French Open and one US Open – and has been unstoppable ever since making his professional debut at the age of 16. Nadal believes that Alcaraz is a player with huge potential who can reach new heights. The 22-time Grand Slam champion also stated that if the 21-year-old remains free of injuries, there is no doubt he become an all-time great. My impression is we are talking about a player that is going to be one of the best [in] history. That's my feeling," Nadal said after partnering Casper Ruud to a first-round doubles victory at the Nordea Open in Bastad. "[He is] a player with huge potential. Life can change quick, that's the truth. You never know what can happen in the future. But today if we have to predict what's going on in his career, we predict amazing things." "His level of tennis is super high. If he is able to stay away from injuries, of course Sinner is there. But I see him with Sinner over the rest today without a doubt. I don't see a lot of players that can stop him on Tour and I think the best thing that he has today is in every tournament that he plays, doesn't matter the surface, he is going to be the favourite." Nadal then went on to explain that in his generation, he was the favourite on clay, Roger Federer was the favourite on the grass while the hard court was the domain of Djokovic. "But no one player was the favourite before every tournament and today I feel that he has that aura, that feeling," Nadal said of Alcaraz. "That's a big advantage because I think he feels that [if] he's playing at his level [that it] is difficult that somebody's going to beat him."—DNA

## India confirms Yadav as T20I captain for SL series

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli will play in ODI series

NEW DELHI : India have appointed Suryakumar Yadav as the captain of their men's T20I team for the tour of Sri Lanka later this month, with Shubman Gill named as the vice-captain of both the T20I and ODI sides. The middle-order batter, who has played 68 T20Is, led the team against Australia and South Africa last year in the absence of key players but has now been handed the reins of the team in the shortest format. The T20I squad has a familiar look with several T20 World Cup stars like Hardik Pandya, Arshdeep Singh, Mohammed Siraj, and Axar Patel returning after missing the Zimbabwe series. Jasprit Bumrah has been rested from the tour, while the likes of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli will play in the ODIs. India's forthcoming white-ball tour of Sri Lanka marks Gautam Gambhir's debut assignment as the team's new coach. Gambhir steps into this role following Rahul Dravid's departure after leading the team to victory in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.



This will be the first time since 2021 that India will travel to Sri Lanka for a bilateral series. Meanwhile, the ODI squad features Riyan Parag, who made his debut in the T20I series in Zimbabwe. KL Rahul and Rishabh Pant are the wicketkeepers, with Sanju Samson missing out. Pacer Harshit Rana, who impressed in the IPL 2024 season for the title winners Kolkata Knight Riders, is included in the ODI squad alongside Khaleel Ahmed. India's squad for Sri Lanka series T20I Squad: Suryakumar Yadav (c), Shubman Gill (vc), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rinku Singh, Riyan Parag, Rishabh Pant (wk), Sanju Samson (WK), Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Khaleel Ahmed, Mohammed Siraj. ODI Squad: Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill (vc), Virat Kohli, KL Rahul (WK), Rishabh Pant (wk), Shreyas Iyer, Shivam Dube, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd. Siraj, Washington Sundar, Arshdeep Singh, Riyan Parag, Axar Patel, Khaleel Ahmed, Harshit Rana.—Agencies

## Troops on streets as Bangladeshi students...

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specific groups, including women, marginalized communities, and children and grandchildren of freedom fighters – for whom the government earmarks 30 percent of the posts. Clashes with police and government supporters began on Sunday after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina undermined the students' cause by suggesting that they supported the "razakars," or those who had collaborated with the Pakistani military, an enemy occupying force, during the 1971 war. Since Wednesday, educational institutions, campuses and students' dormitories have been shut across the country, forcing students on to the streets. Tensions escalated early on Thursday and about 6,000 border guards were sent to assist police. "Considering the present situation, we have deployed additional forces to maintain law and order, and protect the people's lives and properties," Inamul Huq Sagar, spokesperson at the police headquarters, told Arab News. "During emergency situations, we always deploy an additional number of forces."

## PM, President extend...

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for President Biden's early recovery. President Biden's Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre confirmed that the president tested positive for Covid-19 after attending an event in Las Vegas, where he was slated to address a crucial election campaign event ahead of the November presidential polls. Despite being fully vaccinated and boosted, President Biden is experiencing mild symptoms. He will self-isolate at his home in Rehoboth and continue to fulfil his duties, assured Karine Jean-Pierre. According to the latest medical update from the White House, President Biden's symptoms remain mild, with normal respiratory rate, temperature, and pulse oximetry readings. He has received his first dose of Paxlovid to manage the illness effectively during his self-isolation period.

