



Islamabad POST

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Pezeshkian takes oath as Iran's 9th president, calls for global coop

Detailed News On Page-08

Maduro decries right-wing plot, boots 7 envoys

Detailed News On Page-07



Younis poised for major role in PCB

Detailed News On Page-06



NA bill proposes

Affidavit regarding party affiliation can't be changed

PML-N lawmaker tables bill proposing two amendments in the Election Act, 2017

FIAZ CHAUDHRY / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) lawmaker Bilal Azhar Kiyani has tabled the Election Act (Amendment) Bill, 2024, in the National Assembly, proposing that the individuals who contested general election as independent candidate cannot change their affidavit at a later stage to declare affiliation with any political party. The amendments have been proposed to the Section 66 and Section 104 of the Election Act, 2017. "Provided further that an independent candidate shall not be considered as the candidate of any political party if at later stage he files a statement duly signed and notarised stating that he contested the general elections as a candidate of the political party specified therein," read the bill a copy of which is available with Geo News. The bill also proposed that political parties who failed to submit list of the reserved seats within the stipulated time to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will not be eligible for the reserved seats. "Provided further that if any political party fails to submit its list for reserved seats within the aforesaid prescribed time period, it shall not be eligible for the quota in the reserved seats at later stage," the bill stated. Moreover, it proposed that any candidate will be considered as an independent candidate if they fail to submit declaration for affiliation with a political party before seeking the allotment of an election symbol. "Provided that if a candidate, before seeking allotment of a prescribed symbol, has not filed a declaration before the returning officer about his affiliation with a particular political party by submitting party certificate from the political party confirming that he is that party's candidate, he shall be deemed to be considered as an independent candidate and not a candidate of any political party," the bill read. "This Act shall come into force at

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July inflation expected to hover around 12%-13%

In June 2024, CPI inflation reached cusp of single-digit range, monthly economic outlook says

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Amid optimism about reaching single-digit rates, the Ministry of Finance has projected July inflation to hover around 12% to 13%, easing further in August to stand between 11% and 12%, according to a monthly economic outlook released on Tuesday. "Economy moved towards stability in FY2024 with decreasing inflation, a surplus in the primary fiscal account (Jul-May), a negligible current account deficit, and a stable exchange rate," the finance ministry in its Monthly Economic Update and Outlook said. Inflation figures likely to be released on Thursday by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) are closely watched by the central bank, which cut rates this week for the second time in a row as previously surging inflation was tempered. According to the report, in the real sector, agriculture outperformed,

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ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Mussadaq Malik Federal Minister for Petroleum, Governor Sindh Kamran Tesuri, Ambassador of Morocco Mohamed Karmoune and others cutting cake to celebrate the Fifth Anniversary of the Accession to the throne of His Majesty of the Kingdom of Morocco, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. - DNA

Retired colonel court martialled

Awarded the punishment of 14 years rigorous imprisonment

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Lieutenant Colonel Akbar Hussain, a retired officer of Pakistan Army, was convicted and sentenced through Field General Court Martial (FGCM) under Pakistan Army Act, 1952 for the charges of inciting sedition among army personnel from discharge of duties. The court of competent jurisdiction adjudged him 'guilty' of the offence charged, through due judicial process and awarded the punishment of 14 years rigorous imprisonment on 10th May 2024.

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PM directs NDMA to accelerate relief efforts

PM asked the Authority to assess the damages to life and properties caused by the rains

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday telephoned Chairman of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lt. General Inam Haider Malik and directed to take all necessary relief measures as heavy rains lashed across the country.

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Wants fresh elections Imran Khan 'ready to hold talks' with military

When asked why was he seeking talks when he was criticising the army and why wasn't he seeking talks with political parties, he said: "What is the SIFC? Who is Mohsin Naqvi? There is an undeclared martial law"

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) imprisoned founder Imran Khan said Tuesday that his party was ready to hold talks with the military. The PTI founder, who appeared in a court established in Adiala jail for a hearing, said: "We are ready to hold talks with the military. The army should nominate their representative [for negotiations]." Khan, who has been imprisoned for nearly a year, said that his party had never levelled allegations against the army, but had only criticised the armed forces. He further said that if any PTI worker was found guilty in the May 9, 2023,

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PTI trying to indulge military in politics: Tarar

Tarar said, "Sometimes he (PTI founder) grabs the neck and sometimes the feet"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Atta Ullah Tarar has said that PTI founder is

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Briefs

Raof Hasan sent on judicial remand

Court rejects FIA's request for extension in physical remand; defence counsel says Hasan is sick

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: A court in the federal capital sent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Raof Hasan and other suspects in the anti-state propaganda case on a 14-day judicial remand. The FIA had presented Hasan before District and Sessions Judge Shafiq Bhatti, who rejected the agency's request for a further five-day physical remand. Hasan, who was arrested last Monday, was handed over to the FIA on a two-day remand on Tuesday. Later, the court approved a three-day extension to his physical remand and then a two-day remand for further investigation.

Govt taking steps to curb inflation

Rs600 billion have been earmarked for Banazir Income Support Programme (BISP) this year

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Petroleum Musadik Malik has said the government is taking steps to reduce inflation. Last year inflation was 38 percent and it has come down to 12 percent, he added. Giving a press briefing, Malik said the country's growth rate was increasing by 2.4 percent. He said people got most of employment through agriculture in the country and the employment provision was the government's first priority. He said Rs600 billion had been earmarked for Banazir Income Support Programme (BISP) this year.

Deadlock persists in dialogue

Ji chief blasts past govts for crippling IPP deals

Hafiz Naeem demanded that the IPP agreements be made public, accusing the govt of incompetence and corruption for failing to renegotiate these deals

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) leader Hafiz Naeemur Rehman criticized previous governments, including those led by former military ruler General (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf, PPP, PML-N, and PTI, for making agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) that are detrimental to the public. Addressing a press conference at the JI sit-in at Rawalpindi's Liaquat Bagh, which entered its fifth day, Hafiz Naeem highlighted that the protest has sparked hope among the 250 million citizens of Pakistan. The current electricity bills, he argued, are unaffordable, impacting children's education and household expenses. Hafiz Naeem demanded that the IPP agreements be made public, accusing the government of incompetence and corruption for failing to renegotiate these deals. Welcoming and thanking PTI's supreme Imran Khan for supporting the protest, Hafiz Naeem noted that the PPP initiated the

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Govt proposes risky terms for PIA

Buyer-favoured terms allow partial payments, debt-based investment in 3 years

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The government has proposed buyer-favoured terms for the sale of majority stakes in Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), offering to accept partial purchase payments for the acquisition of majority stakes and allowing debt-funded investments over a period of three years. Under the proposed terms, the buyer will have the option to pay approximately one-third of the total sale price in cash and settle the remaining amounts against

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Taliban cut ties with Afghan embassies loyal to former govt

Afghan ministry says it repeatedly urged its political and consular missions in Europe to engage with Kabul

NEWS DESK

KABUL: The Taliban government has severed consular ties with swathes of Afghan embassies in the Western countries, Kabul said Tuesday, cutting off diplomats loyal to the former foreign-backed administration. The 2021 Taliban takeover left diplomats staffing Afghanistan's foreign missions in limbo, having pledged to serve a government which collapsed in chaos after the withdrawal of US troops. No country has yet formally recognised the Taliban government but in the past three years the Kabul authorities have installed Taliban ambassadors in some neighbouring embassies. But Afghanistan's foreign ministry said Tuesday it now "bears no responsibility" for credentials including passports and visas issued by missions out of step with Kabul's new rulers. The embassies include those in the cities of London and Berlin as well as the countries of Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, France, Italy, Greece, Poland, Sweden, Norway, Canada and Australia. "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has repeatedly urged the Afghan political and consular missions in European countries to engage with Kabul," a statement said. "Unfortunately, the actions of most of the missions

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Gulf nations express discontent over Pakistani workforce

Official warns of problems if Pakistani expatriates are not given due training to improve their behaviour

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a worrying development that might have far-reaching consequences for hundreds and thousands of Pakistanis, several Gulf countries have expressed their concerns regarding Pakistani expatriates and labour force. The revelation was made during a Senate Standing Committee on Overseas Pakistanis during which Secretary Overseas Pakistanis Dr Arshad apprised the forum that the

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OEC to send female nursing staff to Malaysia

The interested candidate should have relevance qualification and experience as ICU nurses diploma in nursing or bachelor of science in nursing 16 (Years) or Post RN from the recognized institution

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) would hold walk in interview in Lahore from August 3 to 4 for the selection of female nurses staff for Malaysia. An official source told APP here on Tuesday, he said that our esteemed client Sunway Health Care Hospital requires Female Staff Nurses in the State of Malaysia. He said that only qualified and experienced candidate could join the Walk-in-Interview for their selection from (8:30 am to 5 pm) Lahore Shalimar Tower Hotel Jail Road. The interested candidate should have relevance qualification and experience as ICU nurses diploma in nursing or bachelor of science in nursing 16 (Years) or Post RN from the recognized institution. Registration from the Nursing Council, Minimum of 03 years of related

work experience in the hospital setting, specialized post-basic training in OT/ICU & Pediatric will be preferred Only Females ,Not more than 45 years, Basic Monthly Salary 3,000- 4,500 RM, allowance Per Month including General Nursing Allowance for Pediatric Nurse, Specialized Allowance for ICU & OT Nurses Only, Specialized Allowance= 1100 RM, General Nursing Allowance= 700 RM, Degree Allowance= 400 RM, Post Basic Allowance= 800 RM, Operation Theatre Nurse, Pediatric Nurse, CCU Nurse, NICU Nurse, A&E Nurse. Further he said that all candidates are required to bring the following documents on the interview day including updated resume with color photographs - please refer to the sample of resume provided + must use GMAIL email address. General Education Certificates with a certified true copy, Nursing training certificates -

diploma and nursing degree, Registration certificate with own nursing board/council or with other Nursing Board/Council, Academic transcript with a certified true copy, Additional specialization course - Post Basic ICU/ NICU/ PICU/ OT/ Paeds/ A&E, Current Practicing License, Birth Certificate, International passport (If you have), Marriage certificate, Testimonial from a recent employer (If you have one), Recent passport-size color photographs (5 copies), 3 months' pay slips (If you have). Interested applicants can apply via OEC's website <https://oec.gov.pk/>.

