



# Islamabad POST

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**President for boosting Pak-Turkmen ties**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Bangladesh PM blames political foes for violence**

Detailed News On Page-08



## To achieve economic goals

# PM gives \$60 bln target for annual exports in 3 years

Calling for collective efforts for the country's development, he paid tribute to the business community and investors for their role in increasing exports despite tough circumstances

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday chaired a meeting of the National Export Development Board wherein he tasked the authorities concerned to take the country's annual exports to \$60 billion within three years. The prime minister asked the commerce ministry and other relevant departments to take all necessary measures to achieve the given target. He said the country's exports crossed the \$30 billion mark during the previous fiscal year, and the government's policies also took the IT exports to over \$3.2 billion. The prime minister asked the ministry to resolve the issues pointed out by the exporters and present a report within two weeks. He said that he would personally chair the National Export Development Board meeting

PICTURE ON BACK PAGE

every one-and-half months. Calling for collective efforts for the country's development, he paid tribute to the business community and investors for their role in increasing exports despite tough circumstances. Prime Minister Shehbaz asked the commerce ministry to finalise the policy proposals, in coordination with representatives of the potential export sectors. He also tasked the Ministry of National Food Security to improve extension services, in coordination with provinces, to enhance agricultural exports. He instructed for exporting of quality seeds and agricultural products after further processing and taking measures to introduce crop varieties with high yields. He said that the delivery time of

Continued on Page 06

## PPP also files review plea on reserved seats verdict

PPP objects to granting reserved seats to PTI, arguing that it had not claimed any entitlement to them

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: After the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), its coalition partner Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has also filed a review petition against the Supreme Court verdict granting reserved seats to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). On behalf of the PPP, Farooq H Naek filed the plea, seeking to overturn the apex court verdict of July 12

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## NATIONAL DAY OF EGYPT



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Ambassador of Egypt Dr. Ihab Abdelhamid and others cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of Egypt. - DNA

## NDMA forecasts 'significant' rainfall

Storms and rain expected in Karachi, Hyderabad, Umakot, Mirpur Khas from July 24-27

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority's (NDMA) National Emergencies Operation Center has forecast strong monsoon currents to penetrate from the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal in upper regions of Pakistan. The NDMA, in a statement on Tuesday, said that these monsoon currents may lead to a series of rains across various parts of the country over the next 24 hours and may continue

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## Fin Min Aurangzeb heads to Beijing

Discussions will also address issues related to China's energy circular debt and collaborative projects

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Federal Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb embarked on a three-day visit to China today, aiming to discuss the rescheduling of a \$15 billion energy loan. According to sources from the Ministry of Finance, a joint working group may be established between Pakistan and

Continued on Page 06

## To demand Imran's release PTI holds 'symbolic hunger strike' outside Parliament House

Hunger strike camp established outside Parliament House against injustices, says Barrister Gohar

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The embattled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Tuesday established a hunger strike camp outside the Parliament House in Islamabad to demand release of the party founder Imran Khan and other leaders. The former ruling party has faced back-to-back setbacks in a few days as its central secretariat in the federal capital was sealed by the authorities earlier today a day after the party's Information Secretary Raouf Hasan was nabbed along with the other party workers. A day earlier, Islamabad police took Hasan into custody from the party's Central Secretariat for heading a digital media cell and its alleged involvement in running anti-Pakistan propaganda. Speaking to journalists outside parliament, the party chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said that the hunger strike will be observed daily

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## UK parliamentarians demand Imran Khan's immediate release

Over 22 MPs from major parties attend hearing on PTI founder in House of Lord's Committee Room

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Nearly two dozen UK members of parliament have called for the immediate release of Imran Khan, the former prime minister of Pakistan, currently imprisoned in Adiala jail with his wife Bushra Begum. The demand for Khan's release was made

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### Imran refuses to undergo polygraph test

Khan cooperated with Lahore cops after initial refusal

COURT REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan has refused to undergo polygraph and voice matching test as a part of investigation launched by Lahore police regarding May 9 cases. The Lahore police - led by DSP Javed Asif - had visited Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi and completed the first round of its investigation against Imran Khan in the May 9 cases. The PTI founder answered the questions of police for 15 minutes after DSP Javed Asif vowed to dispense justice. Meanwhile, the former premier refused to undergo the above mentioned tests to the Punjab Forensic Science Agency's team.

### TTP Pak's 'red line', hope Afghan govt will take action

At the same time, Durrani said, "We have to deal with the Afghan government with patience and perseverance. Pak desires peace and stability in Afghanistan"

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Special Envoy for Afghanistan Ambassador Asif Khan Durrani on Tuesday said the banned militant TTP group was the country's "red line" and there were hopes that the interim Afghan government would take effective action against the outfit. "Terrorism emanating out of Afghanistan is a concern not only for Pakistan but other neighbouring countries like China, Iran, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan as well," Ambassador Durrani said at a roundtable discussion on "Pak-Afghan Relations.

## "Mastermind" of May 9

# PML-N, PPP blast Imran after protest 'confession'

Sherry Rehman says only confession not enough, but PTI founder should tender apology for his crimes

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) have taken former prime minister Imran Khan to task over his alleged confession to orchestrating a protest outside the army's headquarters. The development has come after Khan, while speaking to journalists during a hearing of a case inside Adiala jail on Monday, acknowledged he had given a call for holding a peaceful protest outside the Pakistan Army's General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, before his arrest in response to the "attack" on his Zaman park residence by law enforcers. In response to the PTI founder's claim reported by media, the party leaders have said that the remarks were wrongly attributed to Khan as he had not said such a thing. PML-N leader and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, in a statement, said the "mastermind" of May 9 incidents had finally confessed to the sin of architecting and facilitating them. Maryam termed the PTI an anarchist group,

Continued on Page 06

## Court grants FIA two-day remand of Raouf Hasan

FIA accuses PTI leader, workers of spreading anti-state propaganda; FIR includes multiple PECA sections

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in Islamabad on Tuesday granted a two-day physical remand of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Information Secretary Raouf Hasan to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in a case related to his alleged involvement in disseminating anti-state propaganda. Presenting the PTI official before the court, the FIA prosecutor requested the court to grant physical remand of the suspect for recovering devices -

Continued on Page 06

# Hamas, Fatah sign unity deal aimed at Gaza governance

The factions have agreed an 'interim national reconciliation govt', says Chinese Foreign Ministry

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: Palestinian factions have signed a "national unity" agreement aimed at maintaining Palestinian control over Gaza once Israel's war on the enclave concludes. The deal, finalised on Tuesday in China after three days of intensive talks, lays the groundwork for an "interim national reconciliation government" to rule post-war Gaza, said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The agreement was signed by long-term rivals Hamas and Fatah, as well as 12 other Palestinian groups. "Today we sign an agreement for national unity and we say that the path to completing this journey is national unity," said senior Hamas official Mousa Abu Marzouk at a news conference in Beijing. Mustafa Barghouti, secretary-general of the Palestinian National Initiative, one of the 14 factions to sign the accord, told Al Jazeera the agreement goes "much further" than any other reached in recent years. He said its four main elements are the establishment of an interim national unity government, the formation of unified Palestinian leadership ahead of future elections, the free election of a new Palestinian

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## Secret Service chief resigns over Trump shooting

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: US Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle resigned on Tuesday, a day after acknowledging that the agency failed in its mission to prevent an assassination attempt against Donald Trump. Cheatle was facing bipartisan calls to step down after a 20-year-old gunman wounded the former Republican president and current White House candidate at a July 13 campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. "It is overdue, she should have done this at least a week ago," Mike Johnson, the Republican Speaker of

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# CDA, FCDO collaborate to transform capital into a modern city

Chairman CDA Mohammad Ali Randhawa emphasized the importance of collaboration for sustainable and efficient projects to modernize and prosper Islamabad

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Chairman CDA Mohammad Ali Randhawa Tuesday met with FCDO British High Commission Development Director Joe Mayur and his delegation to discuss potential areas of cooperation for the development of Islamabad. The meeting aimed to transform Islamabad into a brand city through various initiatives. The CDA briefed the delegation on proposed projects to modernize Islamabad, including digitization of infrastructure and services, large-scale plantation to increase green cover, digital parking management, and digital billboards for outdoor advertising. It was decided to digitize property tax collection for increased efficiency and transparency. The meeting also gave consent for technical assistance for obtaining carbon credits and formation of a joint working group to enhance cooperation and develop multi-term goals. Chairman CDA Mohammad Ali Randhawa emphasized the importance of collaboration for sustainable and efficient projects to modernize and prosper Islamabad. The joint working group will set timelines to achieve these goals, paving the way for a transformed Islamabad. Earlier on, in a significant move towards enhancing citizen convenience and

transparency, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) is embarking on an ambitious digitization drive. Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Tuesday presided over a meeting to oversee the progress of various digitization projects. The authority is set to launch a case management system, offering over 130 services to citizens on their mobile phones. Additionally, birth and death certificates, property tax, and other municipal functions will be digitized, making it easier for citizens to access these services. A property management system is also in the works, which will digitize over 85,000 property files. Furthermore, an App is being developed to provide easy access to CDA services, currently in its trial phase. The digital parking project is nearing completion, with software ready and hardware expected to arrive by month-end. To ensure transparency in revenue collection, Chairman Randhawa emphasized the need for a reputable third-party monitor. The revenue generated from digital parking will be utilized for construction, repair, and renovation of parking locations, ultimately improving facilities for citizens. Meanwhile, in response to the torrential rains that hit the city on Tuesday, the Islamabad Administration and Capital Development Authority (CDA) have swung

into action to ensure the smooth flow of traffic and prevent water-logging. Under the direction of Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, joint teams comprising officials from CDA, Municipal Corporation Islamabad (MCI), and the district administration are working together to monitor the situation and take necessary measures. Deputy Commissioner Islamabad is supervising the drainage process, while Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) and Assistant Commissioners are also part of the operation. Teams from CDA, MCI, and 1122 are actively participating in the efforts. According to the CDA spokesman, traffic is flowing normally on all roads in Islamabad, and staff and machinery are present in the field to monitor the drains and ensure the free flow of water. The Chief Commissioner has instructed officials to strictly monitor all highways, drains, and waterways in Islamabad and ensure the drainage of water at underpasses and other places. Special attention is being given to low-lying areas, where strict monitoring is being carried out to prevent water accumulation. Citizens have been advised to contact the CDA helpline number in case of any emergency, and complaints are being addressed in a timely manner.



RAWALPINDI: Isphanyar Bhandara in Krishna Mandir at oath taking ceremony of Hindu Community welfare organisation of Rawalpindi on Saturday the 20th July.—DNA

## LESCO collects over Rs 4.32m in 24 hours

LAHORE: Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has recovered more than Rs 4.32 million from 130 defaulters in all the five districts—Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara—on the 269th day of its recovery campaign. The LESCO spokesman told media here Tuesday that on the 269th day, SE (Superintending Engineer) Nisar Sarwar has recovered outstanding dues of Rs 0.32 million from 15 defaulters in Northern Circle; SE Umar Bilal recovered Rs 0.39 million from 21 defaulters in Eastern Circle; SE (Central Circle) Shabbir recovered Rs 0.39 million from 21 defaulters; SE (South Circle) Zafarullah Sanghi collected Rs 0.31 million from 11 defaulters; SE (Nankana Circle) Muhammad Husain recovered Rs 0.71 million from 13 defaulters; SE (Sheikhupura Circle) Najamul Hassan recovered Rs 0.46 million from 22 defaulters; SE (Okara Circle) Jamshaid Zaman collected Rs 0.64 million from 16 defaulters and SE (Kasur Circle) Ahmad Shahzad Chughtai recovered Rs 0.51 million from 14 defaulters in Kasur Circle. During the 268 days of anti-power theft campaign under the supervision of Director (Customer Services) Rai Muhammad Asghar, the spokesman added, the company recovered more than Rs 3.33 billion outstanding dues from 108,163 defaulters.—APP

## Ashrafi urges political parties to play role for country's stability

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Tuesday stressed all the political parties to be united and work collectively to bring stability in the country, keeping aside the political differences. Addressing a press conference, he said that unity is the need of hour to steer the country out of prevailing challenges. Maulana Tahir Ashrafi announced to hold a series of activities including press

conferences, seminars and conventions under the title "Pakistan's Stability" which will take place from August 1-30. The challenges being faced by the country and their solutions will be highlighted during these month long activities, he said. The Chairman PUC also emphasized on implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) and said, "Terrorism and extremism should be eradicated through implementation of NAP in letter and spirit". Ashrafi also expressed concern over the lack of punish-

ment for criminals involved in the incidents of May 9, over a year ago, and called for ensuring swift justice. On the occasion of Independence Day, Pakistani flags will be hoisted at all mosques and madrassas across the country, he added. Ashrafi said that PUC's initiatives aims to foster a sense of national unity and address pressing issues affecting the country's stability. He also condemned the desecration of the Pakistani flag in Frankfurt, Germany. He said that "the Pakistani flag is our red line".