## Pakistan-China relations...

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Defence Attaché, Chinese Embassy officials & Officers from tri-services of Pakistan attended the event. COAS Munir while welcoming the Chinese guests, congratulated the PLA and praised PLA's contribution to Chinese defence, security and nation development. "Relations between Pakistan Army and Peoples Liberation Army are strong and both militaries continue to engage in bilateral military cooperation, demonstrating the iron clad brotherhood between the two countries", COAS concluded. Speaking on the occasion, the Chinese Ambassador thanked COAS for hosting the event for the 97th anniversary of the founding of the PLA. "Pakistani military has always been at the forefront of countering terrorism and has made great sacrifices for the peace and stability of Pakistan and the region", Chinese ambassador remarked.

## Atta Tarar grieved over demise of 'autistic Palestinian'

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autism, by the injuries reportedly inflicted by "a combat dog of the Israel Defence Force (IDF)". According to the story, also shared by the minister on social media to grieve the demise of Bhar, said "Mohammed Bhar was left for dead after being mauled by a combat dog of the Israel Defence Force (IDF) on July 3, during a raid on his family's home in Shejaiya." The minister, in his post that has Bhar's picture, said, "He had Down syndrome and Autism. Their dogs attacked him and left him to die. At a loss of words, can't explain the pain."

## Briefs

## Italy sends humanitarian aid for Gaza

ROME: Italy has sent food supplies and health equipment aboard a humanitarian flight that landed in Jordan, a statement said on Thursday, as part of Rome's "Food for Gaza" initiative to help civilians there. Aid includes over 60 tons of food, hygiene kits and sanitary equipment, along with 150 tents. The flight, which departed from the southern city of Brindisi, has landed in the Jordan capital of Amman from where the materials will be delivered to Gaza. "With this operation we give a tangible demonstration of the attention that the Italian government is dedicating to the humanitarian situation in the Strip," Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said. He added Italy was committed "to do everything possible to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian population in Gaza." The Food for Gaza initiative is led by Italy together with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Program (WFP) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). On Wednesday, the US military announced that its mission to install and operate a temporary, floating pier off the coast of Gaza was complete, formally ending an effort to bring humanitarian aid to Palestinians.—APP

## Rising opioid fears in Eastern Europe

WARSAW: Eastern Europe, once seen as immune to the opioid crisis wreaking havoc across North America, has been ramping up its fight against the rise of the dangerous, synthetic drugs. There have been dozens of deaths and many more arrests in Poland this year linked to synthetic drugs, including mephedrone — an alternative to cocaine — as well as fentanyl and nitazenes. Poland's Central Investigation Bureau of Police has dismantled 33 illegal synthetic drug "factories" this year, according to its spokesman Krzysztof Wrzesniowski. Two of them were exclusively producing mephedrone, used to replace cocaine at a cheaper cost. Aside from causing problems in Poland, media reports found that such laboratories were also found to be exporting drugs throughout the European Union, including to the neighbouring Czech Republic and Slovakia. "It is a constant race between criminals who produce these substances... and laboratories and the sanitary inspection," Poland's Chief Sanitary Inspector Pawel Grzesiowski said. "They are constantly looking for new substances, new varieties." Zuzmin, a town of about 9,000 people two hours north of Warsaw, has been named the region's unofficial fentanyl capital. For some, it is reminiscent of small towns in the United States which were the first to fall victim to the country's opioid epidemic.—Agencies

## Japan faces jet fuel shortage

TOKYO: Amid boom in tourism, Japan is facing jet fuel shortage, as the country's plummeting oil refineries cannot provide adequate fuel to enable return trips for all planes. Authorities at Narita Airport near Tokyo, Japan's main gateway for international arrivals, said in late June that six airlines had shelved plans to add 57 flights to the weekly schedule, according to the NHK News on Wednesday. Regional airports are also experiencing difficulties. Every winter, New Chitose Airport near Sapporo in Hokkaido Prefecture attracts waves of skiers and snowboarders drawn by northern Japan's renowned deep powder. However, this year, Qantas Airways and Singapore Airlines have canceled their seasonal flights to the airport, citing an inability to secure enough fuel for the return journeys. The problem has multiple causes, Japanese Transport Minister Saito Tetsuo explained at a recent news conference.—APP