Help-Desk Team: for technical support, contact the OEC-Helpdesk team at UAN: 0311-0011-632 or Email: helpdesk@oec.gov.pk The applicant will submit/attach the deposited Bank challan amounting to Rs. 1000/- generated at the time of online application submission.



ISLAMABAD : President Asif Ali Zardari welcoming the Secretary-General of Commonwealth, Patricia Scotland, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.—DNA

QCCI assure for promoting Pak-Indonesia bilateral ties

QUETTA : Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI), Business Community on Tuesday assured to play their full role for the promotion of bilateral economic and trade relations between Indonesia and Pakistan. Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia to Pakistan, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma visited the Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry and addressed the local business community along with President QCCI, Abdullah Achakzai in Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Charge d'Affaires of the embassy of the Republic of Indonesia to Pakistan, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma invited the business community of Quetta to participate in the 'Indonesian Industrial Exhibition' to be held in Indonesia in the coming October and called their cooperation important for the development of mutual trade. Charge d'Affaires of the Republic of Indonesia said that his government will provide all possible facilities to the businessmen and investors coming to the trade fair in Indonesia and the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad will guide them in visa and other matters. On the occasion of this visit to the Quetta Chamber of Commerce, he said, "I have recognized the potential of the local business community, whose role is very important in improving the economic relations between Pakistan and Indonesia in the future". He said that Indonesia has \$1.4 billion economy with manufacturing, tourism and agriculture and services as important sectors which have many opportunities for the local business community. Rehmat said that Indonesia is the largest economy in ASEAN and the country has great opportunities for the business community here He said that he will play his due role to increase scholarship and set quota in Indonesian universities for students of Balochistan. Meanwhile, on the occasion, President Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Abdullah Achakzai said that his chamber encourages bilateral trade and investment opportunities between the two countries and the business community of Quetta strives to make the economic and trade relations between the two countries stronger.—APP

President for stronger coop with Commonwealth

He called for enhanced interactions among parliamentary bodies, particularly young parliamentarians and students, to further strengthen and promote the bonds of friendship with Commonwealth member states

MEHTAB PIERZADA

ISLAMABAD : President Asif Ali Zardari has emphasised the need for stronger cooperation with the Commonwealth in areas of climate change, education, parliamentary exchanges and disaster preparedness. He called for enhanced interactions among parliamentary bodies, particularly young parliamentarians and students, to further strengthen and promote the bonds of friendship with Commonwealth member states. The president expressed these views while talking to a delegation led by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Patricia Scotland, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Tuesday. Welcoming

the delegation, the president said that Pakistan, being the founding member of the Commonwealth, attached great importance to this organization for promoting cooperation among member states. President for stronger cooperation with Commonwealth The meeting exchanged views on the consequences of climate change for Pakistan. The president said that Pakistan had suffered a lot due to the impacts of climate change. He informed that over 2 million mangroves had been planted in Sindh to mitigate the impacts of climate change which had also earned \$ 27 million by trading carbon credits in the international market. He also mentioned that the Sindh government

had started constructing 2 million flood-resilient houses in the wake of the floods of 2022. Secretary-General Patricia Scotland said that Pakistan was facing huge challenges relating to Climate Change and was among the countries most vulnerable to its consequences. She highlighted the Commonwealth's robust engagement with Pakistan and expressed her gratitude for Pakistan's continuous support for the work of the organization. The president appreciated Secretary-General Patricia Scotland's climate advocacy for Pakistan in meeting the adverse impacts of climate change, especially in the aftermath of the climate-change-induced devastating floods in 2022.

Screening stressed to ward off cervical cancer

LAHORE : The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) Tuesday organized an awareness session focusing on the importance of cervical screening for women's health at its premises. The event, which was organized under the leadership of LCCI President Kashif Anwar, was attended by Professor Dr. Zuna Saeed, Dr. Roohi Saeed, Professor Dr. Muhammad Saeed, LCCI EC member Fareeha Younas, the healthcare professionals, industry leaders and community members. In his opening address, President Kashif Anwar highlighted the critical role of cervical screening in preventing cervical cancer, a major health concern for women globally.

The LCCI President said that the prime duty of the chamber is to talk on the issues of taxation, trade, industry and economy but it is also active in social sector. He highlighted several initiatives undertaken by the LCCI to support and empower women. Kashif Anwar said that the Lahore Chamber has established a Women's Business Lounge at the LCCI for the women entrepreneurs. He said that for the first time in LCCI's history awards ceremony were held exclusively to recognize the achievements of women. He mentioned LCCI's efforts in raising awareness about breast cancer and supporting the rehabilitation of individuals with special needs. He said that the LCCI has signed numerous Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with various hospitals to ensure healthcare facilities on discounted rates for LCCI members. The LCCI President praised the efforts of LCCI Executive Committee Member Fareeha Younas for her dedicated work towards the development of women in the business sector. Her contributions have been instrumental in promoting and supporting women entrepreneurs.

Digital push in Pakistan's agriculture sector takes off

DNA

ISLAMABAD :United Nations Food and Agriculture (FAO), here on Tuesday marked the official launch of the Digital Agriculture Consortium (DAC), a pivotal step in transforming Pakistan's agriculture through digital means. The event, part of the PDAC project "Technical Support for the Establishment of Pakistan Digital Agriculture Consortium," was backed by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFSR). It brought together a wide range of participants, including digital agriculture companies, mechanization service providers, digital service providers, financial representatives, policy-makers, and development partners. Government bodies such as the Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunication and Land Information & Management System also attended. The event

showcased various digital agriculture products and services, giving attendees a hands-on look at the latest advancements, from precision agriculture tools to smart farming technologies. The event covered key areas like digital track and traceability systems and land information management, demonstrating how these technologies can improve agricultural productivity and efficiency. Panel discussions featured industry experts and thought leaders discussing topics like bridging gaps in ag-tech solutions and post-harvest success. The DAC also began enrolling stakeholders into the consortium, aiming to integrate key players from government, private sector, academic institutions, and agri-tech companies into a unified platform. This broad coalition is committed to advancing digital agriculture across Pakistan. The primary goal of the DAC launch was to highlight the consortium's main objectives: establishing robust governance structures, developing a unified digital

platform, and formulating comprehensive digital strategies. The event identified key industry challenges and proposed effective solutions to address them. The DAC aims to make Pakistan's agriculture sector more productive, efficient, and sustainable by integrating advanced technologies. This includes making farming more consistent and resource-effective, benefiting farmers and society at large. The role of the private sector in expanding Pakistan's digital agriculture was emphasized, highlighting the need for systematic mainstreaming and coordination of digital services. The successful launch of the DAC sets the stage for significant advancements in digital agriculture in Pakistan. By fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and strategic planning, the DAC is well-positioned to drive the digital transformation of agriculture, enhancing productivity, efficiency, and sustainability across the country.

AIOU VC calls on Sindh Minister to expand educational outreach

ISLAMABAD : Vice Chancellor (VC), Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Tuesday called on Sindh's Minister of Education and Minerals, Syed Sardar Ali Shah in the latter's office and discussed matters relating to the expansion of educational facilities in remote areas of Sindh. During the meeting, Syed Sardar Ali Shah stated that the university will be provided with all possible support to promote education. The provincial minister praised AIOU for illuminating remote areas across the country with the light of knowledge and acknowledged the mission to spread education in Sindh as a commendable initiative. He assured the VC of the provincial government's support for this noble cause. The VC briefed the provincial minister on the university's network and educational services across Sindh. He emphasized that their mission is to illuminate remote areas with knowledge, identifying regions, where formal education systems are lacking and establishing university campuses and model study centers to spread the light of knowledge. Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, VC AIOU further mentioned that the university is transferring regional offices from rented premises to its buildings and highlighted the need for land for the construction of the Hyderabad campus. He requested to philanthropists and high-ranking government officials to assist in this noble cause. During this meeting, the Director General of Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqeer Ahmed Khan, and the Director of Admissions, Syed Zia-ul-Hassnain, accompanied the VC.—DNA

KP to equip 2000 women with digital technological skills

Special Assistant to the Chief Minister said that the provincial government is ready to make any type of investment, beside developing the new generation also bring the nation at par with the developed world

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR : The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the assistance of TVET Sector Support Programme would equip 2000 women with digital technological skills in the fourth-phase of a phase-wise training programme. In this connection, a consultative workshop of all stakeholders was held at the Institute of Management Sciences (IM-Sciences) with Special Assistant to KP CM on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tord-

her as chief guest here on Tuesday. Besides, Director IM-Sciences, Usman Ghani and teaching staff of the institute, Director General (DG) NAVTCC, the representatives of universities, GIZ, British Council, Academia, experts from private sector and public sector authorities were also included in the participants. Addressing the participants of the workshop, the experts stressed on the elimination of unemployment in the modern era and equipping the young generation with modern technology and digital training and in this regard termed linkage be-

tween the industry and academia important. The experts stressed the need for provision of the technology based expertise to meet the challenges of the current era, adding that efforts should be made to prepare skilled talents equipped with technology as demand of the industry. In the workshop, IT Board officials said that they are heading towards making the province a hub of digital skills and getting its share in the digital economy in the world. Speaking on the occasion, the Special Assistant to the Chief Minister said that our province has

a status of the commercial centre in the country suitable for trade through many corridors. He said that the provincial government is ready to make any type of investment, beside developing the new generation also bring the nation at par with the developed world. He said that 15 industrial institutions are providing on-the-job training opportunities to the students, wherein financial stipends will also be paid to the under training students. The Special Assistant said that about Rs.4 billion will also be disbursed in shape of credit to the pass out

trainees through Akhwat Foundation to begin a technical or skill based business. He described the digital skills development of women in the fourth phase of the TVET sector as a very useful initiative and said that the girls will take benefit from this project and assured the full support of the provincial government in this regard. A question and answer session was also held on behalf of the stakeholders and they shared their views and suggestions to make the fourth phase more useful and effective.