## Metro Bus provides world class facilities to people

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak here on Tuesday said that Metro Bus Service was providing world class travel facilities to the citizens. Chairing a high level meeting regarding new feasibility study of the Metro Bus Service he said, in proportion to the population of the city, it has become necessary to increase the frequency of buses and routes. It was informed in the briefing that Metro Bus Service was providing travel facilities on six routes. NESPAK representatives briefed the Commissioner regarding the new feasibility study of metro bus service. Work is in progress regarding the new feasibility study of the Metro Bus Service in proportion to the growing population.—APP

## NCSW hosts conference on Women with disabilities

ISLAMABAD :The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) on Tuesday hosted a groundbreaking national conference on women with disabilities as part of its esteemed series, "The Next Horizon". This significant event convened experts from across Pakistan to chart a progressive path forward for the empowerment of women with disabilities. Chairperson NCSW, Nilofar Bakhtiar in her opening remarks, underscored the pressing need to address the challenges faced by differently abled women in Pakistan. She highlighted the critical importance of making public spaces universally accessible and ensuring comprehensive support in health and education sectors. Deputy Representative of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Latika Maskey Pradhan lauded NCSW's

efforts and reaffirmed UNFPA's commitment to empowering all women in Pakistan, advocating for a healthier and more inclusive society. Senator Mahesh Kumar, the chief guest of the inaugural session, pledged his unwavering support for the empowerment of differently abled women in Pakistan. He emphasized the need for societal reforms to foster inclusivity and equality. Federal Secretary for Law and Justice, Raja Naem Akbar, reiterated the ministry's dedication to providing equal opportunities for all citizens. Federal Secretary for Education, Mohyuddin Wani, expressed his commitment to crafting inclusive education policies. Federal Secretary for Human Rights, Allah Dino Khawaja, announced the forthcoming launch of the

Integrated Social Welfare System, a groundbreaking initiative designed to provide comprehensive support to persons with disabilities. This innovative system will be interconnected with all relevant authorities, ensuring seamless assistance and empowerment at the highest level. The conference featured dynamic group discussions focused on four pivotal areas, Legal Framework and Protection, Accessibility and Inclusive Services, Education and Employment Opportunities, Combating Gender Violence and Support. This conference marks a significant step forward in the ongoing efforts to empower women with disabilities in Pakistan, reflecting NCSW's unwavering commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable society.

## RCCI assures coop with the visiting delegation of OCCI

DNA

RAWALPINDI: President, RCCI, Mr. Saqib Rafiq had a meeting with the visiting delegation of Oman Chamber of Commerce headed by H.E Ibtisam Ahmed Said Al Farooji, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion of Oman. Matters related to the close cooperation between the Chambers of Commerce and joint ventures and exploring investment opportunities in various sectors including, Energy, IT, Tourism, Poultry, Gems and Pharmaceutical etc were discussed. Other

dignitaries included Ambassador of Oman to Pakistan, representatives of Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry and representatives

from private sector, TDAP representatives, including Mr. Arif Ullah and Mr. Ishaq Shinwari were also present on the occasion along with

Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh and Executive Committee Member Ikram ur Rehman Abbasi.



## Glacier falls in Narran, claims 2 lives

ISLAMABAD: A piece of glacier fell in the Narran area of Mansehra, burying two members of a family from Rajanpur on Tuesday. According to a private news channel and police, the family was taking photographs under the glacier on Lake Road when the ice suddenly broke and fell on them. According to the police, 22-year-old Mehran and his 13-year-old niece died on the spot after being buried under the snow. Local residents retrieved their bodies and transported them to Narran Basic Health Unit (BHU), from where they were sent to Rajanpur by ambulance.—APP

## Indonesian diplomat for collaboration to increase mutual trade

LCCI President Kashif Anwar expressed LCCI's eagerness to learn from Indonesian technology and advancements

ABID RAZA

LAHORE : Charge d' Affaires of Indonesia Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma has said that this is time of collaboration to bring the trade between the two countries at a par with the potential. Talking to the business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Tuesday, LCCI President Kashif Anwar welcomed the diplomat and highlighted the trade and economic ties between the two countries. LCCI Executive Committee Members Raja Hassan Akhter and Mian Atiq ur Rehman were also present. LCCI President Kashif Anwar expressed LCCI's eagerness to learn from Indonesian technology and advancements. He agreed with the diplomat on the significance of economic stability and the low cost of doing business. He urged LCCI members to participate in the 39th Trade Expo-Indonesia, scheduled from October 9 to 12, 2024. Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma emphasized the importance

of collaboration to elevate the trade between Indonesia and Pakistan to its full potential. He said that Indonesia is the largest economy in Southeast Asia, with stable economic growth. "Indonesia, with a GDP exceeding \$1 trillion, is the world's 16th largest economy and is projected to be the 7th largest by 2030," he stated. He highlighted that Indonesia's economic growth has remained stable at around 5% annually over the last two decades. The Indonesian diplomat stressed the need for stronger liaison between the business communities of both countries, highlighting mutual benefits from each other's potential and experience. He emphasized the promotion of cooperation in multiple sectors, including tourism, education, health, and IT. LCCI President Kashif Anwar highlighted the remarkable increase in Pakistan's exports to Indonesia, which surged from US \$ 127 million in 2022-23 to US \$ 534 million in 2023-24.

This increase elevated the bilateral trade figures from US \$ 2.77 billion to US \$ 2.95 billion and reduced Pakistan's trade deficit with Indonesia from US \$ 2.5 billion to US \$ 1.9 billion. He said that Pakistan's imports from Indonesia primarily comprise palm oil, coal, and synthetic fibers for textiles, while major exports to Indonesia include rice, ethyl alcohol, woven fabrics, frozen fish, citrus fruits, leather products, and cotton yarn. He emphasized the potential for Pakistan to further enhance its exports to Indonesia, given Indonesia's global imports exceeding US \$ 220 billion. The LCCI President identified various products such as wheat, pharmaceutical products, parts for tractors/motorcycles, sugar, copper, dairy products, meat, processed food, and surgical instruments as potential exports. He suggested utilizing existing trade agreements to reduce tariffs and non-tariff barriers, making it easier and more cost-effective

for businesses to trade. He also highlighted the importance of promoting e-commerce and digital trade platforms to facilitate cross-border business growth. Regarding the tourism sector, Kashif Anwar said that Pakistan's breathtaking landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and centuries-old civilizations, stressing the untapped potential of tourism between Pakistan and Indonesia. He advocated for increasing the frequency of direct flights, organizing trade delegations, and holding single-country exhibitions on a reciprocal basis to enhance mutual trade relations. The LCCI President mentioned the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) established by the government of Pakistan, which focuses on expediting new investments in defense, agriculture, minerals, IT/telecommunication, and energy. He encouraged Indonesian diplomat to inform Indonesian investors about these opportunities and promote joint ventures in Pakistan.

### General Practice

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### National Days and Armed Forces Days

#### JULY

July 01/Japan  
Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore  
Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada  
National Day

July 01/Somalia  
Independence Day

July 04/USA  
Independence Day

July 05/Algeria  
Independence Day

July 09/Argentina  
Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia  
Revolution Day

July 14/France  
National Day

July 15/Brunei  
Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium  
National Day

July 20/TRNC  
Independence Day

July 23/Egypt  
National Day

July 26/Cuba  
National Day

July 26/Liberia  
National Day

July 30/Morocco  
National Day

### Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

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Cantonment Board 9270151-3

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Pakistan, Egypt agree to enhance mutual cooperation

Egyptian ambassador calls on Religious Affairs Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain here on Tuesday said that Pakistan wants to strengthen its relationship with Egypt in various areas of mutual interest, including religious education. The minister said this during a meeting with Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan, Dr. Ihab Mohamed Abdelhamid Hassan where the two sides discussed ways to further enhance bilateral relations between Pakistan and Egypt. Both the dignitaries also discussed to exchange mutual studies in enhancing the Masjid roles as center of religious, spiritual, social guidance and social services. The ambassador who called on the federal minister at his office informed him about establishing an institution in Punjab affiliated with Alazhar university to impart religious education. The ambassador said 11 professors of Egypt are already teaching in different faculties in International Islamic University Islamabad. He also invited the minister to attend a conference on the role of women in building awareness.



## Pak Navy takes over command of combined task force

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy has taken over the command of Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150) for the 13th time at an impressive change of command ceremony held at Headquarters US NAVCENT, Bahrain. Commodore Asim Sohail Malik of Pakistan Navy assumed the Command from Capt Mathews of Royal Canadian Navy. CTF 150 is one of the five Task Forces operating within the ambit of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). Its mission is to promote maritime secu-

urity in order to counter illicit activities at sea. While addressing the audience, the incoming Commander CTF-150, Commodore Asim Sohail Malik assured that his team is fully geared up to efficiently shoulder this prestigious responsibility to contribute towards Maritime Security and Stability in the region. He lauded the outgoing Commander, Capt Mathews of Royal Canadian Navy and his team for their staunch commitment and commendable services to achieve the set objectives of CTF-150. Commodore Asim Sohail

Malik underlined that CTF-150 area of responsibility consists of some of the world's most challenging and important international waters. He assured that his team will strive to further strengthen efforts of this multinational task force to provide a robust security in this vital maritime region. The CCTF also highlighted that Pakistan Navy is committed to work with coalition navies for ensuring peace and stability within the Area of Responsibility. Pakistan Navy has the distinction of commanding CTF-150 twelve times previously.

This being 13th Command, is a manifestation of the trust and respect reposed in Pakistan Navy by the coalition partners. The change of command ceremony was attended by Ambassador of Pakistan to Bahrain H.E Saqib Rauf, Honorary Consul of Canada in Bahrain Mr. Hatim Zubi, Commander Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) Vice Admiral George M. Wikoff, Commander Royal Bahrain Naval Force, Rear Admiral Ahmed Al Binali besides representatives of several other navies operating with CM.

## RWMC appoints additional workforce

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) has deputed additional sanitary workers to clean and dredge major drains to avoid urban flooding. According to the RWMC spokesman, the RWMC carried out the cleanliness of nullahs and choked drains during rainfall on Wednesday late at night to ensure sanitation in several city areas. He said that additional staff had been assigned duties to ensure cleanliness round the clock so that some sanitation-related problems could not become hurdles in the smooth flow of water. He informed that RWMC workers removed hundreds of tons of waste in the Rawalpindi city areas while drains blocked during the rain had been opened immediately to have no problem with drainage in the city. He said that complaints received on social media platforms were also being addressed promptly. In case of any complaint, citizens were asked to register their complaints on helpline number 1139, which would be resolved immediately, he added. RWMC has appealed to the citizens not to throw garbage and plastic bags in nullahs and drains, which cause obstruction.—APP

## CDNS successfully implements reforms, automation program in institution

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has successfully implemented the reforms and automation program in the institution and reforms agenda to be completed soon after which the entire institute will be digitized. The Automated Teller Machine (ATM) facility has been afford in CDNS which is successfully continued its services for the convenience of the customers, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Tuesday. At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced. The official said that lot of work was being done on institutional reforms in the CDNS. Given the current market trend in the country, an ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he added. Replying to another question, he said that the 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. 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

## Mansehra Police shine under DPO command: Bakhtawari

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mansehra is known for its natural beauty and peaceful atmosphere, making it an attractive destination for tourists. The city and its surrounding areas offer a range of attractions and activities like the Kaghan Valley, Naran and the Saiful Malook Lake. The local community is also known for its hospitality and warm welcomes to visitors. This has been stated by District Police Officer (DPO) Mansehra Shafiullah Gandapur while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry which called

on him under the leadership of former President ICCI and Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari. Shafiullah Gandapur said that the Mansehra police is playing a vital role in promoting tourism in the area by extending maximum facilities to tourists which will surely have a positive impact on the local economy and community. He went on to say that by establishing national brands in Mansehra, the city can promote its unique identity, create employment opportunities and contribute to the national economy. He also expressed the hope that other national brands will follow

suit and establish their businesses in the region for the benefit of its people as well as for the promotion of commercial activities. To mark the occasion, the DPO honored Mr. Zafar Bakhtawari by donning him with a traditional turban and presenting him with a gun, in accordance with time-honored Pakhtoon customs. On his part, Zafar Bakhtawari expressed gratitude to the DPO for maintaining peace and supporting tourism development in the area. He briefed the DPO on ICCI's initiatives to promote businesses in the capital city and urged the KP government to develop infrastructure along the Silk Road, including rest areas, mosques, washrooms, first aid centers and Tourism Facilitation Centers to enhance tourism, which in turn will benefit the local community and increase foreign exchange earnings. Appreciating the role of Shafiullah Gandapur in North Waziristan.