## UK will 'never leave ECHR,' says Starmer

Statement marks clear departure from the stance of previous Conservative government, which had often threatened to withdraw from the convention

## FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Thursday declared that the UK will "never leave the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR)." The statement marks a clear departure from the stance of the previous Conservative government, which had often threatened to withdraw from the convention. In his opening remarks at the European Political Community summit at the Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, Starmer emphasized the UK's enduring commitment to Europe, pledging that the country would remain a steadfast "friend and partner of Europe." He underscored the importance of collaboration in addressing critical issues, particularly the fight against people-smuggling gangs. Starmer stressed that these criminal networks must not be

allowed to operate with "impunity" in Europe, highlighting the need for a united front to tackle such challenges. Speaking at the birthplace of Winston Churchill, Starmer evoked the former prime minister's legacy of liberty and democracy, linking it to the current need for defiance and resolve in the face of new challenges on the continent. "Today, as a new storm gathers over our continent, we choose to meet it in that same spirit, and we choose to meet it together. And that is the choice of the government that I lead," he said. He also called for a reset in relationships with European countries, emphasizing the shared interests and the importance of renewing the bonds of trust and friendship that underpin European life. He reiterated the UK's pledge to support Ukraine "for as long as it takes," standing firm in solidarity with the Ukrainian



people and their fight for sovereignty and security. Flanked by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Starmer addressed 44 European leaders gathered at Blenheim Palace, stating: "The task is urgent, because our security is on the line. Every day Ukraine fights to protect not just the Ukrainian people, but the European people." Earlier on Thursday, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer

also emphasized the critical importance of European unity in supporting Ukraine as he hosted European leaders for a summit in Oxfordshire. "Every day Ukraine fights affects not just the Ukrainian people, but the European people," he said in his opening remarks at the European Political Community summit at Blenheim Palace. He underscored the broader implications of the conflict that began in February 2022, highlighting the continent's hard-won values of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. "A continent where our belief in freedom, democracy, and the rule of law was hard won and that wants to live in peace," he added. "Will Europe be a continent that neither surrenders nor sells itself to tyrants? Will yours be a continent of nations and communities? We will see how much the bravery of previous generations has won for

us and secured this Europe for us... and our children," Starmer said. He reiterated the UK's commitment to Ukraine, pledging support "for as long as it takes." The UK premier emphasized the urgency of the situation, noting that European security is at stake. "Every day Ukraine fights to protect not just the Ukrainian people, but the European people." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy also addressed the forum, highlighting recent successes on the battlefield against Russia, including halting Russian advances on Kharkiv. "The reality on the battlefield is more convincing than anything," he said. "Putin has sacrificed tens of thousands of his citizens but has achieved nothing significant." Zelenskyy also condemned Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's recent engagements with Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump, labeling them a betrayal of European unity.

## SA's president opens Parliament after election win

Ramaphosa will open a new parliamentary term Thursday to mark the official start of business for his 11-party coalition government

## WEB DESK

CAPE TOWN: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will open a new parliamentary term Thursday to mark the official start of business for his 11-party coalition government, an uneasy union brought together by an historic election result. Ramaphosa's speech will likely outline the priorities for the new government, which were made clear after his one-dominant African National Congress party lost its parliamentary majority for the first time in the country's May 29 election. Voters driven by anger over extremely high levels of unemployment and inequality and the falling state of many basic public services handed the ANC its most ever result in a national election. In the biggest shift in South African politics since the end of the apartheid system of white minority rule in 1994, the long-ruling ANC dropped to

just 40% of the vote and no party won a majority. The ANC has been forced to share power with others for the first time in South Africa's 30 years of democracy, including with what was the main opposition Democratic Alliance. That means Ramaphosa will also come face-to-face Thursday with a new opposition. It is headed by former South African president and ANC leader Jacob Zuma and led in Parliament by an impeached judge who Ramaphosa removed from his position in March for gross misconduct. The newly-founded MK Party of Zuma surprisingly won the third largest share of the vote in its first election and was formally recognized by Parliament's rules committee this week as the official opposition as the largest party not part of the governing coalition. Zuma, a contentious figure who was forced to resign as president in 2018 amid corruption allegations, has turned against the ANC and become the

fiercest critic of Ramaphosa, who was once Zuma's deputy president. Zuma made MK a significant political force almost overnight due to his lingering popularity in parts of the country, although he was disqualified from serving as a lawmaker for five years from 2022 due to a conviction and short prison term he served for contempt of court for refusing to testify at an inquiry into government graft. Because Zuma can't serve in Parliament, his party appointed former judge John Hlophe as its leader in the legislature. He was a High Court judge who was impeached by Parliament and fired by Ramaphosa for trying to influence other judges in a case dealing with a corruption investigation into Zuma. Ramaphosa's coalition government is made up of 11 parties, with seven of them represented in his new Cabinet. It faces a steep challenge to revive South Africa, where levels of unemployment.