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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

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



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
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WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43
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Met Office.....9250360-6
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TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

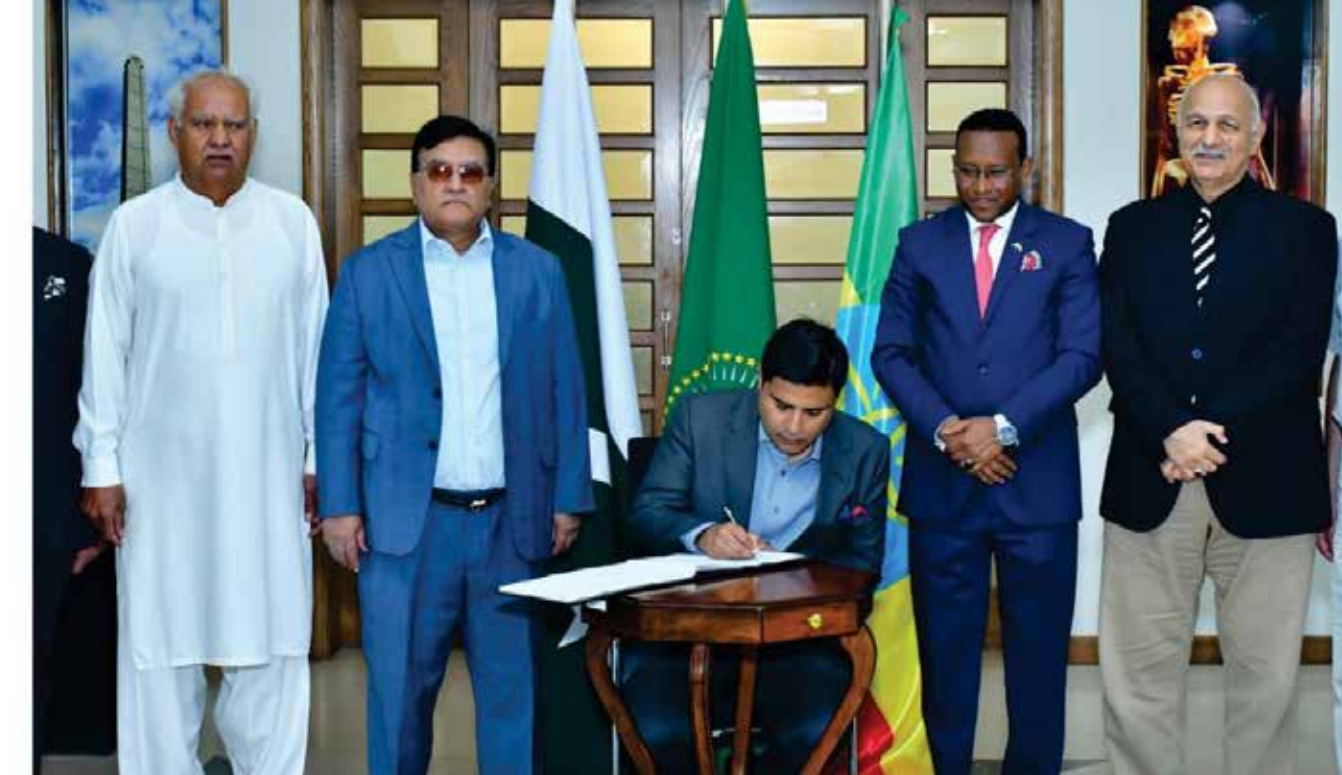
Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ICCI delegation visits Ethiopian Embassy, expresses solidarity

The Ambassador expressed gratitude for Pakistan's support in launching Ethiopian Airlines' operations in Karachi, a key component of Pakistan's "Look Africa and Engage Africa" policy to strengthen government-to-government, people-to-people, and business-to-business relations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan, His Excellency Jemal Beker Abdula has emphasized the strategic partnership between Ethiopia and Pakistan, expressing determination to enhance bilateral relations, particularly in trade and business. He made these remarks during a meeting with a delegation from the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), led by its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, which visited the embassy to offer condolences for the loss of over 260 lives in Ethiopia's recent landslides. On this occasion former Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed was also present. Ambassador Abdula highlighted the successful interactions between Pakistani and Ethiopian entrepreneurs through exchange programs, fostering mutual understanding and co-operation. He also noted Pakistan's potential to benefit from Ethiopia's experience in addressing climate change. The Ambassador expressed gratitude for Pakistan's support in launching Ethiopian Airlines' operations in Karachi, a key



component of Pakistan's "Look Africa and Engage Africa" policy to strengthen government-to-government, people-to-people, and business-to-business relations. ICCI President Ahsan Zafar

Bakhtawari reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to its ties with Ethiopia, recognizing it as a gateway for exports to Africa. He emphasized the role of Ethiopian Airlines in promoting bilat-

eral relations and expressed the Pakistani business community's enthusiasm for exploring new avenues with Ethiopian entrepreneurs. Earlier, President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari had expressed

his heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the people and government of Ethiopia for the tragic loss of lives caused by the devastating landslides last week. He assured Ambassador Jemal

Beker Abdula that the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) was fully committed to providing all possible assistance to the affected families. Additionally, he recorded his condolence message in the condolence book, further solidifying the Chamber's support during this difficult time." Former Senator and PAIDAR Chairman Mushahid Hussain Syed highlighted the importance of people-to-people exchanges and business-to-business connectivity in areas like education, trade, and sustainable development. Former ICCI President and United Business Group Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari commended Ambassador Abdula's efforts in strengthening bilateral relations by saying that together both the brotherly countries have gained a sufficient ground and that Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's visit to Pakistan will be a jump to further solidify ties between the two nations. The ICCI delegation included Malik Shabbir Awan, Faizan Shahzad, Malik Mohsin Khalid, Maqsood Tabish, Akhtar Abbasi, and Zia Chaudhry.

"Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking"

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Stakeholders from various international organizations and the Government of Pakistan reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening collaboration and accelerating efforts to combat human trafficking. During an event organized to commemorate World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, the emphasis was placed on protecting children and upholding the rights and dignity of those most at risk of exploitation. The event, under the global theme "Leave no child behind in the fight against human trafficking," was a collaborative effort organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO), in partnership with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). Observed annually on July 30th, the World

Day Against Trafficking in Persons aims to raise awareness about human trafficking and advocate for protection of victims' rights. This year's global campaign urges accelerated action to end child trafficking and labour issues. Children make up a significant proportion of trafficking victims worldwide, with girls disproportionately affected. Rising inequalities and globalization have fueled complex trafficking networks that challenge traditional legal frameworks, creating new forms of slavery. Online platforms further expose children to sexual exploitation and gender-based violence, enabling traffickers to exploit victims across borders. The event aimed to raise awareness about the prevalence and impact of child trafficking and labour in Pakistan while highlighting the collaborative efforts and commitments of various organizations in combating human trafficking. It also recognized national partners and stakeholders making significant contributions to the fight against human trafficking in Paki-

stan. During the event, UN agencies and partner organizations reiterated their commitment to addressing human trafficking through inclusive and collaborative efforts at all levels. Moreover, the event provided a platform for sharing knowledge, strategies, and best practices through presentations, expert opinions, and discussions. In his opening remarks, the Additional Director General of FIA, Mr. Abbas Ahsan, our society as a whole and practitioners including law enforcement in particular must acknowledge what constitutes trafficking; it's prevalence in Pakistan and the impact it has on the lives of people especially children. Country Representatives from UNODC, ICMPD, ILO, IOM, SSDO, and FIA underscored the importance attached to the protection of children and stressed that targeted measures are essential to reduce their vulnerability to trafficking. Dr Jeremy Milson, Representative UNODC Country Office Pakistan, invited Ms. Shahida Gillani, Programme Officer Human Trafficking and Migrant

Smuggling to read the message of UNODC Executive Director Ghada Waly with the audience. Ms Gilani highlighted in her message, this year's theme focuses on child victims which have tripled over the past 15 years. She also shared, "according to UNODC's data, globally, children account for one-third of trafficking victims, suffering unspeakable abuse - whether they are forced into labour, sold off as brides, recruited as soldiers, or coerced into criminal activities. Geir Tonstol, Country Director for the ILO Pakistan, said, "The ILO recognizes the urgent need to combat human trafficking, a grave issue disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable, especially children. With a staggering 3.3 million children trafficked worldwide, it is crucial for state systems to adopt integrated approaches that prioritize child protection. By leveraging forums like this, we can expand partnerships and collaborate with like-minded organizations to support Pakistan's progress towards a fairer and more equitable society."