## Brazilian Naval Chief calls on Defence Minister

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff of Brazilian Armed Forces, Admiral Andre Luiz Silva Lima De Santana Mendes called on Federal Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Tuesday. During the meeting, matters related to regional situation and bilateral cooperation, came under discussion, a news release said. The Defence Minister said that Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Brazil and intended to expand cooperation in all fields. Highlighting Pakistan's role in the region and its relation with neighboring countries, the Defence Minister dilated on Pakistan's efforts to achieve peace and stability in the region. Both the leaders exchanged views on enhancing and diversifying defence cooperation for which considerable potential exists between two countries. The two sides also agreed on the institutionalization of defence cooperation through a Memorandum of Understanding. Moreover, regular exchange of trainees to each other's training institutions also came under discussion.—DNA

## Fundraiser Art Exhibition "Spero" continues to attract visitors

ISLAMABAD: A fundraiser art exhibition titled 'Spero' continues to attract the visitors at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) through featuring display of exquisite collection of paintings by various artists. The art exhibition and fundraiser for the Al Wadood Hospital, dedicated to child and mother care, is being arranged by the TrueWorth Foundation in collaboration with PNCA and MoodsAtelier. The exhibition, curated by Aasim Akhtar and Mehmood ul Hassan, will remain open for visitors till July 26. The exhibition displayed the work of prominent artists including Feheem Abbas, Hamza bin Faisal, Tahira Noreen, Kaiser Irfan, Jibril Shahid, Naqsh Raj, Unab Sumbal, Mehmood ul Hassan, Irfan Abdullah, Tahir Saleem and Mahad Saddique. The exhibition was inaugurated on Monday by the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms. Jane Marriott and attended by Director General PNCA, M. Ayoub Jamali and other dignitaries, including the Turkish Ambassador. The opening event at PNCA saw a large turnout of artists, diplomats, designers, architects, and enthusiasts from various fields. The artwork received high praise for its creativity and depth. Speaking on the occasion, Zahra Wadood Fatemi, who has established Al-Wadood Hospital through her untiring efforts, said this hospital, for the last 15 years, has been serving as a beacon of hope for the countless individuals and families by providing free of cost medical facilities to them. She said that the medical staff in the hospital also works with compassion and dedication to serve the patients. "Through a team of skilled medical professionals and a patient centric approach.—APP

## IFA cracks down on poor sanitation in city hotels

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) on Tuesday took a strict action against the hotels of the Federal Capital and sealed a kitchen of a famous hotel for violating sanitation standards. Talking to APP, Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of IFA, Dr Tahira Saddique said that during the inspection, the food safety teams (FSTs) found the hotel's kitchen in poor sanitary condition. The team discovered fungus-tainted meat and rotten vegetables being used for food preparation. The kitchen was also infested with cockroaches, posing a significant health risk to customers. Dr. Tahira Siddique, who leads the IFA's operations, stated that these inspections are part of a broader initiative to ensure all food establishments in Islamabad maintain high standards of cleanliness and food quality.—APP

## NDMA alerts relevant departments

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Tuesday issued alert to relevant departments amid forecast of significant rainfall, flooding across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Southern Sindh. According to the National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) of NDMA, strong monsoon currents were likely to penetrate from Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal in upper regions of Pakistan, resulting in a series of rains across various parts of the country over the next 24 hours, expected to continue until July 27. Thunderstorms and rain are expected to night in the coastal areas of Sindh including Karachi, Hyderabad, Umarnkot, Mirpur Khas, Nawabshah, Sukkur, Larkana Division, Tharparkar, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal, Islamkot, and surrounding areas. NEOC anticipated heavy to moderate rainfall in Rohi and Rahim Yar Khan of southern Punjab, Neelum Valley, Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur in Azad Kashmir, Dir, Chitral, Swat, Kohistan, Bajaur, Shangla, Battagram, Buner, Kohat, Bajaur, Mohmand, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Peshawar, Swabi, Nowshera, Mardan, Charsadda, Hangu, Kurram, Waziristan, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan in KP and areas of Gilgit Baltistan. The rain may cause flood situations in various urban areas, rising water levels in streams and rivers, and landslides in mountainous areas. NDMA urges all relevant authorities and the public to take necessary precautions to mitigate the potential impacts of flooding and landslides. NDMA issued instructions to all relevant departments to alert Emergency Response Teams and mobilized resources to ensure a swift response to any arising situations. Tourists are advised to avoid traveling to these areas during the forecast period. The public is advised to remain vigilant and follow instructions from local authorities. NDMA advises the public to stay informed and download 'Pak NDMA Disaster Alert' mobile app for timely alerts and closely monitor weather reports.—APP

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## Briefs

## Patriata chairlift, an eco-friendly facility for tourists

RAWALPINDI: Regional Manager Patriata Chairlift, Mian Moazzam Nazir reiterated for facilitating the tourists with best services at Patriata chairlift. He said that the chairlift department was fully engaged in maintaining quality services of the chairlift. He further said that Patriata chairlift is an eco-friendly facility which remained an iconic recreation. In a media interaction, the regional manager said many countries in the world changed the destiny of the people through tourism. The government is also focusing on promoting the tourism industry for which various initiatives are being taken, he said adding collective efforts are required to attract international tourists. To miscellaneous questions from the media, he said that potential of tourism in Pakistan could be gauged from the arrival of tourists from domestic and foreign countries to tourist destinations across Pakistan. Murree is a center of tourism in Pakistan. The management of Patriata Chairlift is providing entertainment and facilities to the tourists, he said. —APP

## Interior minister directs CDA to ensure timely drainage of water

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Following heavy rainfall in Islamabad, Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to remain alert. Minister called CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa and directed him to expedite the drainage process under his supervision, ensuring timely drainage of water from low-lying areas. He also directed that relevant officers and staff must remain in the field until the drainage work is completed. While directing regular monitoring of Islamabad's streets, drains, and waterways, he emphasized ensuring water drainage at underpasses and other locations. He also instructed traffic police to proactively perform their duties to maintain traffic flow. He stated that additional resources should be deployed in the water drainage efforts.

## Operation against illegal use of residential buildings

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) is successfully continuing operation against unauthorized commercial use of residential buildings in Sectors G-13 and G-14 of the federal capital. "In this regard, the authority has already issued notices to the owners of illegal and unauthorized use of residential properties for commercial purposes in these sectors," sources in the FGEHA told APP. As per the Islamabad Capital Territory Building Control Regulation 2020, they said, "FGEHA has decided to take legal action against property owners involved in unlawful or unauthorized commercial use of residential buildings in the sectors." The sources said, "The relevant authority has issued formal show-cause notices and warnings to them to immediately cease non-conforming use of residential buildings." Moreover, they said, "The authority has cautioned the property owners that failure to comply the orders would result in a fine of Rs. 500,000 in addition to sealing such properties." They informed, "As many as 80 residential buildings in these sectors have been identified as in unauthorized and illegal commercial use, including various offices, schools, guest houses, beauty parlors, hostels, property offices, furniture showrooms, and others."

## Facilitators of IPPs are traitors, says Samina

Public outrage over electricity bills is rising Masses may resort to violent protests if issue remained unresolved

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Samina Fazil, founder president of the Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI), said on Tuesday that there is increasing anxiety among the people over exorbitant electricity bills. The public's anger over electricity bills can erupt like a volcano at any time, which will be very difficult for the authorities to handle, she added. She stated that since IPPs have become a threat to the country's security, the government should resolve this issue immediately. Speaking at a meeting of women entrepreneurs, she asserted that the presence of corrupt IPPs hinders economic growth and prevents the masses from experiencing relief. If we don't address the growing public discontent over electricity bills, she warned, large crowds may choose to demonstrate violently. Samina Fazil said that the politicians who brought the country's economy to the brink to reward crooked IPPs are now expressing rage over excessive bills, which is deceitful behaviour. She noted that corrupt politicians are sacrificing the interests of 240 million people in order to benefit 40 families who own different IPPs. She advocated for an immediate halt to the establishment of new IPPs, citing Pakistan's abundant power generation capacity relative to demand. Politics and IPP favoritism cause load shedding, not power shortages. She demanded that the contracts with IPPs be either balanced or cancelled, and that the government



pay its own IPPs a reasonable price. Electricity should also be purchased from the IPPs of the friendly country of China at a reasonable price, and this practice of plunder should be stopped because the IPP owners have been paid trillions of rupees and they have also rewarded their facilitators well. According to Samina Fazil, the high cost of electricity bills has led to a

rise in domestic disputes, despite the fact that housewives bear the brunt of these costs. Why does the government spend trillions of rupees without procuring a single unit of electricity from various IPPs, while various IPs receive payments ranging from Rs 350 to Rs 750 per unit, a situation she described as unbelievable? If contracts with IPPs were transparent, why are they kept secret?

she said, adding that due to the heavy payments of IPPs, the government has nothing left to invest in social sectors, which is ruining society. People receive electricity worth Rs 10 for Rs 60, and she noted that if they don't band together and resolve their issues, they risk bankruptcy before the country does. On this occasion, IWCCI President Rizwana Asif, Senior Vice President Sonia Sal-

eem, and former President Mrs. Mumtaz said that they will not allow the exploitation of 240 million people for the sake of 40 corrupt families. Businesswomen across the country pay outstanding tribute to former Federal Minister Gohar Ijaz and United Business Group Patron SM Tanveer for exposing the corruption of IPPs and offering all-out cooperation to both leaders.

## Kashmiris cannot be denied their right

DNA

ISLAMABAD - A seminar to commemorate the passing of resolution for Jammu & Kashmir's accession to Pakistan in July 1947 was held at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with the Youth Forum for Kashmir, featuring reflections from notable figures from Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), including, Senator Zarqa Suhrawardy Taimur, Sheikh Abdul Mateen, Altaf Husain Wani, Sundas Malik and Zaman Bajwa. Farrukh Pitafi, a renowned journalist, moderated the session. The speakers underscored the enduring significance of Kashmir's symbolic ac-

cession to Pakistan and the ongoing struggle in IIOJK for the right of self-determination. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, in his opening remarks highlighted how entire South Asia's peace and development had been blocked by India's hegemonic designs epitomized by its illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. He noted that the enduring rivalry between Pakistan and India could only witness a rapprochement through resolving the Jammu & Kashmir dispute as per UNSC resolutions, since the Kashmiris could not be indefinitely denied their right of self-determination. Senator Zarqa Suhrawardy emphasized upon Pakistan's commitment to sup-

port Kashmiris in their quest for self-determination and the necessity of evaluating the effectiveness of Pakistan's support to Kashmir cause. Sheikh Mateen provided historical context of Kashmir dispute, citing July 19, 1947, resolution whereby Kashmiris expressed their desire to accede to Pakistan. He also discussed the cultural and religious affinities that align Kashmiris with Pakistan. Altaf Wani paid tribute to the foresightedness of the leadership of the Muslim Conference, which decided to accede to Pakistan. He said that the deplorable situation of Kashmiris in Indian occupied Kashmir proved that the decision made by the people of Azad Jammu Kashmir was right.

## Khursheed urges political harmony

ISLAMABAD: Senior leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah on Tuesday called upon all political parties to foster greater unity and harmony to achieve much-needed national development and prosperity. In a statement, Shah emphasized that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) should abandon its negative politics and engage in positive and constructive activities that benefit the country. He believed that the PTI founder had laid the foundation of the politics of hatred and violence in Pakistan. —APP

## ANF seizes 330 kg drugs in 9 operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 9 operations across the country managed to recover 330 kg drugs and arrested 8 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that 826 grams ice was recovered from a passenger going to Qatar at Islamabad Airport. 900 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for the UK at a courier office in Lahore. 12 grams weed was recovered from a parcel sent from UK at courier office in Rawalpindi. 250 kg hashish was recovered from Pasni road area in Balochistan and 7.2 kg opium, 2 kg heroin and 36 kg hashish were recovered from the possession of 2 suspects netted near Ravi Toll Plaza Lahore. 8.4 kg hashish and 2 kg ice recovered from 3 women in two operations conducted near M-1 Motorway Islamabad. In 8th operation, 18 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted on Ring road Peshawar. In 9th operation, 4.8 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle near Charsadda interchange toll plaza and 2 suspects were arrested. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process. —DNA

## AIU introduces e-commerce skills, online certificate courses

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), in collaboration with BF Technologies, has introduced e-commerce skills and online certificate courses and has commenced admissions for them. According to the AIU, these courses include Amazon Virtual Assistant (Private Label and Wholesale), Virtual Store Manager (Daraz), Virtual Trade (Alibaba), Shopify Dropshipping, and Facebook Executive Marketing. The Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, while stating the objectives of introducing these courses, mentioned that the aim is to promote a business mindset among students so that they can improve their family lifestyle as well as contribute to the socio-economic betterment of the country. The last date to apply for these programs is September 5th. Additionally, admissions for the Fall 2024 semester for Matric, FA, ICom, BS, MS, MPhil, and PhD programs are also open. Details are available on the university's website www.aiu.edu.pk

## WASA on high alert to cope with flooding: MD

RAWALPINDI: Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Rawalpindi was on high alert to cope with urban flooding, said Managing Director (MD) WASA, Muhammad Saleem Ashraf here on Tuesday. He informed that rain emergency was declared in Rawalpindi and all arrangements were finalized to cope with flooding. Heavy machinery and personnel were deployed in different areas particularly in low-lying areas to ensure drainage of stagnant rain water, he added. Nullah Lai was being monitored and the flow of water in Nullah Lai was normal on Tuesday, he said and informed that, today, 7 feet water level was recorded at Katarian and 5.5 feet at Gawalmandi Bridge. Traffic flow was also normal at Committee Chowk underpass, he said. According to the Meteorological Department, 60 mm of rain was recorded in Shamsabad, 48 mm at PMD and 61 mm at Saidu Pur. WASA spokesman informed. The Met Dept had predicted that the rain would continue for two days, he said. —APP