## Fake luxuries supplant tradition in Istanbul's Grand Bazaar

ISTANBUL: Cut-price branded perfumes and fake high-end handbags line the ornate alleys of Istanbul's Grand Bazaar, with traditional merchants saying the luxury counterfeits are stripping the marketplace of its character. Where heritage Turkish crafts once flourished under the Ottoman-era marketplace's painted ceilings, the elegant carpet store run by Hasim Gureli is now surrounded by shops selling designer dupes. "Back in the day, imitations were rare," said Gureli, who is vice-president of the bazaar's traders' association and a member of its board of directors. "When some people started selling fake bags, they kept themselves hidden. They were afraid of the state," the carpet-seller added. Many others among the bazaar's old-timers, who have fond memories of the small workshops that used to fill its labyrinthine alleyways, despair at seeing it overrun by fraudulent facsimiles. Two aisles down, tea set-seller Gazi Uludag lamented that the Grand Bazaar has "lost its unique character." "There is nothing but imported or counterfeit goods left.—DNA

## Kenya police ban protests in the capital

NAIROBI: Kenyan police have banned protests in the centre of the capital, Nairobi, and surrounding areas "until further notice", citing their leaderless nature that has made it difficult to enforce safety. It comes after a month of anti-government protests in which scores of people have been killed. More protests are planned for Thursday. Nairobi city centre has been the heart of the youth-led protests, which have also taken place across the country. The protests began against unpopular tax rises but after they were withdrawn have broadened out, including demands for President William Ruto to resign. Online posters calling for people to gather on Thursday at Uhuru Park in the city centre, before marching to State House, the president's official residence. Late on Wednesday, the police said "no demonstrations will be permitted in the Nairobi Central Business District and its surroundings until further notice to ensure public safety". The ban has sparked outrage online with some arguing that the police do not have such powers, as Kenyan law gives citizens the right to hold demonstrations. Acting head of police Douglas Kanja said in a statement that the decision was taken after receiving "credible intelligence that organised criminal groups are planning to take advantage of the ongoing protests". "Criminals have continued to infiltrate the protesting groups, resulting in a troubling trend of disorderly and destructive conduct," it said. It added that its decision had also been informed by "the lack of designated leadership in previous demonstrations" that had "made it difficult to enforce safety protocols". Since the protests began, the president has caved in to some of the protester's demands, including dropping the contentious finance bill and firing his entire cabinet. The head of the police also resigned. But people have been calling for more action against bad governance and corruption and for police to account for the deaths of dozens of demonstrators at recent rallies. At least 50 protesters have been killed and 413 injured since the protests started on 18 June, according to the state-funded Kenya National Commission on Human Rights.—DNA

## KSA executes 7 Pakistanis among 100 in 2024

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia executed two people convicted of drug trafficking, the interior ministry said on Thursday, bringing the total number of executions carried out this year to at least 106, according to media reports. The official Saudi Press Agency reported the ministry's announcement, saying one was a Saudi national executed for trafficking amphetamines and the other a Pakistani for trafficking heroin, both in Makkah. Saudi authorities resumed executions for drug-related offences at the end of 2022 after a hiatus of nearly three years. Seven of the 106 executions recorded this year have been for drug-related offences, according to the AFP tally, based on official data. In 2023, the authorities executed at least 170 people, including 33 accused of terrorism-related crimes. At this point last year, the Gulf kingdom had executed at least 74 people. On Monday, the Berlin-based European-Saudi Organisation for Human Rights condemned Saudi Arabia for carrying out "one execution almost every two days". "One hundred executions in 196 days demonstrates the Saudi government's insistence on using the death penalty extensively, in violation of international laws and its official commitments," it said in a statement. Those executed this year include 78 Saudis, eight Yemenis, five Ethiopians, seven Pakistanis, three Syrians and one individual each from Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Jordan, India and Sudan, according to the rights organisation and AFP's tally. Two of them were women. Saudi Arabia had executed more people in 2023 than any other country besides China and Iran, Amnesty International said in its annual report on the death penalty for that year. The kingdom, notorious for beheadings, drew a wave of condemnation from around the world when it executed 81 people in a single day in March 2022. The authorities deem the executions to be compatible with Sharia law and necessary to "maintain public order". De facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is seeking to transform the image of the world's biggest crude oil exporter in a bid to draw in tourists and investors.—APP