Rana Tanveer calls for technology adoption

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries, Production and National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain on Tuesday emphasized the need for modernization and technology adoption in the agriculture sector to boost productivity, reduce costs, and increase exports. Speaking at a seminar titled "Change of Agriculture of Pakistan", the minister said that the traditional farming practices were unsustainable and inefficient. He said that technologies like ICT, IoT, mobile applications, GPS/GIS, and UAVs are playing a significant role in transforming traditional farming practices. "Traditional farming practices are unsustainable and inefficient, which increase costs and reduce profits", Rana Tanveer said. The minister said that the agricultural sector grew by 6.25 per cent last year, surpassing other sectors and boosting the overall economic growth rate by 2.38 percent. He highlighted that environmental impact can be reduced by using new technology. Rana Tanveer said collaboration with stakeholders in the agricultural sector was going on and the government was providing the necessary institutional support to the agricultural sector.--APP

Interest rate reduction by SBP appreciated

ISLAMABAD: The chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President of Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, as well as former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, on Tuesday, lauded the SBP for a slight reduction of one per cent in the interest rates. Staff level agreement with the International Monetary Fund, control over imports, increase in taxes, reduction in current account deficit, stabilization of rupee value and reduction in inflation have boosted the central bank's confidence on which it has cut the key policy rate, he said. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the central bank's decision will increase the confidence of the business community to some extent. However, he said, keeping in mind the reduction in inflation, which has come down from 35% to 12%, a three to four percent reduction in interest rates was needed to meet challenges as industry and business are facing worst conditions. Mian Zahid Hussain said that not only are electricity and gas more expensive in Pakistan than in the countries of the region, but the interest rate is also much higher than in these countries. He said that the Monetary Policy Committee of the State Bank of Pakistan has reduced the basic policy rate by 100 basis points to 19.5% due to the trend of decreasing inflation. This decrease will lead to some reduction in interest payments on loans. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the external accounts are continuing to improve.--DNA

China's experience offers valuable lessons

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China's experience offers valuable lessons for other countries, including Pakistan, as they work towards enhancing their digital payment ecosystems. It is transitioning towards a cashless society, with electronic payments becoming increasingly common nationwide. According to data provided by Statista, the total transaction value in the Digital Payments market is projected to reach US\$11.55tn in 2024, with the highest accumulated transaction value reached in China (US\$3,744.00bn in 2024). This digital payment trend extends beyond urban areas, positively affecting residents and small businesses in rural regions as well. "China offers valuable insights into Pakistan's journey towards digital payment adoption. Pakistan can benefit from China's diverse strategies and tailor them to meet our specific requirements," says Monis Rahman, Co-founder & CEO, Dukan, Pakistan's leading e-commerce infrastructure provider. "While exploring Guangzhou, walking through charming narrow streets and alleys, I looked for small businesses to understand how they collect payments from customers. China doesn't seem to have a unified QR scheme like UPI, RAAST, or PIX. Instead, QR codes from multiple banks are used," Rahman said. He observed that most shops display two QR codes--green for WeChat and blue for Alipay. Incentives likely encourage this dual display. Like Pakistan's multiple POS machines, Chinese stores often have multiple QR codes.

Book 'The Lost War' by Brig Ishaq Khattak (Retd) Launched at IRS

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with Pakistan House hosted the launch of the book titled, "The Lost War: Why the Taliban Re-emerged to Claim Victory in Afghanistan", authored by Brigadier Ishaq Ahmed Khattak (Retd) at its premises. Speaking at the event, the author reflected on his challenging yet rewarding journey as an author. He noted that capturing the memories of the tumultuous years during the US invasion posed significant complexities, especially in addressing the book's central question: why the Taliban re-emerged to claim victory in Afghanistan. The author also described how his passion for writing about Afghan affairs began in 1998 during his posting in Peshawar, where frequent interactions with Afghans and the Taliban sparked his interest in the Afghan culture, history, and the struggle. Addressing the gathering, Amb Jauhar Saleem, President of IRS, emphasized that while the global war on terrorism has concluded, achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan remains a significant challenge in the post-US withdrawal era, continuing to threaten regional and global security, particularly for Pakistan. He noted that Ishaq Khattak's book, "The Lost War," is not just a historical narrative but provides vital lessons for promoting lasting peace in Afghanistan. Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Athar Javed, DG Pakistan House, lamented that despite Pakistan's fight in the global war against terrorism being the frontline state.--DNA

COMSTech-Indonesia research fellowship program completes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 3rd batch of the COMSTech-Indonesia Research Fellowship Program for Virology and Vaccine Technologies has completed successfully. COMSTech in collaboration with Indonesian Ministry of Health, PT Bio Farma, and Padjadjaran University, the Center of Excellence on vaccine and biotechnology products, enrolled 12 early-career scientists from

nine OIC member states for a month-long training in virology and vaccine technology. The third phase of one month-long training program held in Jakarta and Bandung, west Java. Scholars from Indonesia, Cameroon, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Egypt, Pakistan, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda, participated in the program. The goal of the program was to enhance research and development capabilities in the field of virology and vaccine technology among OIC member states. First two phases of the same program have been successfully conducted in Indonesia in 2022 and 2023. The program aimed to foster collaboration among OIC countries in vaccine production and contribute to global health initiatives. Since 2022, COMSTech-Indonesia Research Fellowship Program has supported 24 research fellows from 18 OIC member countries.



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Briefs

Poverty, unemployment leads to human trafficking

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in his special termed the poverty, unemployment and unequal distribution of resources as major factors behind the rising figures of human trafficking. He stated on "World Day Against Human Trafficking" that underdeveloped countries were badly affected by human trafficking, and organized gangs were also active in Pakistan. He emphasized that FIA always remains vigilant in curbing these gangs and apprehended several suspects. He underscored the need for multi-faceted joint actions from the international community to prevent human trafficking. Interior Minister said that human traffickers played with the lives of thousands of people, families have been separated from their loved ones. He stressed that people must stand together against the heinous crime. He reiterated that let us work together to raise awareness against human trafficking, address its causes, and strive for a society where no one is exploited due to human trafficking.

Pharmaceutical goods' export increases

ISLAMABAD: The export of pharmaceuticals goods from the country has witnessed an increase of 3.90 percent during the fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period last year. Pakistan exported pharmaceutical products worth US\$ 341.023 million during July-June (2023-24) as compared to the export of US\$ 328.210 million during July-June (2022-23), showing a growth of 3.90 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, the export of pharmaceutical goods also rose by 44.38 percent from 59,213 metric tons to 85,492 metric tons, the data revealed. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the pharmaceutical goods' export increased by 32.92 percent during the month of June 2024 as compared to the same month of last year. The pharmaceutical exports in June 2024 were recorded at US \$29.128 million against the export of US\$ 21.914 million in June 2023, the PBS data revealed. On a month-on-month basis, the exports of pharmaceutical goods however decreased by 24.47 percent in June 2024 as compared to US\$ 38.566 million in May 2024.—APP

Rescue 1122 on high alert due to intense rains

DNA

RAWALPINDI: District Emergency Service, Rescue-1122 has put its personnel on high alert to deal with any expected emergency situation due to intense rains. Rescue personnel have joined their duties at areas surrounding Nullah Lai and the low-lying areas. The deployment of the rescuers have been made for security measures in Gawalmandi and other low-lying areas. Residents in the vicinity of the Lai area have been advised to be extra careful during the rains. Spokesman Rescue 1122 Muhammad Usman informed that during the rains, rescue personnel would remain on duty at the deployment places. After heavy rains, there are reports of rainwater entering houses in various low-lying areas of the city. The spokesperson advised parents not to let their children go near drains and electric poles. He also stressed people to drive at low speed during rain. He appealed to the public not to go under weak and dilapidated roofs during rains and to report any emergency to the rescue helpline 1122 immediately. All officers and personnel of Rescue 1122 are present in Fled all the time to serve the public, he said.

UNDP Resident Rep. urges collective action for addressing global challenges

Dr Rizk further shared that despite making progress on certain counts, Pakistan had fallen from medium human development in 2020-21 to low level of human development in 2023-2024, ranking 164th out of 193 countries – a score also low by the sub-region's ranking He shared that, according to UNDP's 2020 National Human Development Report on Inequality, the richest 20 per cent of Pakistanis had almost five times the income of the poorest 20 per cent

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: July 29, 2024: Dr Samuel Rizk, the UNDP Resident Representative in Pakistan, emphasized global solidarity and collective action to tackle shared global, regional and national development challenges such as inequality, pandemics and climate change. He urged policymakers to prioritize education, health, economic empowerment, institutional accountability, and resilience to climate-change for individual and collective well-being. He was speaking at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here on Monday. "When we look at the current state of global affairs, we see a set of interlinked global problems that no country is immune to. However, the spirit of cooperation to address these global, systemic problems, which used to exist, has been weakened by polarization and fractured multilateralism," said Dr Rizk. He highlighted the widening gap between very high human development index (HDI) countries and low HDI countries. He added that after factoring in inequality and fairness dimensions, South



Asia's loss in the HDI due to inequality was among the highest in the world, after sub-Saharan Africa. Yet, at the same time, much thinking and policymaking on human development actually originates in the South Asian

region – be it Mahbub-ul-Haq or Amartya Sen. Dr Rizk further shared that despite making progress on certain counts, Pakistan had fallen from medium human development in 2020-21 to low

level of human development in 2023-2024, ranking 164th out of 193 countries – a score also low by the sub-region's ranking He shared that, according to UNDP's 2020 National Human Development Report on Inequality, the richest 20 per cent of

Pakistanis had almost five times the income of the poorest 20 per cent. Despite being 48 percent of the population, women's inclusion remained in the social, political, and economic domains in Pakistan remains low, and 22 million school-age children were out of school. With 64 per cent of Pakistan's population below the age of 30, Dr Rizk called for "targeted investments in education, employment, and engagement for reimagining this youth bulge - that some consider a liability - into an asset." For Pakistan, 2022-2024 have been characterized by multidimensional, concurrent challenges including the 2022 floods, macroeconomic stability, political transition, and regional geostrategic developments. The mid- to long-term impact of these challenges and external shocks continue to take their toll on Pakistan's most vulnerable groups. Dr Rizk called for investments into human capital, economic stability and predictability (especially for the poorest segments), as well as horizontal and vertical trust as a foundation for effective policy and development action. Building on the

newly-released National Human Development Report for Pakistan 2024 on Digital Transformation, he urged Pakistanis to take advantage of the increasing digitalization to promote more inclusion, equity, and socioeconomic transformation. To sum up, he underscored the importance of pursuing and maintaining a development course of action that is people-centered and institutions-based development action to achieve human security, equality and prosperity. President IRS Ambassador Jauhar Saleem remarked that human security entailed freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity, while human development was about promoting long and healthy lives, providing access to knowledge; and ensuring a decent standard of living for all. He underscored that the progress of South Asian countries towards achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals was slightly lower than the global average. He added that the low score of Pakistan was because of obstacles across all areas of the SDGs, including education, health, and economic stability..