## Over Rs 80 bln disbursed among beneficiaries

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has disbursed over Rs.80 billion among over 76,00,000 beneficiaries from across the country so far under the Benazir Kafaalat quarterly payments (April-June). "Till July 22, over Rs. 80 billion has been disbursed among over 76,00,000 beneficiaries which make 81 per cent of the total beneficiaries", said an official source. The disbursement of the quarterly tranche (April-June) of Benazir Kafaalat cash assistance to the beneficiaries is continued across the country to disburse Rs. 10,500 per household among over nine million registered beneficiary families. The beneficiaries can receive their payment through the nearest centers after receiving the message from 8171. The beneficiaries, in case of any complaint, can approach the nearest BISP Tehsil offices or call the toll-free helpline number 080026477 of the Benazir Income Support Program. The special control room has been activated in the BISP headquarters to address the complaints of the beneficiaries promptly. However, the beneficiaries can also contact the officials on WhatsApp numbers including 03018472841 (Hyderabad District), 03018472838 (Karachi Division), 03175370095 (South Punjab), 03202399616 (Central Punjab), 03028238564 (North Punjab), 03492883482 (Balochistan), 03155212820 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), 03155213094 (Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan). The messages from the Benazir Income Support Program are sent only from 8171, and messages from any other number should not be trusted. —APP

## US, China, and UAE top destinations for Pakistani exports during FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD: The United States (US) remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the fiscal year 2023-24, followed by China and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Total exports to the US during July-June 2023-24 were recorded at US \$4,32,929 million against the exports of US \$ 5,932,358 million during July-June 2022-23, showing a decline of 8.41 percent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). This was followed by China, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US \$2,707,225 million against the exports of US \$2,025,741 million last year, showing an increase of 33.64 percent. UAE was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported products

worth US \$2,082,206 million during the year under review against the exports of US \$1,475,832 million, SBP data revealed. Among other countries, Pakistani exports to United Kingdom (UK) stood at US \$2,012,643 million against US \$1,968,432 million last year while the exports to Germany were recorded at US \$1,512,458 million against US \$1,600,413 million last year, data said. During fiscal year 2023-24, the exports to Holland were recorded at \$1,383,094 million against \$1,445,738 million whereas the exports to Italy stood at \$1,121,772 million against \$1,151,241 million. Pakistan's exports to Spain were recorded at \$1,449,465 million against the exports of US \$1,375,019

million while the exports to Afghanistan were recorded at \$554,008 million against \$522,271 million last year. The exports to Bangladesh stood at US \$666,516 million against US \$768,548 million. Similarly, the exports to France during the year under review were recorded at US \$507,739 million against US \$570,094 million while the exports to Belgium stood at US \$556,163 million against US \$701,013 million. Pakistan's exports to Saudi Arabia were recorded at US \$710,335 million compared to US \$503,851 million last year whereas the exports to Turkey stood at US \$335,137 million against US \$323,398 million. —APP

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## The missing children

THEY aren't just numbers. They represent tens of thousands of stories of loss, grief, and intense pain carried by families in Gaza. Over 20,000 children are still missing, with their fate unknown. Another number close to that is of unaccompanied children, as the tragedy of families in Gaza continues with the ongoing aggression since October 7th. Ahmad Hammad, who lost most of his family in a bombing on Deir al-Balah last January, says: "My grief for my martyred wife and children is one thing, but my grief for Hadi is on another level. He's the only one we couldn't retrieve from under the rubble that night. I don't know if there's anything left of his small body to bury or if he was vaporized by the explosion and fire." In this painful story, Hadi was just 5 years old. He is one of the thousands of missing children, either buried under the rubble of their destroyed homes or detained by the occupation forces. Some were captured from different parts of the Gaza Strip during the ground invasion that began on October 7th, while others' fates remain unknown, according to official and civilian sources. The British organization "Save the Children" reported that approximately 21,000 children in Gaza have gone missing due to the Israeli war on the Strip, according to their latest estimates. Many of these children are either trapped under the rubble, detained, buried in unknown graves, or separated from their families. The report also highlighted that recent displacement due to the Israeli attack on Rafah has led to more children being separated and increased pressure on families and communities caring for them. UNICEF estimates that at least 17,000 children in Gaza are unaccompanied or separated from their families, each with a heartbreaking story of loss and grief. In an unprecedented scene before the war, posters searching for missing children have become common among the tents of the displaced and in some populated areas of Gaza. Abdullah Abu al-Qumsan, who lost his young son in the war, sets out every morning to post search notices for his son Fouad, who went missing after being injured in a bombing in the Jabalia refugee camp in October 2023, according to a UN report. Abu al-Qumsan recounts that he was at his relatives' home in the camp on October 31, 2023, when a 2:30 PM airstrike hit, killing his parents. He and his son Fouad were trapped under the rubble for half an hour until they were rescued. He adds that he was holding his conscious son, who was then taken for treatment, but he didn't know which hospital he was taken to. After searching through morgue refrigerators with no success, he found details in the archives of Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City matching his son's description: "An unidentified child with minor injuries was brought to the hospital." Abu al-Qumsan says he still doesn't know who took his child or who has cared for him since then. He has tried every possible means to find his son Fouad, using media and social media, and recently resorting to paper posters with Fouad's picture, spreading them among the tents and streets, hoping for any clue about his son's fate. During his nine-month search for his son, Abdullah has encountered similar and even more challenging cases of families looking for their children. Fouad's picture isn't the only one spread among the tents. The UN news camera has spotted many other posters searching for children missing during the war and the displacement crisis in Gaza.



## Harris' White House odyssey

SHE'S a US senator who becomes a vice-president after a failed bid to run for president. She spends much of her time in the White House being ignored and disregarded by people with real power. But things take a turn for the worse for the president and suddenly, despite her complete lack of interest or knowledge about basic policies, she is offered a path into the Oval Office. But when she tries to win the presidency in her own right, she predictably loses. Oh, sorry, I wasn't talking about US Vice-President Kamala Harris, President Joe Biden's heir apparent who will now likely take on the formidable task of battling the virtually unassailable Donald Trump in the coming election. I was just paraphrasing the plot summary of Wikipedia's entry on Veep, the long-running satirical TV series starring the inimitably funny Julia Louis-Dreyfus as Vice-President Selina Meyer. For a long time, I thought Veep was just very funny. Now, I think it's prophecy. I was really sad when the series ended. But real life now may be even better. As good as the comic dialogues and sometimes monologues in Veep were, Harris' speeches and comments over the years are hard to beat. Here are some gems and pearls of wisdom for the ages. For example, Harris on the nature of time: "The governor and I, we were all doing a tour of the library here and talking about the significance of the passage of time, right, the significance of the passage of time. So, when you think about it, there is great significance to the passage of time in terms of what we need to do. What we need to do to create these jobs. And there is such great significance to the passage of time when we think about a day in the life of our children." Got that? Neither do I. Speaking about the need to address climate change, she said: "We will work together, and continue to work together, to address these issues ... and to work together as we continue to work, operating from the new norms, rules, and agreements, that we will convene to work together ... we will work on this together." And on gun control after a mass shooting: "We got to take this seriously, as seriously as you are because you have been forced to have taken this seriously." On how to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, she said: "It is time for us to do what we have been doing. And that time is every day." She also spoke on the war in Ukraine with passion and articulation, such as the time when she offered a geography lesson. "So Ukraine is a country in Europe. It exists next to another country called Russia. Russia is a bigger country. Russia is a powerful country. Russia decided to invade a smaller country called Ukraine. So, basically, that's wrong." She wasn't speaking at a kindergarten either, but addressing an adult audience in a radio interview. To be fair, though, you can't really blame her as repeated surveys have shown there is much room for improvement when it comes to the knowledge of world geography among Americans. Commenting on inequality, or at least I thought she was, Harris quoted what her own mother supposedly said: "I don't know what's wrong with you young people. You think you just fell out of a coconut tree, you exist in the context."

## State in internal turmoil

Qamar Bashir



The conflict among all stakeholders escalated to its highest level after the Supreme Court's decision to restore PTI as a party in the National Assembly and allocate reserved seats to it. This decision enraged both the government and the establishment. All indications point to a prolonged conflict between the Supreme Court on one side and the Federal, Punjab and Sindh governments and PML(N)...

ALL patriotic Pakistanis, from common laborers to highly accomplished individuals, are deeply worried and scared by the current state of conflicts within the government, among various governmental entities, among institutions, within institutions, and between the government and these institutions. This pervasive distrust is escalating at a breakneck pace, causing significant concern across the nation. The federal government and the KP government are embroiled in a bitter blame game, each accusing the other of inefficiency, corruption, incompetence, and mismanagement of the law and order situation. The political party PTI is accusing the federal and Punjab governments of stealing their mandate, exacerbating the political turmoil. In response, the federal and Punjab governments are threatening to ban the PTI and charge its leaders with high treason and rebellion. The Federal, Punjab and Sindh governments are accusing the superior judiciary of re-writing the constitution and providing unconstitutional and unlawful relief to PTI, while threatening both the judiciary and PTI with dire consequences and vowing to teach them a bitter lesson. JUI leader MoulanaFazalRehman is openly claiming that the army wants to seize the mineral wealth of the FATA regions under the guise of launching military operations. The army is blaming the federal and provincial governments for failing to register the madrasas and mosques, a task assigned to the civilian government in 2014, which remains unaccomplished. The KP government and PTI are accusing the army of fomenting unrest in the KP province, while the army blames the KP government for its failure to manage the participants of a peace march. According to the army, after holding a rally and chanting objectionable slogans, some participants attacked BannuCantt, breached the wall of its storage facility, and stole flour and other supplies. When the crowd became too unruly, the army unit deployed at BannuCantt resorted to aerial firing as an SOP to prevent further damage to the state installation. The army also accused the KP government of failing to trace and arrest those participants of the peace march who were carrying firearms. The army also blamed social media activists sympathetic to PTI for committing digital terrorism, alleging that they had established a nexus with terrorists

to carry out attacks on the ground. These activists are accused of doctoring old pictures and images of wounded and injured persons from other countries, presenting them as victims of the Pakistani army. While the army spokesperson was accusing PTI activists of digital terrorism, a heavy police contingent invaded the PTI party office and arrested PTI spokesperson Mr. Raouf Hassan and media coordinator, confiscating computers, digital disks, files, and documents. The army also criticized the judiciary for failing to impart exemplary punishments to the masterminds, planners, abettors, and facilitators of these acts, instead providing them with relief. The army spokesperson warned that if this trend of rewarding perpetrators of violence continues, it would lead country to unimaginable consequences. Furthermore, the army blamed all opposition parties for resisting and politicizing a comprehensive, robust, and all-encompassing operation, Azm-e-Istehkam. The army accused these parties of misconstruing and misreading the operation, making it controversial from the very beginning and undermining its efficacy, despite its conception for the greater national interest. The army complained that when it closed the borders to stop smuggling from Afghanistan, a propaganda campaign was launched by politicians to spread hatred against the army. This campaign instigated people, especially at the Chaman Border in Balochistan, to chant slogans against the army. During an hour-long press conference, the army spokesperson frequently used the terms "digital terrorism" and "anarchist group." The term "anarchist group" was often attributed by the audience, rightly or wrongly, to PTI, while "digital terrorists" is perceived rightly or wrongly by the audience referring to PTI activists who were allegedly targeting the army on the digital media for all the wrong reasons and on false premises. The conflict among all stakeholders escalated to its highest level after the Supreme Court's decision to restore PTI as a party in the National Assembly and allocate reserved seats to it. This decision enraged both the government and the establishment. All indications point to a prolonged conflict between the Supreme Court on one side and the Federal, Punjab and Sindh governments and PML(N), PPP, establishment, and parliament on the

other. How the Supreme Court will face this coordinated attack remains to be seen, but logically, the Supreme Court has very few power pieces compared to its opponents on this political chessboard. The judiciary faced a similar situation in March 2023 when a massive rally organized by JUI, PML(N), and PPP, backed by the establishment and parliament, took place right in front of the Supreme Court. This rally threatened Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, urging him to desist from pressing for the holding of general elections on May 14, 2023. Sensing his helplessness, the Chief Justice caved in, though he did not reverse his order; he did not press for its implementation either. This state of affairs also reflects a bitter reality: the judiciary may be mocked globally if the government, the establishment, and the parliament do not support it. Similarly, the army and the government are vulnerable without the people's support. All stakeholders have become so entrenched in their egoistic pursuits that they have entered a blind alley, seeing only one option: to fight and use force to resolve issues. They are forgetting the maxim that when the use of force fails, applying more force often leads to an even greater failure. The volatile situation is causing widespread anxiety among the populace, as persistent conflicts and mutual recriminations undermine the stability and progress of the country. All stakeholders must step back from their deeply entrenched positions and realize that in this country, which is our home, we must live together, whether willingly or unwillingly, happily or gloomily. We need to start respecting each other, address the underlying issues and conflicts, provide justice to each other, and grant the rights that lawfully belong to others. It is imperative to stop name-calling and labeling each other as anarchists, rebels, or usurpers of rights. We must understand that the only solution to our woes is to establish and respect the rule of law, which is more applicable to state operatives than any private entity. All stakeholders should have mercy on the people of Pakistan, who are like grass being trampled by the fights of elephants.