## PKK terror group's 'intelligence' cell busted

ANKARA: Türkiye's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) has busted a so-called intelligence cell of the PKK terrorist group that was operating in Istanbul, security sources announced Thursday. Two PKK members, Sadık Topaloğlu, code-named "Halil," and Mehmet Savaş were the ringleaders of the intelligence cell and operated under instructions from PKK leaders, sources informed. Topaloğlu illegally crossed over to northern Iraq's Qandil region where the PKK has a stronghold and received intelligence training there. During this period, he frequently met with Cemil Bayk, one of the PKK's ringleaders, code-named "Cuma." Topaloğlu and Savaş were captured in a joint operation by MIT and Istanbul police. Both have since been arrested and jailed on charges of being a member of a terrorist organization. Moreover, MIT found that Topaloğlu was in contact with his older brother Osman Topaloğlu, one of the founders of the NLP Strategic Policies Studies Center which was controlled by PKK's so-called press committee. Topaloğlu was assigned to Türkiye by another PKK ringleader, Mustafa Karasu, where he gathered intelligence for the group under the pretext of "journalism." He oversaw financial affairs with Savaş on behalf of the terrorist group and supplied materials for PKK members in northern Syria through a shell company he set up in Türkiye. The two suspects were ordered to incite chaos in Türkiye through propaganda, street marches and official press releases as part of foreign influence activities. PKK terrorists Cemil Bayk, code-named "Cuma," and Sadık Topaloğlu, code-named "Halil," pose for a picture in an unnamed location in this photo provided by security forces.—DNA

## N.Korea launching more trash balloons

SEOUL: North Korea is launching more balloons believed to be carrying trash toward the South, Seoul's military said Thursday, in the latest round of a tit-for-tat balloon war between the two Koreas. Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the North was "launching (suspected) trash balloons aimed at the South once again," adding they were currently floating across the border. "Citizens are advised to be cautious of falling debris. If you find any fallen balloons do not touch them and report them to the nearest military unit or police station," it added. Seoul city authorities issued an alert to residents Thursday, saying "a suspected balloon from North Korea is confirmed to have entered the airspace of Northern Gyeonggi province. Citizens should be cautious of outside activities." This is the eighth round of trash-carrying balloons launched by Pyongyang since late May. The nuclear-armed North has already sent more than a thousand of the balloons south, calling it retaliation for ones carrying anti-regime propaganda floated northwards by activists south of the border. In response to the trash balloons, Seoul has fully suspended a tension-reducing military deal and restarted some propaganda broadcasts.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja chairing 60th Board of Directors meeting of Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB).—DNA

## Fidan discusses battle against terrorism during Niger visit

Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan discussed advancing defence industry and intelligence capacity in Niger, echoing Ankara's efforts in Somalia within the counterterrorism framework

## WEB DESK

ANKARA: Türkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said that during a recent visit to Niger, he discussed the fight against terrorism, "which is the main source of instability in the Sahel region." "We discussed what could be done to advance the defence industry and intelligence capacity within the framework of counterterrorism in Niger, as we have done in Somalia. We also discussed what steps we will take against terrorism, which is the main source of instability in the Sahel region," Fidan told reporters in the Nigerien capital, Niamey. Turkish National Defence Minister Yas

ar Guler, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Alparslan Bayraktar, National Intelligence Organisation chief Ibrahim Kalin and other officials were also present at the news conference. Noting that Türkiye maintains embassies in 44 out of 54 African countries, Fidan said: "Our partnership policy with Africa is progressing and becoming more institutionalised every day. Our joint efforts with African countries in areas such as diplomacy, economy, finance, security, defence, education, and health are intensifying." Fidan underlined that Türkiye's historical ties with Niger date back to the time of the Ottoman Empire and that Turkish officials have been working in recent years to place

bilateral ties on a more structural footing. "As we develop our relations with Africa, we are implementing initiatives that prioritise the benefit and welfare of the local people, our brothers. Peace, security, and stability in Africa are also among our priorities. As you know, the problems of instability and terrorism in the Sahel region have become increasingly chronic," he added. Wide range of issues Fidan said they discussed many issues, including counterterrorism, education, energy, health, trade, security, and defence, which in the West African nation. He added that as a delegation, they met with Nigerian Prime Minister Ali Lamine Zeine, ministers, and heads of institutions.