Makli Necropolis, a world heritage site needs promotion to attract tourists

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Despite being a potential spot representing the evolution and elimination of different eras, Makli necropolis is not well-known. Its promotion globally will fetch a fortune for the natives and state wallets of Pakistan, Managing Director Sindh Tourism Development Corporation (STDC) Syed Fayaz Ali Shah said. He said, "Makli Necropolis is a mesmerizing place sitting on a treasure of craftsmanship in its funerary monuments. It was designated as a world heritage in 1981 by UNESCO. Makli is located on a plateau, about six kilometres from the ancient city of Thatta, once the capital of Lower Sindh until the 17th century. Thatta, itself was the pivot of civilization

and culture and even today, its ancient constructions are worth seeing. From a common person to saints, esteemed scholars, and royalty belonging to different religions and cultures are buried here in brick or stone monuments. Like Thatta, a lot of other full of historic signs are also a strong reason to visit this place". By promoting the said places, new windows of opportunity will open for the locals. He said trained tourist guides knowing different dynasties could also play a vital role in making it a well-visited area, added Fayaz Ali. Discussing the archaeological details of Makli Necropolis, Deputy Director Archaeology (North), Punjab Muhammad Iqbal Khan Manj said, "Spanning over an area of about 10 square kilometers, Makli necropolis is one of

the largest funerary sites, globally and the largest in Asia. It houses at least one million tombs and was the properly designed cemetery of the ancients. In 1981, it was designated as a world heritage by UNESCO. In Makli, the funerary architecture is influenced by different cultures including Persian, Muslim, Hindu, and Gujarati. Tombs here were built during the era of Sindh Civilization between the 14th and 18th centuries B.C. The prominent dynasties that ruled this region were, Samma (14th century AD), Tarkhan (15th century AD), Arghun, and Mughals (1570 to 1640)". He said the royal mausoleums in Makli were divided into two major clusters Samma, Tarkhan, Arghun; and Mughals clusters. The tombs of Samma dynasty are located together, while

the others are away from them. Generally, the largest tombs are located at the southern edge. However, covering an area of approximately 5 miles, the tombs of Samma dynasty (also called the Samma cluster) are located north of Makli. Their tombs are strongly influenced by Gujarati styles and Muslim and Bindu decorative elements. Talking to WealthPK, Muhammad Iqbal said, "The earliest tombs were like small pyramids formed by stacking the sandstone slabs one above another. The evolving funerary architecture then incorporated small plinths. Larger monuments dating from later periods included corridors and some designs inspired by cosmology. Some tombs are featured with lotus flowers, a feature commonly associated with Hinduism".

UBG leaders call for deeper policy rate cuts

ISLAMABAD: The United Business Group (UBG) leadership, comprising S.M. Tanveer, Zubair Tufail, Khalid Tabwab, Hanif Gohar, and Syed Mazher Ali Nasir, expressed disappointment over the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) recent 100bps policy rate cut, urging further reductions to stimulate economic revival and growth. The business community had anticipated a more substantial cut of 300-500bps to address the high cost of doing business. The UBG leaders described the 19.5% policy rate as "disappointing" and emphasized the need for additional cuts to keep the economic wheels turning. Despite descending inflationary trends, the UBG leaders had expected a more significant reduction. They noted that lower interest rates, aligned with international trends, would encourage private sector borrowing, facilitating business expansion and industrialization. The leaders highlighted that inflation has decreased to 11%, down from 38%, due to government administrative measures, and improved agricultural production. They cited excellent crop production and the stability of the rupee value as key factors in easing inflation. The UBG leaders view the recent rate cut as a positive step but urge further reductions to support the business community, which faces challenges like inflationary effects of increased power tariffs, higher petroleum development levies, and imposition of taxes on essential items. They believe a lower interest rate will encourage private sector borrowing and economic activities. They further suggested the government could manage inflation and accelerate reduction in policy rate by reducing taxes included in lower power tariff.—DNA

Education ministry takes steps to provide better bus service

ISLAMABAD: As per the directions of Federal Education Minister, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has announced that 45 out-of-order and dysfunctional buses since 14 years, are currently being repaired and rehabilitated and will be brought back into the system within a week to ensure safe and reliable transportation for the FDE students. According to the education ministry, 200 drivers and conductors have also been hired after eight years through a third-party service to address the human resource deficiency in the school bus fleet. This will enable us to provide efficient and timely transportation services to the students. Similarly, 20 Pink Buses have also been allocated for girl students and teachers to travel from rural to urban areas.—APP

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to reduce unemployment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has successfully entered into a promised CPEC PHASE-II. Enormous expectations are associated with this phase of a \$64 billion investment project. The prominent among all other hopes is that of reduction of rising unemployment in the country. Currently, Pakistan's unemployment rate stands at 4.2 percent. However, it is noted by research conducted by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) that 37 percent of educated youth are unemployed. Amidst this worrisome situation of unemployment, the CPEC phase-II offers extensive opportunities for the unemployed youth of Pakistan. Essentially, the Special

Economic Zones (SEZs) have greater potential to reap the fruits of success destined while initiation of CPEC during the historic visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2015. Circumscribing the discussion mainly as to what extent the CPEC Phase-II holds the potential to limit Pakistan's rising unemployment is a point that needs discussion and debate. CPEC Phase-II is beyond infrastructure and connectivity projects, rather it is purely a phase of economic activities through Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The SEZs contains small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The industries and production units will be given tax cuts and facilities such as uninterrupted energy supply by the state. This

indicates that the industrial growth is certain under CPEC Phase-II and it is destined to achieve desired goals of economic growth in Pakistan. In an interview, Professor Dr. Muhammad Idrees, dean of faculty of Social Science, Quaid-I Azam University, Islamabad shared his exclusive thoughts about the possible outcome of CPEC Phase-II in its relation to overcoming the rising unemployment in the country. He said that the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) will curtail the scourging unemployment by 2 percent in the next six years through employment opportunities in engineering, and management. And entrepreneurship. He also added that the CPEC holds significance to creating 1.2 million by 2028.

Kumrat valley shines as tourists flock to monsoon paradise

KUMRAT: Kumrat Valley is basking in its monsoon glory in Dir Upper district, transforming into an idyllic retreat for tourists and adventure sports enthusiasts arriving from plain districts of KP and Punjab provinces amid great fun and laughter. The valley's charm is heightened during monsoon by the melodic chirping of birds in the Deodar forests and the delicate hovering of butterflies over vibrant seasonal flowers take tourists over the lap of serenity. The region's unique weather patterns, featuring playful interludes of clouds and sunshine alongside moderate to erratic rains, have been a major draw for visitors and adventure enthusiasts seeking respite from the sizzling heat. The

cool breeze emanating from snow clad hills of Kumrat valley and refreshing climate add to the allure of this picturesque locale. Families are relishing the serene atmosphere, with children playing joyfully around them and indulging in delicious Chappli Kabab and green tea on the banks of the Kumrat River. Among the delighted visitors is a family of Qaisar Khan from Wapda Town Peshawar, who expressed their elation at finally experiencing their dream destination during the monsoon. There are many hidden jewels in Pakistan which are yet to be explored – be they natural sites, valleys or minerals- and Kumrat Valley is one of them which was explored a few years

back and now has become one of the favorite destinations for many national and international tourists due to its untouched beauty. Known for breathtaking natural beauty, deodar forests and magnificent waterfalls, Kumrat Valley's beauty is still not fully discovered by the tourists who fall into the lap of serenity once they reach the valley. Located some 45 kilometers from the Thal town on the bank of River Punjkora mostly originated from Dir, Kohistan and Swat's snow-capped mountain peaks of over 81,000 feet sea level, Kumrat Valley's hotels and makeshift inns are jam-packed with tourists with many witnessed living in tents to enjoy its pleasant weather.—APP

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Off 11: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

India has much to do to woo Chinese firms

Although the latest call from some Indian finance and industry officials to ease governmental restrictions on Chinese investment in India is a welcome sign, those Indian policymakers still hesitant to adopt that suggestion, citing an overreliance on China, need to know that even if New Delhi reopens its door to Chinese companies, India might not be able to recover the appeal it had for the latter before 2020. On the sidelines of a series of foreign ministers' meetings hosted last week by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Vientiane, the capital of Laos, the Indian foreign minister urged his Chinese counterpart to address issues between the two countries with a sense of mission and urgency, conveying the haste with which the Indian side is looking to Beijing to at least give it a ladder to climb down so that it can better explain at home the necessity of reopening doors to Chinese companies and investment. The Sino-Indian relations should not be defined by the border frictions between the two neighbors. It was from 2020 that New Delhi started taking the tensions with China as an excuse to pave the way for its diversionary tactics to implement its nationalist and jingoist strategies at home. The Narendra Modi government not only took the border disputes as a pretext to desincentivize Indian industry, information and investment sectors in support of its "Made-in-India" plan but also used it as an open sesame to join Washington's China-containment clique, in a bid to speculate on the latter's reshoring strategy as both a destination for US investment and a manufacturing base exporting to the US market. However, the lackluster business environment of India, which has poor infrastructure, an underdeveloped industrial base, a lack of contract spirit and skilled labor and inefficient governmental system have prompted many multinational corporations from the US and other developed economies to give up on India. Both the Indian government and these Western investors are well aware that none of these problems can be easily addressed in the short term, offsetting the country's advantages in cheap labor prices. What makes China hard to be replaced by India or any other developing country is its relative strengths in these areas. These have made it the major trading, logistics and investment partner of most countries in the world and an irreplaceable link in global supply chains. That the China-India trade volume has stayed largely steady at around \$110 billion to \$130 billion with Chinese exports to India rising continuously over the past four years, despite New Delhi's "de-risking" efforts, proves China's indispensability to India as a source of mechanical and electrical goods, chemical products and base metals and products, which are of strategic importance to India's manufacturing and export industries. New Delhi should be reminded that, in the face of its continuous suppression of Chinese companies, apps, technicians, entrepreneurs, investors and reporters, Beijing has exercised considerable restraint and refrained from taking any substantial retaliatory measures, which would have been fully justified to defend its core interests. The restrictive measures targeting Chinese entities represent only the tip of the iceberg. Only easing them will not pull Chinese investors to India.