— Former Press Secretary to the President  
Former Press Minister to the  
Embassy of Pakistan to France  
Former MD, SRBC

## HRW report on October 7 accused of bias, here's why

Robert Inlakesh

In reality, YasminPorat was lambasted after a number of appearances she made on Israeli television, where she said that during hours of being kept under Hamas captivity "they did not abuse us. They treated us very humanely," adding that "they give us something to drink here and there. When they see we are nervous they calm us down. It was very frightening but no one treated us violently. Luckily nothing happened to me like what I heard in the media." Porat also said that a Palestinian fighter spoke to her in Hebrew in order...

notes, it's impossible to cover every aspect in a single article. However, it's important to examine some areas where it falls short. To begin with, Sari Bashi, the Israeli Program Director for the report and co-founder of the "Gisha- Legal Center for Freedom of Movement," which is funded by Zionist sources such as the "New Israel Fund", stated the following on X: "This is the most comprehensive account of October 7 by an independent international organization and concludes that Hamas-led attacks against civilians in Israel rise to the level of crimes against humanity. We need accountability and civilian protection. Now." The methodology of the report is perhaps the most telling part, from which we can decipher how HRW reached its conclusions. Many of these conclusions do not hold up to scrutiny or, at the very least, demand further answers. In their methodology section, HRW notes that it interviewed "94 survivors and witnesses from the October 7 assault", which suggests a comprehensive picture of what occurred across "19 kibbutzim and five moshavim (cooperative communities), the cities of Sderot and Ofakim, two music festivals, and a beach party" that they noted in their overview. However, they admit that they were only able to actually interview survivors from the MoshavPriGan, MoshavYachini, and the Psyduck music festival sites - just three out of 24 locations mentioned in their summary of events. The report goes on to state that for its actual forensic information, HRW "spoke to two medical experts hired by the Israeli government to examine the remains collected by ZAKA (see below) and provide forensic advice." They further note that "following October 7, some ZAKA members provided information to the media that proved unfounded", which is a major understatement. The head of the "Search and Rescue" service has repeatedly peddled debunked lies, as ZAKA produced false claim after false claim, ranging from grotesque stories of rape, sexualized torture, babies strewn on clothing lines, to the infamous "40 beheaded babies" lie. Despite this, HRW interviewed 10 ZAKA members who were all first responders on October 7 and claimed that it only used independently verifiable information. However, it admits that the two experts they spoke to that were tasked with examining the forensic evidence provided by ZAKA, were both hired by the Israeli regime directly. Without going through every detail in their methodology, it consists of interviews with Israeli journalists, ZAKA members, an Israeli soldier, a range of experts without specifying who they were exactly, in addition to some interviews with Palestinian citizens of "Israel" and Palestinians in Gaza. "Most of those interviewed were Jewish Israelis, but we also interviewed Palestinians from Gaza, Palestinian citizens of 'Israel', and foreign workers from Nepal, Thailand, and the Philippines. Interviews were primarily conducted in Hebrew with the assistance of interpreters, and in Arabic, English, Spanish, and Thai", the report states. Then there is the fact that the HRW was prevented by the Israeli authorities from entering any other site than Kibbutz

Be'eri, where they were not given unrestricted access, meaning that their ability to actually inspect would have been restricted. In the segment of the HRW report on Kibbutz Be'eri, they cite survivor testimonies and build a narrative about what occurred there, without bothering to mention the fact that the Hannibal Directive was triggered there. In one case, at Yossi Cohen's home in Kibbutz Be'eri, where the Israeli military opened fire with light arms and then tank fire, killing 13 Israelis, the account is completely one-sided and omits key information that is readily available online. It mentions a key witness, YasminPorat, who survived the battle between Hamas fighters and the Israeli military. While the report says that Porat "briefly spoke to Human Rights Watch and confirmed these events, albeit in less detail", this comes off as an attempt at providing a linguistic loophole in order to provide cover to the fact that Porat did not actually confirm the precise characterisation of events presented by HRW. In reality, YasminPorat was lambasted after a number of appearances she made on Israeli television, where she said that during hours of being kept under Hamas captivity "they did not abuse us. They treated us very humanely," adding that "they give us something to drink here and there. When they see we are nervous they calm us down. It was very frightening but no one treated us violently. Luckily nothing happened to me like what I heard in the media." Porat also said that a Palestinian fighter spoke to her in Hebrew in order to calm her down and said "Look at me well, we're not going to kill you. We want to take you to Gaza. We are not going to kill you. So be calm, you're not going to die." That's what he told me, in those words." Porat lost her husband on October 7 and undoubtedly endured significant trauma, which is why her testimony was so powerful at the time. Porat did not attempt to justify the actions of Hamas, but she presented a completely different picture to the one depicted in the HRW report, which is not at all acknowledged. If anything, the way the report deals with this specific incident is evidently omitting important details. Then we have the allegations of a premeditated mass rape campaign, which the Israeli regime claims was carried out on the orders of Hamas that day. The report, in its section titled "Crimes Involving Acts of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence", admitted the following: "Human Rights Watch was not able to gather verifiable information through interviews with survivors of or witnesses to rape during the assault on October 7. Human Rights Watch requested access to information on sexual and gender-based violence in the possession of the Israeli government, but this request was not granted." Although this is a massive blow to the Israeli narrative about a mass rape campaign, they did claim that "forced nudity, and the posing without consent of sexualized images on social media", but provided no in-depth information and simply stated that it came to these conclusions after "interviewing first responders, and experts on sexual violence who provided information about the con-

text, and reviewing images captured during the assault". It did not name who these experts and first responders were, however, we can reasonably assume from the information presented on methodology that ZAKA and Israelis were the bulk of those sources. The photographic evidence aspect is also not clearly explained or detailed, which does not enable us to further inspect such claims. This segment seems, however, to rely heavily on a report by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, which concluded that there is "reasonable grounds to believe that conflict-related sexual violence occurred during the 7 October attacks in multiple locations across Gaza periphery" despite admitting no conclusive evidence. This report was made at the request of the Israeli regime and did not claim to be investigative in nature, however, it did reveal the below-mentioned issues: "At least two of the allegations of sexual violence previously reported were determined by the mission team to be unfounded, due to either new superseding information or inconsistency in the information gathered, including first responder testimonies, photographic evidence, and other information. These included the allegation of a pregnant woman whose womb had reportedly been ripped open before she was killed, with her fetus stabbed while still inside her. Another such account was the interpretation initially made of the body of a girl found separated from the rest of her family, naked from the waist down. It was determined by the mission team that the crime scene had been altered by a bomb squad and the bodies moved, explaining the separation of the body of the girl from the rest of her family. Allegations of objects found inserted in female genital organs also could not be verified by the mission team due in large part to the limited availability and low quality of imagery." In addition to this, the HRW report notes that they viewed and analyzed hundreds of videos and photos from that day, most of which were from Telegram channels and have long been available to the public. These only provide snapshots of what went on and are no way conclusive. On top of this, there was no analysis, investigation, or even mention of "Israel's" triggering of the Hannibal Directive at numerous sites that day, which has now been confirmed as per sources cited by the Israeli daily Haaretz. Right here, this is the biggest red flag that indicates bias and debunks the idea that this report was in any way comprehensive, as it completely left out the role of Israeli forces in killing non-combatants that day. The most recent UN report which focused heavily on October 7, released on June 12 under a Human Rights Council resolution, mentions the Hannibal Directive and reports of Israeli forces killing their own people, making it a lot more balanced than the HRW report. Overall, if we look at the examples noted above, the claim that this report is unbiased and presents a comprehensive view of the situation is false.

ON July 17th, Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a 236-page report that accused Hamas and other Palestinian Resistance groups of committing war crimes on October 7th. However, the report has significant shortcomings, including a heavy reliance on Israeli sources and forensic evidence based on analogies of information provided by the infamous ZAKA rescue service, known for fabricating crime scenes and disseminating various propaganda hoaxes. Despite its length and the new details it brings to light on the events of October 7 during the Hamas-led Al-Aqsa Flood offensive, the new HRW report is perhaps the most biased international investigation so far, and does not make mention of the 'Hannibal Directive' and 'Israel's' role in killing its own non-combatants on that day. Given the report's extensive nature, with over 800 foot-



## Briefs

## PPP also files review plea on reserved seats verdict

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pertaining to reserved seats of women and non-Muslims. In its appeal, the PPP objected to granting the reserved seats to the PTI, arguing that the former ruling party had not claimed any entitlement to them. The PML-N had on July 15 filed a review petition in the SC against the same verdict. The review petition had asked a number of questions including whether the SIC should be granted the reserved seats. The decision not only paved the way for the PTI's return to the parliament, which was kicked out of the February 8 polls owing to the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) December 2023 ruling but has also increased the pressure on the coalition alliance by changing the composition of the National Assembly. The 85 majority verdict declared that the lack or denial of an election symbol does not in any manner affect the constitutional or legal rights of a political party to participate in an election, whether general or by, and to field candidates and that the commission is under a constitutional duty to apply all statutory provisions accordingly.

## PML-N, PPP blast Imran...

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saying its only aim was to harm the state through mischiefs. She also alleged that Khan's Zaman Park residence served as a hub for terrorists. "Zaman Park remained the training headquarters for terrorists, where training was imparted to make petrol bombs and to attack the state," she said. Referring to the PTI founder's injury following which his leg was plastered, she said the May 9 tragedy was planned during the "drama of tying the leg in plaster for four months". On the PTI's claim that it had called for a peaceful protest, she queried what kind of peaceful protest it was, wherein more than 200 military installations were vandalised. "Pakistan Air Force planes were set on fire, corps commander's house was burnt and martyrs' memorials were defiled. "Writing a letter to the IMF is part of this big conspiracy to make Pakistan default. Conspiracies to wave ciphers and desecration of martyrs' memorials are part of all this," she said.

## Hamas, Fatah sign unity deal...

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National Council, and a general declaration of unity in the face of ongoing Israeli attacks. The move towards a unity government is especially important, he said, because it "blocks Israeli efforts to create some sort of collaborative structure against Palestinian interests". Reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah would be a key turning point in internal Palestinian relations. The two main Palestinian political parties in the Palestinian territory have been bitter rivals since conflict arose in 2006, after which Hamas seized control of Gaza. "We're at a historic junction," Abu Marzouk said. "Our people are rising up in their efforts to struggle." Hamas, which led the October 7 attack on Israel, advocates for armed resistance against Israel's occupation.

## Court grants FIA two-day remand...

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allegedly used for anti-state propaganda. A day earlier, Islamabad Police took Hasan into custody from the party's Central Secretariat for heading a digital media cell and its alleged involvement in running anti-Pakistan propaganda. Commenting on the arrest, the police had maintained that the "PTI digital media centre had become a centre of international disinformation, from where anti-Pakistan propaganda is run throughout the world".

## Tee to Triumph

## Serena Hotels boosts Young female Golf talent

The training programme, currently underway at the scenic Margalla Greens Golf Club, is attracting enthusiastic participation from over 25 young girls



DNA  
ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels proudly tees off the second season of the two-week "Tee to Triumph" golf training programme for young girls, under the Sports Diplomacy Initiative. This initiative, in collaboration with the Margalla Greens Golf Club, aims to provide these aspiring golfers with a platform

to learn and improve their skills in a sport that is both challenging and rewarding. The training programme, currently underway at the scenic Margalla Greens Golf Club, is attracting enthusiastic participation from over 25 young girls. They are being trained under the expert supervision of the club's coaches. The programme will conclude on August 1, 2024, with a closing ceremony. The participants have expressed their gratitude

to Serena Hotels and Margalla Greens Golf Club for their unwavering support and for providing them with such a valuable opportunity. "We are pleased to partner with Serena Hotels on this wonderful initiative. The 'Tee to Triumph' golf training programme not only introduces young girls to the sport but also helps build their confidence and discipline. It is a pleasure to see their progress and enthusiasm," said Commodore (Retired) Majid

Satti, Secretary Margalla Greens Golf Club. "Serena Hotels believe in the power of sports to bring positive change and inspire the younger generation. This sponsorship of the 'Tee to Triumph' golf training programme is a proof of dedication to encouraging talent, promoting sports, and empowering young girls to pursue their ambitions," said Junaid Shaqat, General Manager Marketing & Communication.

## Charith Asalanka to lead SL in India T20I series



KANDY: Sri Lanka announced a 16-member squad for the upcoming T20I series against India which is set to begin on July 27 in Kandy and they will be led by Charith Asalanka. Asalanka replaced Wanindu Hasaranga after the all-rounder stepped down as the skipper after Sri Lanka suffered a group-stage exit at the T20 World Cup 2024 which was won by India. Sri Lanka will play three T20Is and as many ODIs against India. While Asalanka will lead the team in the shorter format, Kusal Mendis will

lead the Islanders in ODIs. Dhananjaya de Silva, who is the Test captain, and veteran Angelo Mathews were not included in the 16-man T20 squad. Sri Lanka squad for T20I series vs India. Charith Asalanka (capt), Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Janith Perera (wk), Avishka Fernando, Kusal Mendis (wk), Dinesh Chandimal, Kamindu Mendis, Dasun Shanaka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Dunith Wellalage, Maheesh Theekshana, Chamindu Wickramasinghe, Matheesha Pathirana,

Nuwan Thushara, Dushmantha Chameera, Binura Fernando. The series against Sri Lanka will be Gautam Gambhir's first assignment as the Indian cricket team head coach. The former batter was appointed as India's coach earlier this month and will lead the team till 2027.

Remember, India's squad for the white-ball series was confirmed earlier this week. Rohit Sharma will lead the ODI side, while Suryakumar Yadav is the new T20I captain.