They also held three working groups, where detailed discussions on foreign policy, security, defence, energy and mining, economy, and trade took place, said the Turkish foreign minister. Fidan added that they were received by Abdourahamane Tchiani, Niger's President of the National Council, for the Safeguard of the Homeland. They evaluated the outcomes of the meetings and agreed on a series of joint steps, he said. Stressing that Ankara's policy is to share its counterterrorism experience with friendly nations, Fidan underlined that terrorism was one of the major problems faced by Africans. "We evaluated how to further advance activities in the fields of education and

health, such as the Friendship Hospital and Maarif Schools scholarships," he said "We also discussed enhancing cooperation in the areas of economy and finance. Various topics were addressed, including increasing the number of Turkish investors, contracting services, and strengthening the contractual basis of trade." Noting that they had productive discussions on the issues of energy and mining, Fidan said they agreed to develop cooperation and increase investments. "We will systematically follow up on the decisions made. The issues scheduled on the agenda will be implemented in coordination with our relevant ministries and institutions. I hope our visit will be beneficial for both countries," he said.

**Briefs**

**SHCBA  
opposes ad hoc judges  
in SC**

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court Bar Association on Thursday opposed the appointment of ad hoc judges in the Supreme Court. According to the Sindh High Court Bar Association, they condemned the notification issued for ad hoc judges and demanded that the notification be withdrawn. Permanent judges should be appointed to clear the backlog, said the statement. The Sindh High Court Bar Association demanded that the notification be withdrawn and senior judges of the High Court be elevated instead. Earlier, the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) supported the appointment of ad hoc judges in the Supreme Court. According to the Pakistan Bar Council's statement, "The cases of ordinary litigants in the Supreme Court are facing delays due to political cases. The bar has also demanded the establishment of a separate constitutional court."

**Imran Khan,  
Bushra Bibi  
move IHC  
against arrest**

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi approached the IHC against their arrest in the Toshakhana case. On behalf of Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi, the application was filed in the IHC by Barrister Salman Safdar and Khalid Yusuf Chaudhry. Chairman NAB, DG NAB and other officers have been made parties in the petition. The court is requested to declare the arrest illegal. It is also requested to issue orders for their release and to make the arrest subject to the orders of the High Court in the future. According to the petition, Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi were arrested without warrant in fake cases for political revenge. It was said in the petition that both the accused were arrested during the hearing of the petitions. The political opponents are using NAB for political revenge, it said. The high courts have emphasized in their judgments that an arrest cannot be made merely on the filing of a case, the petition said. It is further stated in the petition that there was an investigation involving Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi and that there was no need to arrest the PTI founder, Bushra Bibi immediately after the release in the Iddat case. There is also a violation of the orders of the High Court.

**Syrian  
Baath Party  
clinches  
control of  
parliament**

DAMASCUS: The results of Syria's parliamentary elections, announced Thursday, showed that President Bashar Assad's Baath Party has won a majority of seats, as expected. The elections for 250 parliamentary seats were held Monday at 8,151 centers in government-held areas of the country, but the voting was repeated in several districts – including Aleppo, Latakia, Hama and Daraa – after election officials said there had been irregularities, including voters casting ballots twice. The heads of some electoral centers were referred to the judiciary for alleged electoral violations. Altogether, 1,516 candidates were competing for the 250 seats. However, only 65 of those seats were seen as truly up for competition, as the Baath Party and allied parties presented a list of 185 candidates. Typically, all candidates who make it through the Baath Party primaries and appear on the final list win seats. The results announced Thursday showed that all 185 candidates from the Baath Party and its allies won seats as expected, an increase from the 177 seats won by the coalition in 2020. – Agencies

**PMPMA urges supportive policies for local industry**

*Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb acknowledged the valuable feedback and underscored the government's commitment for expanding the entire digital ecosystem in the country*