BD State is yet to answer for so many deaths

The Bangladesh government seems to be in overdrive to identify those involved in the violence centring the quota protests, which would have been welcome had it included in its assessment of "violence" the role of its own security forces, especially in the deaths of over 165 people (as verified by this paper) that occurred during those violent clashes. In this connection, more than 10,000 people have been arrested in 12 days, and at least 473 more detained in police raids till July 29, according to our reports. Many of the arrests and detentions, as highlighted by a recent editorial in this daily, have been taking place without following due process of the law. Unfortunately, despite the gravity of the violence against students and the general population, the government's sole focus seems to be catching those who carried out vandalism of public properties, or clashed with security forces and members of ruling party affiliated groups—totally disregarding the role played by the latter in terms of instigation, escalation, and even the commission of killings. It is not for nothing that the students are now asking if the damage and destruction caused to public establishments, which we must condemn, are worth more to the current regime than the loss of citizens' lives. By the home ministry's own count, at least 150 people have so far lost their lives in the recent violence over the quota reform protests. Would the ministry please provide an answer for how these people died? Was there really a shoot-on-sight order? If so, who ordered it, and why? And if not, why did law enforcers go out of their way to indiscriminately open fire on protesters? It is beyond comprehension that law enforcement would react the way they did when there are many options available to riot police to dissipate protests in non-lethal manners. Verified videos, media reports, and eye-witness accounts have provided chilling evidence of the cruelty of the state apparatuses, which didn't even spare a four-year-old standing on his balcony. Despite repeated calls for accountability and justice—not least from the students themselves who have lost their comrades—we have not seen any real attempt by the government to address the mass killings, even as it observed a nationwide mourning in remembrance of those killed in the recent violence. The judicial probe commission that was formed has confirmed that it will only investigate the six deaths that took place on July 16 for now. Who will answer for the blood that has since been spilled? And when? As the government goes all out to quell the protests—by using the full force of the state—they seem to be missing the point altogether. Public anger and calls for accountability cannot be suppressed by mass arrests and crackdown on social media. By refusing to acknowledge the complicity of state apparatuses in the deaths, it is trivialising the sanctity of the lives of citizens and in the process further eroding its own credibility in the public eye. We can observe a national mourning day, but without unearthing what caused so many deaths, it will lack any moral authority.

Fatwa and Gwadar Incident

Qamar Bashir



During my over four decades of experience, I have frequently interacted with the Army Command when they were called to assist civilians. The army consistently argued that they should only be called upon in extreme circumstances. They emphasized that their military-grade weapons are unsuitable for use against their own citizens, which limits their effectiveness to that of the civilian government. While their presence and flag marches may initially intimidate

The situation in Pakistan is deeply troubling as the incompetence of politicians and civil administration has forced the army into handling sensitive ethnic, religious, cultural, and social conflicts, areas outside its training and primary purpose. The army is primarily trained to combat foreign enemies and assist the civilian government only when law and order are beyond civilian control. For example, during the Paris Olympics, over 10,000 military personnel provided security but returned to barracks after the event. In Pakistan, however, due to the persistent failures of political and civil leaders, the army is repeatedly called upon to manage conflicts that should be the civilian government's responsibility.

During my over four decades of experience, I have frequently interacted with the Army Command when they were called to assist civilians. The army consistently argued that they should only be called upon in extreme circumstances. They emphasized that their military-grade weapons are unsuitable for use against their own citizens, which limits their effectiveness to that of the civilian government. While their presence and flag marches may initially intimidate the populace, this effect diminishes as people grow accustomed to the army's involvement in civilian matters. The involvement of the army in civilian affairs, driven by the incompetence of politicians and the civil administration, has severely damaged its image. Visible and virulent movements against the army have emerged in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) in KP advocates for the rights of the Pashtun people, aiming to end extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and unlawful detentions, while demanding justice and human rights. In Balochistan, groups like the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), Baloch Republican Army (BRA), Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), and United Baloch Army (UBA) engage in armed struggle and propaganda against the army, further complicating the situation. This standoff has led to numerous incidents of violence, including the recent clash in Gwadar where a protest by the Balochistan Yakjehti Committee turned violent, resulting in the death of

one soldier and injuries to 16 others. The loss of life, whether of a protester or a soldier, is deeply painful for every Pakistani patriot, underscoring the urgent need for competent governance and peaceful resolution of conflicts. Like violent movements which should have no place in a democratic country, another deeply worrying phenomenon that reflects a serious fault line in our national fabric is the issuance of fatwas that call for taking the life of someone who contradicts the fatwa giver's religious philosophy. There has been a history of such illegal fatwas in Pakistan. In 2012, the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan issued a fatwa against Malala Yousafzai for advocating girls' education, leading to an assassination attempt. In 2011, a fatwa was issued against Salman Taseer for criticizing blasphemy laws, resulting in his assassination. Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy faced fatwas in 2016 for her documentary on honor killings. Militant groups like the TTP issued fatwas against polio vaccinations, claiming they were a Western conspiracy, leading to attacks on health workers. The 1974 fatwa against Ahmadis declared them non-Muslims, resulting in severe persecution. The Women's Protection Bill in 2006 faced fatwas for attempting to protect women from domestic violence. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi faced threats and was forced to leave Pakistan in 2005 due to his progressive Islamic views. In 2017, clerics issued a fatwa against Imran Khan over comments on the Khatm-e-Nabuwat clause. Judges involved in the 2018 acquittal of Asia Bibi faced death fatwas from extremist groups, and those who delivered the 2019 Faizabad Dharna verdict were similarly targeted by religious groups like TLP. The latest incident involved the issuance of a fatwa against Supreme Court Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa. In general parlance, the TLP, often termed the "Fatwa Churning Machine," is allegedly seen as an asset of the ISI and is subjected to mudslinging campaigns. The Pakistan Army faces a two-pronged jeopardy, despite the unwavering dedication of its brave soldiers and officers who frequently embrace shahadat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan to protect the country and its people from terrorists, criminals, and extremists. Instead of receiving the praise they rightly deserve, a virulent propaganda campaign has been unleashed against the

army on social media and traditional media platforms. While this propaganda has failed to deter the armed forces from achieving their objectives, it negatively impacts overall morale. Therefore, it is imperative to address and reverse this situation promptly. In this context, the parliament should prioritize addressing the underlying fault lines within the country instead of wasting time on self-serving laws to protect itself from the judiciary or opposition parties. The parliament must investigate and understand the real reasons and factors that have transformed a large segment of society into separatist, insurgent, extremists, religious bigots, and intolerant individuals. These elements take pride in waging armed struggle against the army, burning religious symbols of minorities, lynching individuals accused of blasphemy, slaughtering those opposed to their religious views, and issuing fatwas to murder others without judicial process, all with impunity. Interestingly, the district administration, special branch, and other intelligence agencies monitor all gatherings as a standard operating procedure, compiling daily reports at the district, divisional, provincial, and national levels, which ultimately reach the Prime Minister's desk every morning. Ironically, neither the Prime Minister, the parliament, nor our so-called intellectual thinkers and philosophers have taken up the challenge to reverse the ever-increasing phenomena of separatism, extremism, bigotry, intolerance, and violent behavior. Due to this impunity, these elements have become emboldened to the point of issuing fatwas against high-ranking officials, including the army chief, the prime minister, judges, and now the chief justice. As a nation, we must insulate our army from civilian affairs. Politicians and civil administration should step forward boldly to handle all internal political conflicts, such as the PTM and Baloch insurgency, taking full responsibility for their success and failure. Moreover, civilian leadership must recognize that fatwas, especially those that incite violence or are criminal in nature, including those related to incitement to violence, hate speech, and terrorism, have no official legal status. Those issuing these illegal decrees must be immediately brought to justice at the district level before such issues escalate to the national level.

Eurasian security system should be a force for peace

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

The OSCE's valiant attempts to bring together European adversaries from both camps were successful in mediating minor conflicts, but it has failed to bridge the gap in the Ukraine conflict. The lofty ideas of a united Europe have given way to war and destruction. While NATO and Russia are not officially at war, it is clear that Europe now has a skewed bipolarity, with an expanded and empowered NATO on one side and Russia on the other without its former Warsaw Pact allies. With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the failure of pan-European projects, the expansion of NATO and now the war in Ukraine...