India's squads for Sri Lanka series  
**T20I Squad:** Suryakumar Yadav (c), hubman 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

## PM gives \$60 bln target...

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Pakistani goods to Europe and America should be reduced by solving the problems related to the shipping of exports immediately. Similarly, the commerce ministry and Board of Investment should ensure cooperation regarding the transfer of Chinese export industries to Pakistan. He also called for carrying out research and development, innovation and brand development to increase the export of Pakistani goods. The prime minister warned against any delay by the Federal Board of Revenue in refunds to the exporters, besides emphasising the trade officers in Pakistan's missions abroad to promote Pakistan's exports and for guiding the exporters. The prime minister tasked the power ministry to present a comprehensive plan to provide low-cost electricity to the industries. Highlighting the crucial role of the private sector for national development, he called for the sector's inclusion in the policymaking process. The representatives of the export sector appreciated the prime minister for his frequent meetings to resolve their problems and called his keen interest in the export sector "very encouraging". They also appreciated the prime minister's initiative to ensure timely refunds by the FBR to the export industry. The meeting was briefed about the steps taken for the uplift of the export sector. It was told that the country's exports crossed the \$30 billion mark this year and a five-year plan to double the exports was also presented in the meeting. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, federal ministers Jam Kamal Khan, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Abdul Azeem Khan, Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Sardar Awais Leghari and Dr Musaddiq Malik, Ministers of State Ali Pervaiz Malik and Shaza Fatima Khwaja, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission Jahanzaib Khan, State Bank Governor, PM's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal, relevant FBR officers and representatives of textiles, IT, leather, agriculture and other sectors attended the meeting.

## NDMA forecasts 'significant' rainfall

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until July 27. Additionally, it anticipated thunderstorms and rain to lash the coastal areas of Sindh tonight. These areas include Karachi, Hyderabad, Umakot, Mirpur Khas, Nawabshah, Sukkur, Larkana Division, Tharparkar, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal, Islamkot, and surrounding areas. Meanwhile, the National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) anticipated heavy to moderate rainfall in southern Punjab's Rohi and Rahim Yar Khan, Azad Kashmir's Neelum Valley, Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur. Heavy to moderate rainfall is also expected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dir, Chitral, Swat, Kohistan, Bajaur, Shangla, Battagram, Buner, Kohat, Bajaur, Mohmand, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Peshawar, Swabi, Nowshera, Mardan, Charsadda, Hangu, Kurram, Waziristan, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, and Dera Ismail Khan and areas of Gilgit Baltistan.

## Secret Service chief...

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the House of Representatives, told reporters. "I'm happy to see that she has heeded the call of both Republicans and Democrats." President Joe Biden thanked Cheatle for her nearly three decades in the Secret Service and said she had "selflessly dedicated and risked her life to protect our nation throughout her career." "We all know what happened that day can never happen again," Biden said in a statement. "As we move forward, I wish Kim all the best, and I will plan to appoint a new director soon."

## PTI holds 'symbolic' hunger...

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till 8pm as a token protest against "injustice" and for the PTI founder's release and the supremacy of the parliament. He added that he conveyed his party's reservations to National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq over "illegal and unconstitutional actions". The lawyer-cum-politician said that his party raised voice for the PTI lawmakers and their families who were being picked up. "[The] PTI founder and his wife have been imprisoned for no reason. This camp will continue till the release of the PTI founder." Gohar strongly condemned the sealing of the party's secretariat in the federal capital.

## UK parliamentarians demand...

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at a hearing today in the House of Lord's Committee Room about the erosion of democratic norms in Pakistan and the "illegal incarceration" of the former prime minister. The hearing was jointly convened by Labour MP for Bradford West Naz Shah, and Conservative Peer Lord Hannan of Kingsclere. Sayed Zulfikar Bukhari, who was appointed Imran Khan's International Affairs Adviser today, and PTI candidate in the 2024 Pakistani general election Meher Bano Qureshi were guest speakers, as was Sarwar Bari, founder of Pattan Development.

## Fin Min Aurangzeb heads to Beijing

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China to facilitate the loan rescheduling. The discussions will also address issues related to China's energy circular debt, which currently amounts to approximately Rs500 billion. The minister is also expected to engage in talks regarding the Panda Bond, as Pakistan seeks to secure \$30 million through this financial instrument in China. Finance minister's discussions will also cover the ongoing efforts and developments on CPEC and other collaborative projects.

## Naseem unavailability for The Hundred disappoints Moeen

LONDON: Moeen Ali has voiced his disappointment regarding Naseem Shah's unavailability for The Hundred tournament, emphasising that Shah was their top choice and his absence has disrupted the team's balance. Ali highlighted that Naseem Shah was expected to deliver exceptional performances, making his absence particularly notable. He expressed frustration that players should be able to participate in cricket tournaments if they do not have other obligations. When asked about his potential participation in the Champions Trophy in Pakistan next year, Ali stated that it is too early to make predictions. However, he remains confident in the England team's ability to contend for the title. He mentioned that the 50-over format of the Champions Trophy might lead to the selection of younger players, but he is prepared to contribute if chosen. Regardless of his selection, Ali is committed to inspiring future generations of cricketers, finding fulfillment in motivating even a few young players. Ali also shared a personal update about his son, Abu Bakr, a passionate 10-year-old cricketer. Abu Bakr, a left-handed wicketkeeper-batsman, aspires to play for England one day, reflecting his father's dedication to the sport. - Agencies

## Younis Khan opens up about Woolmer's tragic death

LAHORE: Younis Khan opened up about the tragic death of the former head coach of the Pakistan cricket team, Bob Woolmer, who passed away a day after Pakistan were eliminated from the ODI World Cup 2007. Pakistan lost to Ireland on March 17, 2007, after which they were knocked out of the tournament and just a day after, on March 18, Woolmer was found dead in his room. There were speculations about his death that it may have been a murder but investigations by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and Jamaican authorities confirmed that he died of natural causes. Talking to a Geo News' program Hasna Mana Hai, Younis insisted that if Woolmer had remained Pakistan's head coach, the team would have reached great heights. "I have no doubt that if Woolmer had remained head coach, Pakistan cricket would have been very different today, and he would have taken it to great heights," Younis said. "I was very close to Bob [Woolmer] and it was our daily routine to sit down together after a match or nets to discuss cricket. Unfortunately, the night he passed away, we didn't sit together as we had lost to Ireland. I was also out for a duck and was very upset with myself. So, I went to my room and locked myself in. The next day, I didn't see him at breakfast and later we learnt about his death," he added. Younis, who led Pakistan to T20 World Cup glory in 2009, revealed that after Woolmer's death, the team was relocated to another island where they were questioned by the local police for three days. "It was like a torture for us there. While I fully understand the responsibilities a player has to show as an ambassador of his country, it should be other way round... authorities must also look after us," he concluded. - DNA



## Pak record 10-wicket win against UAE in Asia Cup

The Green Shirts also qualify for semi-final of Women's Asia Cup 2024

## SPORTS DESK

DUBAI: Pakistan women's cricket team defeated the United Arab Emirates (UAE) by 10 wickets in a must-win match of the ongoing Women's T20 Asia Cup which was played at Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium on Tuesday. An all-round display by Pakistan helped them record their second win in the tournament after losing to India in their first match. The Green Shirts have one step in the semi-final with four points from two matches. Chasing the target of 104 runs, Pakistan's opening duo of Gull Feroza and Muneeba Ali showed impeccable performances with the bat as the Green Shirts reached home in just 14.1 overs without losing a single wicket. Feroza scored 62 off 55 balls with eight fours while Muneeba contributed 37 runs on 30 deliveries with four boundaries. While doing so, Pakistan also

became the first team to win a match by 10 wickets in the history of Women's T20 Asia Cup. Nepal will play India in the last match of Group A and the Green Shirts need the



Blues to beat their opponents to ensure a secure entry into the semi-finals. After being asked the bat first, the UAE women did not have a great start as they kept on losing wickets at regular intervals. Skipper Esha Oza (16 off 26) and Theertha Satish (40 off 36) were the top two scorers for UAE as other than them, only Khushi Sharma (12 off 13) managed to contribute runs in double figures. For Pakistan, Sadia Iqbal, Nashra Sandhu and Tuba Hassan took two wickets each while skipper Nida Dar managed to get one. **Playing XI:** Pakistan: Gull Feroza, Muneeba Ali (wk), Tuba Hassan, Sidra Ameen, Omaira Sohail, Nida Dar (c), Aliya Riaz, Fatima Sana, Syeda Aroob Shah, Nashra Sandhu, Sadia Iqbal UAE: Esha Rohit Oza (c), Theertha Satish (wk), Rinitha Rajith, Samaira Dharmidharka, Kavisha Egodage, Khushi Sharma, Heena Hotchandani, Suraksha Kotte, Vaishnav Mahesh, Lavanya Keny, Indhuja Nandakumar.



## Briefs

## Sri Lanka apologizes for cremating Muslim Covid victims

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's government Tuesday formally apologized to the island's Muslim minority for forcing cremations on Covid victims, disregarding WHO assurances that burials in line with Islamic rites were safe. The cabinet issued an "apology regarding the compulsory cremation policy during the Covid-19 pandemic," the government said in a statement. It said a new law would guarantee the right to burial or cremation to ensure the funeral customs of Muslims or any other community were not violated in future. Traditionally, Muslims bury their dead facing Makkah. Sri Lanka's majority Buddhists are typically cremated, as are Hindus. Muslim representatives in Sri Lanka welcomed the apology, but said their entire community, accounting for about 10 percent of the island's 22 million population, was still traumatized. "We will now sue two academics — Meththika Vithanage and Channa Jayasumana — who were behind the forced cremation policy of the government," Hilmy Ahamed, spokesman for the Muslim Council of Sri Lanka, told AFP. "We will also seek compensation." Ahamed said a young Muslim couple suffered untold anguish when their 40-day-old infant was cremated by the state against their wishes.—DNA

## Cybersecurity Wiz calls off \$23bn deal with Google

LONDON: Cybersecurity startup Wiz has walked away from a reported \$23 billion deal to be acquired by Google-parent Alphabet and has chosen to pursue an initial public offering, according to a Wiz memo seen by news agency. "While we are flattered by offers we have received, we have chosen to continue on our path to building Wiz," CEO Assaf Rappaport said in the memo, without naming Google. "Let me cut to the chase: our next milestones are \$1 billion in ARR and an IPO," he added. Reuters reported earlier in July that Alphabet was in advanced talks to acquire Wiz for roughly \$23 billion, citing a person familiar with the matter. Wiz's decision to call off the deal will be a setback for Google, which has been investing in its cloud infrastructure and focusing on winning clients for the cloud business that generated more than \$33 billion in revenues last year. The New York-headquartered company was supposed to be Alphabet's biggest deal ever, and second big acquisition in the cybersecurity space, since its \$5.4 billion purchase of Mandiant in 2022. One of the fastest-growing software startups, Wiz raised \$1 billion in a private funding round earlier this year, which gave it a valuation of \$12 billion. Jazz, Google, Tech Valley celebrate success of 'Digital Safar' programme. The US-Israeli startup had \$350 million in revenue in 2023.—APP

## Turkiye 'neutralizes' 4 PKK terrorists

ANKARA : Turkish security forces have neutralized at least four PKK terrorists in northern Iraq, the National Defense Ministry said on Tuesday. Terrorists, including Yusuf Kalkan who was wanted in the red category, were neutralized in an air operation in the Operation Claw-Lock zone, the ministry said in a statement. Kalkan, codenamed "Sevkan Cele," was wanted for the crimes of "being a member of the armed terrorist organization" and "establishing or leading an armed terrorist organization." Turkish authorities use "neutralize" to imply the terrorists in question surrendered or were killed or captured. The PKK is known for using northern Iraq, near the Turkish border, as a hideout to plot terror attacks on Türkiye. Türkiye's wanted list is divided into five color-coded categories, with red as the most wanted, followed by blue, green, orange, and gray.—Agencies

## Yemen warns has 'surprises' for Israel in coming days

Yemen's Ansarullah said that the response to the Israeli attacks that targeted the Hudaydah port last Saturday will not be delayed

## NEWS DESK

SANAA : A senior Yemeni official has cautioned that retaliation for the recent deadly airstrike on al-Hudaydah will not be postponed and that Israel must be prepared for unexpected events in the coming days. Ali al-Qahoum, a top official of Yemen's Ansarullah movement, in a statement on Tuesday said that the response to the Israeli attacks that targeted the Hudaydah port last Saturday will not be delayed, according to news agency. "The coming days will be full of surprises," al-Qahoum, a member of Ansarullah's political bureau said, adding that the "targets will span a wide range within occupied Palestine. He praised his country "as a key player" that shifts the balance of power and secures victory. A senior Yemeni official warns Israel of "effective operations" in retaliation for the regime's deadly airstrike on the western Yemeni province of al-Hudaydah. On Saturday, al-Qahoum had warned Israel that Yemen's "inevitable, strong and crushing" response "will be an earthquake for the aggressors." He also advised Israelis not to rejoice too much, as there is no escape for