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb was called on by the representatives of Pakistan Mobile Phone Manufacturers Association (PMPMA) at the Finance Division today. Senior officials from the relevant ministries attended the meeting. The PMPMA delegation thanked the Finance Minister and highlighted the necessity for a stable and supportive policy environment that encourages local manufacturers. They advocated for measures to ensure that international brands support the domestic industry and consequently, the national economy. The delegation also presented proposals aimed at promoting the growth of the local industry and increasing the exports of the mobile phone manufacturing industry. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb acknowledged the valuable feedback and underscored the government's commitment for expanding the entire digital ecosystem in the country. He emphasized the importance of maintaining policy continuity and increasing the focus on the policy framework for exports. The Minister reaffirmed the Government's commitment for fos-



...tering export-led growth and providing a conducive environment for local manufacturers. The meeting concluded with a mutual agreement on the need for a strategic and supportive policy framework aimed at fostering local manufacturing and enhancing export potential, thereby contributing to the broader goals of national economic growth and digital transformation.

**Israel bombards central Gaza as tanks advance in Rafah**

More than a million people had sought shelter in Rafah from fighting further north, but most have scattered again since Israel launched an offensive in and around the city in May

NEWS DESK

CAIRO: Israeli forces bombarded the Gaza Strip's historic refugee camps in the center of the enclave and struck Gaza City in the north on Thursday, killing at least 13 people, and tanks pushed deeper into Rafah in the south, health officials and residents said. One Israeli airstrike killed six people in Zawayda town in central Gaza and two other people were killed in a strike on a house in Bureij camp. An Israeli air strike killed three people in a car in Deir Al-Balah, a city packed with people displaced from elsewhere in Gaza, health officials said. In Gaza City in the north, medics said two Palestinians were killed in another airstrike. The Israeli military said in a statement its forces killed two senior Islamic Jihad commanders in two airstrikes in Gaza City, including one whom it said had taken part in the Oct. 7 attack

in southern Israel that triggered the Gaza war. In Rafah, residents said Israeli tanks advanced deeper in the western side of the city and took position on a hilltop there. The Israeli military said forces located several tunnels and killed several gunmen. The armed wing of militant group Hamas and its allies said they fired mortar bombs at Israeli forces in southwest Rafah on Thursday. More than a million people had sought shelter in Rafah from fighting further north, but most have scattered again since Israel launched an offensive in and around the city in May. The fighting has pushed the 60-bed Red Cross field hospital in Rafah to the brink of capacity, ICRC said in a statement on Thursday. "The repeated mass casualty events resulting from the unrelenting hostilities have stretched to breaking point the response capacity of our hospital – and all health facilities in southern Gaza – to care for those with life-threatening injuries," said William Schomburg, head of ICRC's subdelegation in Gaza.

**Sanam walks free after IHC declares her arrest illegal**

Have seen Sanam Javaid's use of inappropriate language: IHC judge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court's (IHC) Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb on Thursday underscored the inappropriate language used by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) firebrand activist Sanam Javaid and sought her lawyer's assurance that such conduct won't be repeated. "[I] saw [Sanam] Javaid using inappropriate language on the internet," Justice Aurangzeb remarked while hearing the PTI leader's plea seeking her release. For months, Javaid has been embroiled in legal battles and has faced arrests and rearrest in multiple cases related to the May 9 riots, triggered after former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan's arrest in a graft case, which saw several military installations being vandalised. She has been acquitted in a total of four cases including the one filed by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) recently,

and has acquired bail in the remaining eight cases. On Monday, the PTI activist secured a major relief after the high court ordered her release and prevented the police and other law enforcement agencies from arresting her till Thursday (today). The court's orders came after her father had moved the court against his daughter's arrest which came soon after her release in the case registered by the FIA. A day earlier, she was shifted to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House in Islamabad on KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's orders. During the hearing of the plea filed against her arrest today, the PTI activist's lawyer assured the court that his client would not indulge in improper use of language in future. Meanwhile, appearing before the court, Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan said that Balochistan police weren't insisting on securing the transit remand of the activist. The remarks refer to the latest case lodged against Javaid in Balochistan under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

**Ursula Leyen re-elected EU president by large majority**

"The last five years have shown what we can do together," she said. "Let us do it again. Let us make the choice of strength. Let us make the choice of leadership"



FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: The re-election was shrouded in uncertainty and rested on complicated arithmetic among the four centrist parties. Ursula von der Leyen has been re-elected as president of the European Commission in a make-or-break vote on Thursday that represented the single greatest test of her political legacy, forged across a succession of crises that have rattled the bloc's foundations. Following a grilling in the European Parliament, the incumbent received 401 votes in favour and 284 against, a large majority to support her second five-year term. The comfortable result is a decisive backing of her stewardship and marks

a significant turnaround from the last time she faced the hemicycle: back in 2019, she made it through with a record-breaking, razor-thin margin of just nine votes. "The last five years have shown what we can do together," she said. "Let us do it again. Let us make the choice of strength. Let us make the choice of leadership." The resolution caps intense days of closed-door negotiations that saw the 65-year-old German politician frantically meet with the Parliament's main groups – in some cases, several times – to secure as many endorsements as possible. Although the three centrist groups – the European People's Party (EPP), the Socialists & Democrats (S&D) and the liberals of Renew Europe – had enough seats to re-appoint her, internal disagreements hinted at shaky arithmetic, forcing von der Leyen to reach out to the Greens and the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) for additional support. Her overture to the hard-right ECR, led by Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy and Poland's Law and Justice (PiS), proved controversial for progressive forces, who saw it as a threat to the centrist coalition. Von der Leyen sought to assuage these fears by promising "no structured cooperation" with Meloni's group and re-committing herself to the goals of the Green Deal, which her centre-right family has increasingly challenged. The secret nature of the vote makes it impossible to ascertain who voted for and against her candidacy. But the speech delivered on Thursday morning, with several pointed references to climate action, suggests it was the Greens who acted as king-maker.

**Vance vows to fight for 'forgotten' Americans**

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's vice-presidential pick JD Vance vowed in a primetime speech to fight for working-class Americans that he argued had been "cast aside and forgotten" by the Democrats. Introducing himself to millions of Americans watching on TV at home, the Ohio senator channelled his humble roots in the Midwest as he assailed "career politicians" like President Joe Biden. He argued in his address at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, that Trump was the "last best hope" for Americans. Trump and his running mate will challenge the Democratic White House ticket, currently Mr Biden and his Vice-President, Kamala Harris, in November's election. Mr Biden's account on X, formerly Twitter, hit back at Mr Vance on Wednesday night, over his positions on abortion and Ukraine. Mr Vance, 39, is hoping to become one of the youngest vice-presidents in US history. In the speech, he charted his journey from a difficult childhood in small-town Ohio to the US Marines, Yale Law School, and finally the US Senate.

**Govt can declare a party banned: Rana**

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: PML-N senior leader Rana Sanullah Khan says Article 17 of the Constitution allows the government to give declaration to ban a political party. Speaking at a TV talk show, Sanullah said that after approval by the cabinet the declaration to ban a political party is referred to the Supreme Court within 15 days. "If the apex court agrees to the declaration, a ban is imposed on that party," Sanullah said, adding the government had only expressed its intentions (with regard to banning the PTI) so far. He said once the government takes a decision, the constitutional procedure will be followed. The former minister said like the PTI, the government also has the right to present its point of view and strive for its success. "There is no harm in making efforts if the government has an option to get the reserved seats through constitutional means," he added.

**Russian trial of US reporter Gershkovich reaches final stages**

YEKATERINBURG: A Russian court on Friday will hear closing arguments in the expedited espionage trial of US reporter Evan Gershkovich, a case that his employer and the White House have denounced as a sham. The 32-year-old became the first Western journalist in Russia to be charged with spying since the Soviet era, when he was detained in March 2023 on a reporting trip to the Urals city of Yekaterinburg. He has spent almost 16 months in Russian detention and faces a prison sentence of up to 20 years if found guilty. After only the second hearing in the closed-door trial at Yekaterinburg's Sverdlovsk Regional Court Thursday, a court spokesperson said the judge would hear closing arguments in a session set for Friday. "Tomorrow there will be a hearing at 10:30 (0530 GMT), there will be closing arguments," Ekaterina Maslennikova, head of the Sverdlovsk Regional Court press service, told AFP outside the court on Thursday. Thursday's hearing was moved forward by almost a month at the request of his defence team. The sudden rapid progress in the case marks a swift change after Gershkovich spent 15 months locked up in Moscow's notorious Lefortovo prison. His pre-trial detention was routinely extended in a series of court hearings in the capital, which Gershkovich attended, standing in a cell or glass cage for defendants. Journalists did not see Gershkovich during Thursday's hearing, which was held behind closed doors. Moscow and Washington have both said they are open to exchanging the Wall Street Journal reporter in a deal, but neither has given clues on when that might happen. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Wednesday that talks between US and Russian special services over possible prisoner exchanges were ongoing, without naming any specific individuals. – Agencies

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