The idea of a Eurasian security system has gained more attention recently as a response to the consolidation of NATO unity and its expanded membership since the start of the Ukraine war. While the idea has been around for some time, that war and the increasing polarization between Russia and NATO have made the idea more attractive, as have the US-China tensions and trade war. When NATO celebrated its 75th anniversary in Washington earlier this month, it appeared very united, striking a confident pose and seeking new partnerships around the world. The organization seems to have overcome differences over the requisite defense spending of no less than 2 percent of the gross domestic product of each member state and is even contemplating raising that threshold. Unlike NATO, which is a military alliance more or less united under US leadership, the Eurasian security architecture is proposed to be more diffuse, with several if not many poles, depending on which countries and organizations join the new architecture. In February, President Vladimir Putin, in his state of the nation speech to the Federal Assembly, stressed the need to form a "new contour of equal and indivisible security in Eurasia." He said that Russia was ready for a substantive conversation on this topic with interested parties and associations. During a visit to Beijing in April, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke of an "agreement" with China to begin a dialogue on this security system. He appeared to link the need for this new structure to the recent consolidation of NATO and the failure of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe to play an effective role in dealing with European conflicts. While the alliance known as the Warsaw Pact disbanded at the end of the Cold War, NATO remained intact, even attracting former Warsaw Pact members such as Bulgaria, Poland and Romania and, more recently, enlisting previously neutral countries such as Finland and

Sweden. The 75th anniversary this year is testimony to its resilience as one of the world's strongest and most enduring military alliances. The OSCE's valiant attempts to bring together European adversaries from both camps were successful in mediating minor conflicts, but it has failed to bridge the gap in the Ukraine conflict. The lofty ideas of a united Europe have given way to war and destruction. While NATO and Russia are not officially at war, it is clear that Europe now has a skewed bipolarity, with an expanded and empowered NATO on one side and Russia on the other without its former Warsaw Pact allies. With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the failure of pan-European projects, the expansion of NATO and now the war in Ukraine, with Kyiv supported by the US and most European nations, Russia and its close allies are advancing the idea of a Eurasian security system. China is one of the main potential players in this proposed security space. The world's top exporter and second-largest economy, China is also developing its military capabilities. More importantly, it is being alienated by the US and Europe and a full-fledged trade war is taking shape between the two camps. The risk of armed conflict over Taiwan and the South China Sea should not be ruled out. While Russia and China are the two main potential members of the Eurasian security system, Beijing has yet to publicly subscribe to this system. It is also clear that Russia is seeking to establish a more inclusive security system with several poles. It is not yet clear how multidisciplinary the new proposal is. Would it focus on defense and security issues or have a wider writ? Considering how heterogeneous the Eurasian space is, it would be difficult to imagine that there would be many countries interested in entering a military alliance. However, if the security architecture focuses on political and economic concerns, it could attract more followers. It would also be likely that some countries would

be interested in joint work on hybrid or asymmetrical threats, such as terrorism and cyberwarfare. The new security system should spell out the set of guiding principles for its work. The most obvious is respect for international law, including the UN Charter. That means respect for the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of all states. As the OSCE seems to have lost its ability to function in the face of acute polarization, the new security architecture should include a dispute resolution mechanism, as many of the potential Eurasian partners have border or other disputes with each other, such as India and Pakistan, India and China, Iran and several of its neighbors, and so on. Some would ask about the need for a new security system when the Shanghai Cooperation Organization can do much of what the new system is expected to do. This grouping includes in its membership China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Iran and others. It also includes about a dozen partners, including Saudi Arabia and most of the Gulf Cooperation Council member states. In sum, there is certainly a need for peacemakers. The devastating war in Ukraine has pitted two camps armed to the teeth with nuclear and conventional weapons against each other. They are determined to settle their conflict on the battlefield, as has been the case throughout most of Europe's history. Therefore, to make the proposal more attractive, the new Eurasian security architecture should be defensive and a force for peace, not a mere counter-balance to NATO. It should try to defuse, not stoke, the tensions around Ukraine, Gaza and other trouble spots. The new architecture should also take advantage of existing organizations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which has been around for decades. This group's summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, earlier this month called for the creation of a fair multipolar world order based on the key role of the UN, international law and the aspiration of sovereign states toward a mutually beneficial partnership.

- Sourced by Arab News

Briefs

Affidavit regarding party...

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once and shall be deemed to have taken effect on and from the commencement of the Elections Act, 2017," the bill read. The amendment bill was tabled amid strong criticism from the opposition benches. Later, the National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq sent the bill to the relevant standing committee in the House. The development comes after the Supreme Court verdict that declared the former ruling party eligible for reserved seats of women and minorities in the national and provincial assemblies. The PTI members had contested the February 8 elections as independent candidates and later joined the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) on the party's instruction in a bid to receive reserved seats as independents are not allowed under law to get reserved seats.

July inflation expected to hover...

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whereas large-scale manufacturing (LSM) is set to take off. LSM expanded 1.0% during Jul-May FY2024, compared to last year's contraction of 9.6%. In May 2024, LSM registered growth of 7.3% year-on-year (YoY) and 7.5% month-on-month (MoM), driven by strong performance in food, apparel, leather, coke & petroleum products, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and machinery and equipment. "In June 2024, CPI inflation reached the cusp of the single-digit range," the finance division said in the report. The external account position improved due to contained imports resulting from prudent fiscal and monetary management, while exports and remittances increased significantly, report said.

JI chief blasts past govts for...

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IPP agreements while the PTI government negotiated with 35 companies. FBR employees, he claimed, are involved in corruption amounting to one trillion rupees annually. He urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to announce that no minister or government official would use vehicles larger than 1300cc, asserting that such a move could save 1350 billion rupees. Criticizing the government for not implementing this policy, Hafiz Naeem accused rulers of living in luxury at the expense of public.

Govt proposes risky terms...

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PIA's payables, according to individuals familiar with the draft agreements being finalised for the sale. The draft agreements also include a provision for a three to five-year pause on dividend payments to shareholders, as reported by government officials. Background discussions with members of the PIA Holding Company Limited (PIAHL) board and officials involved in the airline's privatisation process revealed that the draft Shareholders Agreement, Sale Purchase Agreement, and Subscription Agreement do not fully protect the federal government's rights.

Taliban cut ties with Afghan...

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are carried out arbitrarily, without coordination and in explicit violation of the existing accepted principles." The statement said Afghans living abroad should deal instead with missions affiliated with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan — the self-styled name the Taliban have given the country under their rule. Pakistan, China and Russia are among Afghan embassies working on order from the Taliban government.

Mohsin Naqvi to become next president of ACC

The PCB chief will replace India's Jay Shah as the ACC President

DNA
LAHORE: The Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi is set to become the new president of the Asian Cricket Council, sources told media reporters on Tuesday. Currently, the president of the ACC is Jay Shah who is also the secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). Shah was given a one-year extension in his term as ACC chief in January 2024. As the president of the ACC is appointed on a rotation-based policy among member countries, Naqvi will replace Shah in January 2025 and his term will continue for two years. Naqvi is already working as the chairman of PCB, and Pakistan's Interior Minister. He will oversee three important roles once he is officially appointed as the ACC President. The official announcement confirming Naqvi's presidency is expected to be made in the next ACC meeting, scheduled for October-November.

Waqar Younis poised for major role in PCB

LAHORE: The Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi has decided to share his duties with the former head coach of the team Waqar Younis as he will keep his focus on administrative matters, sources told media reporters on Tuesday. Naqvi, who also works as Interior Minister, will hand over cricket affairs to Younis as he believes that a cricketer should be responsible for the matters related to the game. The decisions related to international, domestic cricket, the selection committee and the No Objection Certificates (NOCs) of the players will be watched over by Younis. Naqvi's primary focus will be to look after the administrative affairs of the upcoming 2025 Champions Trophy, which Pakistan is set to host between February and March next year. According to the PCB Constitution 2014, the Chairman of the board possesses the power to delegate his power to someone and that is how Younis will be given the power to make all the decisions related to the team. Naqvi's vision will be to involve senior cricketers in important aspects of cricket. Earlier this month, Naqvi met with more than two dozen former and current cricketers of Pakistan to discuss the future of cricket in the country. Naqvi assured the implementation of the suggestions in the meeting and said that five or six things that cricketers in the meeting mentioned will be implemented. On the suggestion of Yasir Hameed, former Test cricketer, the PCB chief said that cricket academies will be built in Islamabad and Peshawar. The standard of grounds will also be improved. He said that four-day cricket would be given maximum priority, coaches would be given more education, and qualified coaches would be hired. — Agencies

Earlier today, media reported that Naqvi has decided to share his duties with the former head coach of the team Waqar Younis as he will keep his focus on administrative matters. The PCB chief will hand over cricket affairs to Younis as he believes that a cricketer should be responsible for the matters related to the game. The decisions related to international, domestic cricket, the selection committee and the No Objection Certificates (NOCs) of the players will be watched over by Younis. Naqvi's primary focus will be to look after the administrative affairs of the upcoming 2025 Champions Trophy, which Pakistan is set to host between February and March next year. According to the PCB Constitution 2014, the Chairman of the board possesses the power to delegate his power to someone and that is how Younis will be given the power to make all the decisions related to the team. Naqvi's vision is to involve senior cricketers in important aspects of cricket.

Pakistan and Sri Lanka hold bilateral Consultations today



DNA
ISLAMABAD: The seventh round of Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) between Pakistan and Sri Lanka was held today in

Islamabad. The Sri Lankan delegation was led by Foreign Secretary Aruni Wijewardane while the Pakistan side was headed by Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi. The Consultations were held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere. The two sides reviewed the entire range of bilateral relations and reaffirmed the resolve to further strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation. It was agreed to enhance

bilateral dialogue and exchanges and to strengthen the dialogue mechanisms. They also agreed to explore new opportunities for cooperation in the fields of agriculture, health, connectivity and culture.