## Yemen resistance 'Muslim world's pride': Iran FM

TEHRAN : Interim Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani has expressed Iran's solidarity with the Yemeni people and resistance in the face of Israel's crimes against the impoverished country. Bagheri Kani made the remarks on Monday during a telephone conversation with Mohammed Abdul-Salam, spokesman for Yemen's Ansarullah popular resistance movement. He condemned Israel's Saturday airstrike on civilian facilities in the Red Sea port of al-Hudaydah that killed six Yemenis and left 83 others injured, many of them with severe burns. Bagheri Kani said that the "historic" support of the Yemeni nation and resistance fighters for the oppressed Palestinians in the Gaza Strip is a "source of pride for the Muslim Ummah." The "exemplary" resilience of the people of Gaza, Yemen's pro-Palestinian initiative, and Iran's April retaliatory operation against Israel are the three factors that have resulted in the occupying regime's "strategic failure" during its ongoing genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, the top diplomat added. The Yemeni forces have been targeting the occupied Palestinian territories as well as Israeli ships and vessels affiliated with it since October 7, when the regime in Tel Aviv began its brutal Gaza onslaught, killing over 39,000 Palestinians. They have vowed to keep up their operations as long as the regime sustains the offensive against Gaza and a simultaneous siege that it has been enforcing against the Palestinian territory. On April 13-14, Iran fired more than 300 drones and missiles at military bases in the Israeli-occupied territories in an operation dubbed True Promise.—APP

Punishment. "Your choices will be either migration and return to where you came from or staying in shelters. American and British protection will not help you, and the hand that violates Yemen's sovereignty and attacks its resources and people will be cut off," he warned. Sayyed Abdul-Malik al-Houthi says Yemen is more capable than ever to deal blows to Israel, following the occupying regime's airstrikes against Hudaydah a day earlier. Gates of hell' Additionally, on Tuesday, the Ansarullah resistance movement declared that decisive and deadly measures will be taken against the Zionist regime, which will target the military and security installations deep in the occupied territories of Palestine. Hezam al-Asad, a member of the political bureau of Ansarullah, announced that Yemeni forces have advanced to the fifth phase of their operation, warning that rising civilian casualties will result in attacks on the strategic targets of the Israeli regime. He added that, "The Zionist enemy has opened the gates of hell by targeting Yemen's Hudaydah port, and that the ports, military and security centers deep inside the occupied

Palestinian territories will be under the fire of the Yemeni army." Al-Asad also said, "Certain Arab countries have crossed the red lines by supporting the Zionist enemy by opening land corridors instead of the Red Sea and opening their airspace and calling the Hamas movement terrorist. We warn them that their answer is on the way." He gave a clear message to Israel that any attack on civilians will be met with retaliation. "Yemen's response to the Zionist regime's offense at Hudaydah port will be different ... an unprecedented response that will make the aggressors regret their actions," he added. Moreover, al-Asad in a post on the X social network warned of a crushing and painful blow to the Israeli regime, which he said will be coming soon. He used the Qur'anic verse, saying, "Soon, we will witness a day when the sky will be melted like metal." Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement vows that the country's Armed Forces will ramp up their anti-Israeli strikes after the Tel Aviv regime's latest massacre in the Gaza Strip. On Saturday, Israeli warplanes targeted buildings, oil facilities, and a power station in Hudaydah, killing at least six people and leaving 83 injured, many of them with severe burns.

## Myanmar's military chief named acting president

The current acting president, Myint Swe, has taken medical leave and transferred his duties to Min Aung Hlaing

## WEB DESK

NAYPYIDAW : Myanmar's acting president, Myint Swe, has taken medical leave and transferred his duties to the military chief Min Aung Hlaing, says the country's army. The announcement of the new appointment, broadcast on state-run MRTV television, said Min Aung Hlaing received an official letter from the acting president's office on Monday. The letter authorised him to carry out the duties of the acting president in order to deal as needed with matters related to the National Defence and Security Council while Myint Swe is on medical leave. "Acting president duties have been handed over ... to the chairman of [the] State Administration Council," the military gov-

ernment said, using the name with which it refers to itself. The announcement came about a week before the procedures have to be carried out to renew the state of emergency the military originally declared after it seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021. Myint Swe, 73, had been suffering "psychomotor retardation and malnutrition", state media reported last week. It said he has been receiving medical treatment since early this year and still cannot carry out normal daily activities, including eating food. Myint Swe was the vice president under Suu Kyi's democratically elected government and was later appointed acting president by the military government. Although he

is only a figurehead president, the government has depended on him to sign its decrees and provide a veneer of legitimacy to its rule, which is struggling to contain an expanding civil war and manage a crumbling economy. The National Defence and Security Council, which is formally led by the president, is nominally a constitutional government body, but in practice is controlled by the military. It plays a key role in renewing the state of emergency every six months, allowing the military broad extra-constitutional powers. Legally, the president, or in Myint Swe's case the acting president, is the one who must endorse renewals. The military claims a state of emergency is needed to deal with instability caused by

armed opponents of military rule, who are fighting against the army in most parts of the country. Myint Swe became acting president under controversial circumstances after the 2021 military takeover, when President Win Myint was arrested along with Suu Kyi. Myint Swe, a member of a pro-military party, took over the presidency because he held the post of first vice president. The move, whose legitimacy was questioned by legal experts, allowed the council to be convened to declare a state of emergency and hand over power to Min Aung Hlaing, who led the army's takeover. Min Aung Hlaing currently chairs the ruling military council and the military-installed-government. He declared himself prime minister six months after the takeover.

## Nearly 40 million people had HIV in 2023

UNITED NATIONS: Nearly 40 million people were living with the HIV virus that causes AIDS last year, over 9 million weren't getting any treatment, and the result was that every minute someone died of AIDS-related causes, the UN said in a new report launched Monday. While advances are being made to end the global AIDS pandemic, the report said progress has slowed, funding is shrinking, and new infections are rising in three regions: the Middle East and North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America. In 2023, around 630,000 people died from AIDS-related illnesses, a significant decline from the 2.1 million deaths in 2004. But the latest figure is more than double the target for 2025 of fewer than 250,000 deaths, according to the report by UNAIDS, the UN agency leading the global effort to end the pandemic. Gender inequality is exacerbating the risks for girls and women, the report said, citing the extraordinarily high incidence of HIV among adolescents and young women in parts of Africa. The proportion of new infections globally among marginalized communities that face stigma and discrimination — sex workers, men who have sex with men, and people who inject drugs also increased to 55 percent in 2023 from 45 percent in 2010, it said. UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima said: "World leaders pledged to end the AIDS pandemic as a public health threat by 2030, and they can uphold their promise, but only if they ensure that the HIV response has the resources it needs, and that the human rights of everyone are protected." As part of that pledge, leaders vowed to reduce annual new HIV infections to below 370,000 by 2025, but the report said in 2023 new infections were more than three times higher at 1.3 million. Last year, among the 39.9 million people globally living with HIV, 86 percent knew they were infected, 77 percent were accessing treatment, and for 72 percent the virus was suppressed, the report said.—APP

## Japan imposes sanctions on 4 Israeli settlers

TOKYO : Japan announced on Tuesday that it has imposed sanctions on four Israeli settlers due to their involvement in violence against Palestinians in the West Bank. Hayashi Yoshimasa, the government spokesman, stated that Israeli settlements in the West Bank "violate international law and harm the realization of a two-state solution," according to public broadcaster NHK. "Violence by settlers has been rising sharply. Japan will seek the complete halt of settlements while working with the international community to fully implement the sanctions," said Yoshimasa. The government of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has frozen the assets of the four Israeli settlers. Since Oct. 7, when the Israeli onslaught on Gaza began, there have been 63 reported attacks on Palestinian water sources by Israeli settlers, primarily in the northern parts of the West Bank, Yoshimasa added.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a virtual meeting with the Representatives from Moody's Ratings. APP

## France intercepting 6 drones daily near Olympic sites: PM

The miniature flyers are sometimes operated by "individuals, maybe tourists wanting to take pictures," Attal said

## WEB DESK

PARIS : French security forces guarding sites set to be used in the Paris Olympics are intercepting an average of six drones per day, Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said. The miniature flyers are sometimes operated by "individuals, maybe tourists wanting to take pictures," Attal said. "That's why it's important to remind people of the rules. There's a ban on flying drones," he added during a visit to the event's drone defense hub at Velizy-Villacoublay air base outside Paris. "Systems are in place to allow us to very quickly intercept (drones) and arrest their operators," Attal said. "We can't allow anything to slip past us." He highlighted several incidents around the Olympic village on Sunday. According to a member of Attal's team, the communications chief of the Brazilian

delegation was apprehended over operating a drone. "Any unauthorized drone will be jammed," said Stephane Groen, France's general in charge of air defense, as Attal visited a control room where an aerial vehicle had been spotted over the Stade de France stadium. The defenders' job is particularly tricky as they must avoid the remote vehicles falling while a sporting event is underway. Nevertheless, "if in doubt, we always jam" a drone, Defense Minister Sebastien Lecornu said. As well as drone defenses, other forms of anti-aircraft defense are in place around Olympic sites. Around 18,000 French troops have been deployed to secure the Olympics, 11,000 of them in the Ile-de-France region around Paris. In a French first, airspace in a 150-kilometer (93 miles) radius around Paris will be completely closed on Friday evening during the opening ceremony.

Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron hoped the Paris Olympics would cement his legacy. But a failed bet on a snap legislative election has left him politically stunted, casting a lingering shadow over Macron's moment on the international stage. As he prepares to welcome more than 100 heads of state and tens of thousands of spectators for Friday's opening ceremony along the Seine, Macron is a fragile force — an unpopular president presiding over a caretaker government as it hosts the world's largest sporting event amid heightened security fears. "Macron expected to welcome the Games like an emperor," said French historian Patrick Weil. "But now he's a lame duck." Walking around the Olympic Village on Monday, Macron defended his decision to dissolve parliament and denied the ensuing political instability would overshadow the

Games. "It was me who decided," he said, referring to his determination to call the election ahead of the Games. "There is no bitter taste. On the contrary, we did the things that needed to be done before (the Olympics). Now we can fully focus on the Games." And in a bid to keep the crisis at bay for a few weeks, he appeared to suggest he was unlikely to name a prime minister until the Games were over. "There is a sort of truce," he said. Macron called the legislative vote after a thumping by the far-right National Rally (RN) in last month's EU election, saying he wanted the poll to provide clarity. Instead, French voters delivered a hung parliament and no bloc has so far been able to form a government, leaving Macron's previous cabinet to manage day-to-day affairs in a caretaker capacity. "The Olympics are a great break, an extraordinary moment, a brilliant

showcase for our country," said far-right lawmaker Julien Odoul. "But the difficulties of our compatriots continue despite the Olympic Games. And this National Assembly is currently not in a position to provide a response." Macron aides, Olympics officials, lawmakers and public figures stressed to Reuters that the show would go on, with years of security and logistics planning unaffected by the politics. But some acknowledged the fallout from the political crisis would hang over the Games. Socialist lawmaker Christine Pires-Beaune said Macron's expedited vote had left many French bewildered and angry. "We have never been in such a thick fog," she said. It was not supposed to be this way. In his New Year's Eve address to the nation last December, Macron spoke with pride and optimism about the year ahead.

## Landslides kill dozens in southern Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA : At least 55 people were killed in two landslides in a remote area of southern Ethiopia, local authorities said, warning that the death toll could rise. "More than 55 bodies have been found from the landslides," a statement from the Gofa zone Communications Affairs Department said on Monday, quoting local chief Dagma-wi Zerihun, who warned "the death toll could yet increase". The first landslide occurred around 0700 GMT following heavy rains in the remote region, Dagma-wi said. He added that the search for survivors was "continuing vigorously". "There was a heavy rain yesterday night and some people died from a landslide," said Kassahun Abayneh, the government spokesperson for Gofa district in the South Ethiopia regional state. "In the morning, locals, including police, gathered at the site to save those who were affected by the first landslide" he added. Meskir Mitku, the district general administrator of Gofa district in the Southern Ethiopia region, said women, children and local police were among the dead, the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) reported. Photographs on Facebook shared by EBC showed scores of people on a blank hillside searching for victims. Landslides in southern Ethiopia normally occur during the rainy season, which lasts from June to August. The area has experienced tragic landslides previously, with at least 32 people being killed in 2018 after two separate landslides within a week of each other.—Agencies

## Tunisia's sandy beaches eaten away by coastal erosion

HAMMAMET : In Tunisia's seaside town of Hammamet, bulldozers diligently shovel sand from a nearby desert onto a popular beach in an attempt to stop it from disappearing due to erosion. "This beach is the postcard image of Hammamet," said environmentalist Chihab Ben Fredj peering nostalgically at the town's iconic Yasmine beach. "It has been seared in our minds since our childhood," he added, as labourers worked to restore the central Tunisian waterfront to its former sandy glory. Like many other coastal areas in North Africa, severe erosion has led to many of Hammamet's sandy beaches vanishing in recent years, taking a toll on the holiday hotspot about 65 kilometres (40 miles) east of the capital Tunis. Coastlines across the world are in a constant natural flux, with the seas claiming and depositing sediment. But human activity, including coastal property development and offshore sand mining, significantly accelerates beach erosion. Among other impacts, construction and coastal defences in one area can stop sediment from travelling along a coastline, leaving existing beaches deprived of new material. Studies have also shown the impacts of climate change, including rising temperatures and sea levels, exacerbate the phenomenon. In the Mediterranean, where the British National Oceanography Centre says sea levels have risen at a higher rate over the past 20 years than the entirety of the 20th century, shorelines are changing rapidly. The sea is also warming 20 percent faster than the rest of the world, according to the United Nations.—APP

## European stock markets diverge at open

LONDON: Europe's main stock markets diverged at the open Tuesday following a strong start to a week dominated by the battle to become the next president of US. London's FTSE 100 index fell 0.3 percent to 8,175.88 points. Europe's STOXX 600 logs weekly decline as tech, resources shares weigh in the eurozone, the Paris CAC 40 index lost 0.1 percent to 7,617.23 points and Frankfurt's DAX grew 0.6 percent to 18,523.42.—APP



## Briefs

### Faiz provided evidence against Imran: Vawda

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Senator Faisal Vawda has accused PTI supreme Imran Khan of being responsible for Pakistan's current political instability, citing evidence provided by former director general Inter-Services Intelligence Lt Gen (retd) Faiz Hameed, linking Khan to the May 9 vandalism incident. "I cannot champion law and democracy when multiple cases are pending against me in courts. Some time ago, I revealed that Imran Khan's close associate, Faiz Hameed, provided evidence of Khan's involvement in the May 9 vandalism," stated Vawda during an interview with a private TV channel. Vawda further stated that Imran admitted to directing his supporters to march towards GHQ. He pointed out that parties like PML-N, PPP, JUI-F, and MQM-P had also clashed with the establishment in the past but eventually sat down for negotiations. When questioned if Faiz Hameed had advised the protest at GHQ on May 9, Vawda clarified, "This was not Faiz Hameed's suggestion; however, Imran Khan was part of the entire scheme." Vawda expressed that the government does not face threats from a technocrat government or martial law, but rather from the ongoing power struggle within the PML-N. He added that the IMF had reached a deal with the finance minister, but the decision regarding reserved seats would not be implemented.

### ECP seeks wealth statements from political parties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The ECP asked all political parties to submit their respective wealth statements for the last financial year 2023-2024, a mandatory requirement under the relevant electoral laws, by August 29. The ECP asked all political parties to submit their consolidated statements of accounts for financial year 2023-24 on or before August 29. "The Election Commission of Pakistan reminds all the heads of Political Parties, in terms of section 210 of the Elections Act, 2017 read with section 204 of the Act ibid and rule 159 & 160 of the Election Rules, 2017, thereof, that they are required to file with Election Commission their Consolidated Statement of Accounts on (Form-D) for financial year, 2023-24 ended on 30th June, 2024 on or before 29th August 2024," ECP said in a press statement. It is pertinent to mention here that Section 210 of Elections Act, 2017 provides that a Political Party shall, in such a manner as may be prescribed.

# President calls for boosting Pak-Turkmenistan connectivity

The President stressed the need for continued exchanges and dialogue at all levels and enhanced trade, economic, investment and cultural relations for the prosperity of the two countries



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has called for expanding bilateral ties with Turkmenistan across all areas of mutual interest and reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to its relationship with Turkmenistan. The President expressed these views while talking to the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. President said that Pakistan-Turkmenistan relations were based on a common vision for peace and prosperity in the region. The exchange of high-level visits between the two countries signified the mutual desire to further strengthen bilateral understanding

and cooperation. Welcoming the Minister, the President urged the need to enhance connectivity and communication between Pakistan and Turkmenistan, saying that Gwadar port offered great opportunities for promoting regional trade and Turkmenistan should benefit from the port. The President stressed the need for continued exchanges and dialogue at all levels and enhanced trade, economic, investment and cultural relations for the prosperity of the two countries. He offered that Turkmen students could seek education from the medical institutions of Pakistan. The President noted the importance of the Third Round of Bilateral Political Consultations held today by the two Foreign Ministers. The Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan said that Pakistan and Turkmenistan enjoyed cordial relations. He stated that his coun-

try would continue to promote economic, cultural and educational cooperation with Pakistan. He highlighted the importance of constructing motorways and railways, through Afghanistan, to connect the two brotherly countries. Foreign Minister Meredov conveyed the greetings of the leadership of Turkmenistan to the President. The President reciprocated the sentiment and said that he was looking forward to welcoming the Grand Leader of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in Pakistan. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has underlined the importance of regional cooperation and connectivity and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to early completion of TAPI pipeline. He was talking to Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rasit Meredov, who called

on him in Islamabad this afternoon. Shehbaz Sharif also invited the Turkmen companies to benefit from the promising investment climate of Pakistan, highlighting the special role of SIFC in facilitating foreign investors to invest in different sectors of the country. Shehbaz Sharif expressed satisfaction at the holding of the 3rd Round of Pakistan-Turkmenistan Bilateral Political Consultations, led by the two Foreign Ministers and stressed the need for regular engagements of all the institutional mechanisms between the two countries. He also highlighted the need for enhanced trade, economic, investment and cultural relations between Pakistan and Turkmenistan. The Prime Minister fondly recalled his meeting with the Grand Leader of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov at Astana earlier this month and stated that he is looking forward to welcome Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in Pakistan at an early date. Meanwhile, Pakistan and Turkmenistan on Tuesday, noting the positive trajectory of the bilateral relations, agreed to further enhance high-level dialogue and exchanges at the leadership level, besides strengthening the bilateral dialogue mechanisms. The bilateral ties were discussed in the Third Round of Pakistan-Turkmenistan Bilateral Political Consultations held here at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar led the Pakistan side while the Turkmenistan side was led by Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, according to a Foreign Office press release.

### 'Bench, Bar should go hand in hand'

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) said on Tuesday that if "we don't dispense justice then there is also a court of the Almighty". During his address a ceremony organised by the Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCBA), he said that problems face by the bar must be solved as he also belonged to the bar, adding that bench would also have to play its part. Criticising the lawyers for appearing late in hearings, Justice Jahangiri suggested that lawyers should prepare the case very well and come to the court on time. He further reiterated that he 'recites the Holy Quran' daily for avoiding any injustice through his verdicts, adding that as much as 80% people expect us to give justice. "I have never gone against the merit, whoever commits travesty of justice is a criminal in the eyes of pleader and the Almighty," he added.

### FIA withdraws appeal against Sanam Javed

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Tuesday withdrew its appeal against the acquittal of PTI worker Sanam Javed, leading to the conclusion of the case in the Islamabad District and Sessions Court. The hearing, presided over by Judge Afzal Majoka, addressed the FIA's appeal to the duty magistrate's decision to discharge Javed from the case. During the court proceedings, FIA prosecutor Sheikh Amir appeared to present the agency's position. Sanam Javed expressed her gratitude to the judge, stating, "Thank you for your kindness in this case." In response, Judge Majoka clarified, "I administered justice, not a favour. Lawyers presented their arguments, and I ruled according to the law." The court subsequently dismissed the appeal based on the FIA's withdrawal, closing the matter. Earlier, the Punjab Government, led by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, had challenged the Lahore High Court's decision to discharge Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sanam Javed from a Gujranwala case in the Supreme Court.

## WhatsApp disruption likely 'technical glitch,' says PTA

PTA spokesperson claims there are no issues with social media apps currently

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's telecommunication regulator has downplayed the ongoing issues with WhatsApp services being experienced by cellular users in the country, attributing it to a possible "technical glitch." On July 20, numerous users in Pakistan began reporting difficulties in sending and receiving media files, such as voice notes, photos, and videos, on the popular messaging application while using their mobile networks. Complaints included media files either taking too long to download or not downloading at all, with some users receiving the following message from WhatsApp: "Couldn't download document. Try again. If the problem keeps happening, try connecting to Wi-Fi."

According to a 2024 report by the World Population Review, there are 52.3 million WhatsApp users in Pakistan. The disruptions have persisted for many users. In the last 24 hours, DOWNDetector, a global platform that monitors problems with websites and online applications, has continued to receive reports regarding outages of WhatsApp in Pakistan. Private telecommunications services in the country have also confirmed the issue. A spokesperson for Jazz, Pakistan's largest mobile network, who asked to remain anonymous, told Geo Fact Check that the company has received reports of WhatsApp disruptions. "We are looking into the matter, and our commitment to providing uninterrupted services continues," he added. While a representative from Telenor Pakistan mentioned that they too had received "some complaints over the weekend" about WhatsApp's quality. "We investigated the complaints and concluded that there were no issues from our side or due to our network," he said. "If there was an issue from the backend or elsewhere, they can tell you better about it. That is beyond us."

## Imran Khan did not admit anything: Raja

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) legal counsel for beleaguered party founder Imran Khan, Salman Akram Raja, on Tuesday stated that Khan has not admitted to any wrongdoing regarding the events of May 9. Raja noted that following the Rangers' action in Zaman Park, he was unanimously decided that protests would occur at designated locations, whether GHQ or any other office. After meeting with the PTI founder at Adiala Jail today, the lawyer spoke to the media, saying, "We are ready to discuss Pakistan's welfare. We want to move forward, ensuring that there is no chaos in the country and that the economy progresses, lifting people out of poverty and inflation." He added, "The current environment being created will lead to disaster." PTI's legal counsel highlighted the

importance of public involvement, saying, "You cannot achieve the welfare of the state by distancing it from the people. It is essential to move forward with the people and their elected leadership." He relayed the PTI founder's message, stating, "The news about an admission is completely false. The PTI founder has not admitted to anything regarding May 9." He maintained that Imran's stance remains that the attacks on March 14 at Zaman Park and on March 18 at the judicial complex involved Rangers, police, and ISI personnel. Last night, Senator Faisal Vawda accused PTI supreme Imran Khan of being responsible for Pakistan's current political instability, citing evidence provided by former director general Inter-Services Intelligence Lt Gen (retd) Faiz Hameed, linking Khan to the May 9 vandalism incident. "I cannot champion law and democracy when multiple cases are pending against me in courts. Some time ago, I revealed that Imran Khan's close associate, Faiz Hameed, provided evidence of Khan's involvement in the May 9 vandalism," stated Vawda during an interview with a private TV channel. During media talk today, Salman Akram Raja explained that following these incidents, the party decided that if there was further interference by the Rangers or ISI in police matters, peaceful protests would occur at appropriate locations, including GHQ or other offices, without causing damage. "This was a unanimous decision," he said. - DNA

## Bangladesh PM blames political foes for violence

Ms Hasina, 76, secured her fourth straight term as prime minister in January, in a controversial election boycotted by the country's main opposition parties

FOREIGN DESK

DHAKA: Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has blamed her political opponents for the deadly unrest in the country, adding she was "forced" to impose a curfew for public safety. "We will lift the curfew whenever the situation gets better," she said on Monday in a meeting with business leaders in the capital Dhaka. Security forces are accused of excessive force against student protesters, in which more than 150 people have been killed in the past week. Police have arrested over 1,000 people, including several senior opposition leaders. MsHasina's comments came a day after Bangladesh's top court scrapped most of the quotas on government jobs, meeting a key demand of protesters. The rallies have sparked one of the deadliest outbreaks of violence in the country for years and escalated into calls for MsHasina to quit. MsHasina has blamed the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami and their student wings for the violence, saying her government will work to "suppress these militants and create a better environment". Political analysts see the unrest as an unprecedented test for one of Asia's most powerful women. MsHasina, 76, secured her fourth straight term as prime minister in January, in a controversial election boycotted by the



country's main opposition parties. "The over-politicisation of the spirit of the liberation war by Sheikh Hasina and her party, the denial of basic voting rights to citizens year after year, and the dictatorial nature of her regime have angered a large section of society," said Mubashar Hasan, a research fellow at the University of Oslo who studies authoritarianism in Asia. "Unfortunately, she never became the prime minister for everyone in the country. Instead, she remained the leader of just one group," he told media. Before Sunday's court decision,

Bangladesh reserved about 30% of its high-paying government jobs for relatives of those who fought in Bangladesh's war for independence from Pakistan in 1971. The court ruled that 93% of roles would now be filled on merit. MsHasina is the daughter of Bangladesh's founding leader Sheikh MujiburRahman. Her government abolished the reservation in 2018, following protests. But a court ordered the authorities to reinstate the quotas in June, triggered fresh unrest. The protests by mostly university students began about two weeks ago. They say the system unfairly benefits the children of pro-government groups and they have called for it to be replaced with merit-based recruitment. MsHasina initially dismissed the protesters' concerns, which analysts say exacerbated the unrest. On 14 July, she continued to justify the quota system by reinforcing the divide between the descendants of pro-liberation and anti-liberation forces. "Why do [the protesters] have so much resentment towards the freedom fighters? If the grandchildren of the freedom fighters don't get quota benefits, should the grandchildren of Razakars get the benefit?" she said at a press conference. The Razakars - a derogatory label in Bangladesh - refer to a paramilitary force made up of Bangladeshis who fought on the side of Pakistan during the 1971 war. The group is also accused of heinous crimes during the conflict, which saw atrocities committed on all sides.

## Pak raises minimum marriage age to 18 for Christians

President Zardari says he would write to the govt for enhancing the job quota for minorities

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has said that all minorities are equal citizens of Pakistan who have equal rights, underscoring the need to further enhance the employment quota for them in all government jobs. President Zardari said this while addressing a special ceremony at Aiwan-e-Sadr after he signed into law the Christian Marriage (Amendment) Act 2024, raising the marriageable age for Christian men and women to eighteen years, according to the press release issued on Tuesday by the President's Secretariat Press Wing. Speaking about increasing the employment quota for minorities in all government jobs, the president said that he would write to the government in this regard. Highlighting equal rights for all minorities in Pakistan, he stressed that minorities should not be disheartened by some isolated incidents, saying that they had equal ownership over the homeland as much as anybody else. The president accorded approval to the Christian Marriage (Amendment) Act 2024 under Article 75 of the Constitution. The act amends Section 60 of the Christian Marriage Act of 1872.

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