National hockey training camp starts July 31

LAHORE: The training camp of the national players participating in the Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament organized by the Pakistan Hockey Federation from September 8 to September 17 will be held at Naseerbanda Hockey Stadium Islam from July 31. It will start in Ahd. All players have been instructed to report to Camp Commandant Olympian Sheikh Usman at 2 pm on July 31. Goalkeepers Abdullah Ishtiaq Khan (Mari Petroleum), Muneebur Rahman (ZTBL), Ali Raza (Punjab), among other players Muhammad Abdullah (Mari Petroleum), Ehtesham Aslam (ZTBL), Muhammad Syufyan Khan (Mari Petroleum) are among the players selected for the training camp. Imad Shakeel Butt (National Bank), Abubakar Mahmood (National Bank), Arshad Liaquat (Mari Petroleum), Rana Abdulwaheed Ashraf (WAPD), Moin Shakeel (WAPD), Muhammad Salman Razak (WAPD), Murtaza Yaqub (WAPD), Abdul Hanan Shahid (WAPD), Ejaz Ahmed (WAPD), Abdul Rehman (Air Force), Osama Bashir (Air Force), Zakaria Hayat (Navy), Ghazanfar Ali (Customs), Hammaduddin Anjum (WAPDA), Roman (WAPD), Abdul Rehman (WAPD), Aqeel Ahmed (WAPD), Abdul Manan (Customs), Arbaz Ahmed (Mari Petroleum), Afriz (Mari Petroleum), Basharat Ali (Navy), Muhammad Nadeem. Khan (KPK), Junaid Manzoor (National Bank), Ahmed Nadeem (Punjab), Mohsin Khan (Air Force), Rao Arsalan (Pak Army), Waseem (Pak Army), Rizwan Ali (Air Force), Sameen (Punjab), Aleem Usman (WAPDA), Faisal Qadir (National Bank), Shahzeb Khawar (Punjab), Hammad Ali (Navy) and Abdul Rehman (Punjab Rangers). — DNA

Matthew Mott steps down as England's white-ball coach

LONDON: Matthew Mott stepped down from his role as England's white-ball coach with immediate effect after two years in charge of the team. Mott was England's head coach when they won the 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia by beating Pakistan in the final. However, doubts about his future were raised after the team's below-par performance in the ODI World Cup 2023 and T20 World Cup 2024. England failed in their title defence in both tournaments and reports circulating the rumours of his sacking emerged. However, it has now been confirmed that he will not be continuing his journey with the team. "I am immensely proud to have coached the England Men's team; it has been an honour. We have put everything into trying to achieve success over the past two years, and I am incredibly proud of the character and passion that the team has displayed during that period, including a magnificent T20 World Cup victory in 2022," Mott said in a farewell note. "I would like to thank the players, management, and everyone at the ECB for their commitment, support, and hard work during my time. I leave with many great friendships and incredible memories. "Finally, I would like to thank the England fans, who have always backed us and given us fantastic support wherever we have travelled around the world." Assistant coach Marcus Trescothick will take charge of the team on an interim basis and he will coach England when they play Australia in a white-ball series in September. Trescothick is now looking forward to working alongside Jos Buttler as England will start their preparations for the Champions Trophy which Pakistan will host in 2025. "England cricket is in a strong position, and the potential is huge, given the quality we have available," the former England opener said. "It is about harnessing that potential and developing the work that has already been put in place by Matthew and the rest of the set-up. I'm excited about the challenge and shaping how we want to play." — Agencies



Gulf nations express discontent...

FROM PAGE 01
United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait have voiced reservations on various issues related to overseas Pakistanis. The disclosure comes months after the ministry back in September 2023 informed the same body that out of all the Pakistanis leaving the country, beggars are going abroad the most. The official had said that Pakistani beggars travel to Iraq and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the guise of ziarat [pilgrimage]. Most people visit KSA on Umrah visas and then indulge in begging-related activities. Out of all the beggars who were arrested, 90% turned out to be Pakistanis, the secretary had said. However, the current development relates to a significantly more concerning issue as it highlights the rather "inappropriate" behaviour of Pakistanis in the UAE which includes them making videos in front of women in Dubai.

Imran Khan 'ready to hold...

FROM PAGE 01
riots then the authorities should penalise the individual. Khan reiterated that the incumbent government wanted to destroy his party by creating a wedge between PTI party and the armed forces. When asked why was he seeking talks when he was criticising the army and why wasn't he seeking talks with political parties, he said: "What is the SIFC? Who is Mohsin Naqvi? There is an undeclared martial law." Khan said that Interior Minister Naqvi was "their" representative and that he had reached "this place due to them". He then alleged that he would never hold talks with Naqvi as he along with the Punjab Inspector General (IG) "oppressed" his party.

PTI trying to indulge military...

FROM PAGE 01
trying to indulge the country's establishment in the political affairs for their vested interests when the Army was standing neutral. Talking to the media, Atta Tarar questioned the double standards of Imran Khan by saying that "at one time PTI founder claimed PTI will not bow down but on the other hand, it was requesting for talks with Army". Tarar said, "Sometimes he (PTI founder) grabs the neck and sometimes the feet". He said, "PTI founder was a security risk to this country". He said demands for talks by the PTI founder was a new conspiracy to involve the army in politics. Federal Minister said, "This is a huge U-turn of PTI and an attempt to use the military establishment for political gain".

Retired colonel court martialled

FROM PAGE 01
Pursuant to the awarded sentence, the Rank of the officer has been forfeited on 26 July 2024. Earlier, Ex Major (Retired) Adil Farooq Raja and Ex Captain (Retired) Haider Raza Mehdi were also convicted and sentenced through Field General Court Martial (FGCM) under Pakistan Army Act, 1952 for the charges of inciting sedition among army personnel from discharge of duties and violation of the provisions of Official Secrets Act, 1923 related to espionage and acts prejudicial to the safety and interest of the State.

PM directs NDMA to...

FROM PAGE 01
The prime minister asked the Authority to assess the damages to life and properties caused by the rains and improve coordination with provincial disaster management departments, and the disaster management authorities of AJK and Gilgit Baltistan, according to a PM House press release. He instructed the NDMA to ensure swift restoration of the highways and roads damaged by the rains or landslides. Prime Minister Shehbaz also called for providing all possible healthcare facilities in the rain-affected areas, besides ensuring the supply of relief items including medicines and other commodities.

Countdown to historic Ashes Day-Night Test begins

Women's Ashes will add to list of iconic sporting events held in Melbourne

SPORTS DESK
SYDNEY: Australia captain Alyssa Healy and vice-captain Tahlia McGrath are preparing to light up the MCG as the countdown to the historic CommBank Women's Ashes Day-Night Test Match begins. Healy and McGrath were at the MCG last night to mark six months to go until Australia and England play in the first-ever day-night Test at the stadium between January 30 – February 2, 2025. The match coincides with the 90th anniversary of the first-ever women's Test Match at the MCG, which was the third Test of the Australia-England series in 1934-35. Australia captain Alyssa Healy said: "We can't wait to play the first-ever day-night Test at MCG. It's going to be a special occasion as we honour the 90th anniversary of the first women's Test series under lights at this iconic venue. "We are preparing for a big summer including the ICC T20 World Cup in Bangladesh, white ball series at home against New Zealand and India culminating with the multi-format Ashes series. We hope the Australian fans

get behind us as we take on some tough rivals this summer." Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley said: "It's amazing to think that in just six months our brilliant Australian Women's team will light up the MCG for the historic first day-night Test at the world-renowned venue. "The Women's Ashes will not only be a great sporting event between fierce rivals, it will add to the list of iconic sporting events held in Melbourne and I'm grateful to the Victorian Government and the



Melbourne Cricket Club for their strong support. "Our women's team is one of the most successful in sporting history and this series promises to be a landmark occasion for Australian sport." Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos said: "No stadium in Australia can provide a bigger crowd than the MCG – it's the perfect place for this historic Test Match and to mark this momentous occasion. "These landmark sporting events provide a huge boost to our local economy, filling our hotels, bars, restaurants, and creating a great buzz in the city." Melbourne Cricket Club, manager of the MCG, CEO Stuart Fox said: "The MCG hosted the first-ever international Test Match in 1877, the first-ever One-Day International match in 1971 and saw over 86,000 for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup Final between Australia and India in 2020. "Now we have the opportunity to host our first-ever day-night Test which is sure to become another important moment in the MCG's storied history. It is extremely special that this milestone falls with a Women's Ashes Test, a series beloved at the MCG, and while marking the 90th anniversary of hosting our first Women's Test."

Briefs

UNRWA reports hepatitis outbreak in Gaza

GENEVA : The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) has reported an outbreak of hepatitis across the Gaza Strip amid relentless Israeli attacks on the enclave. In a Tuesday statement, the UNRWA said nearly 40,000 cases of hepatitis have been recorded in Gaza since the start of the Israeli war on Oct. 7, 2023. "800 to 1,000 new hepatitis cases are reported weekly from UNRWA health centers and shelters across Gaza," it added. "Desperate sanitary conditions facilitate the spread of diseases including Hepatitis A," UNRWA said. Israel has continued a devastating military campaign in the Gaza Strip since last Oct. 7 following a Hamas attack despite a UN Security resolution demanding an immediate cease-fire. During the offensive, hospitals were systematically targeted in Israeli attacks across the enclave where at least 39,400 people have been killed and nearly 91,000 others injured, according to local health authorities. Over nine months into the Israeli war, vast tracts of Gaza lie in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water and medicine.—APP

IMF approves 'landmark' Ethiopia bailout

LONDON : The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved a bailout of \$3.4bn (£2.6bn) for Ethiopia to support its economic reforms over the next four years. The Horn of Africa nation has been struggling with chronic foreign currency shortages and high inflation - largely blamed on the brutal two-year civil war in Tigray, which ended in 2022. "This is a landmark moment for Ethiopia," said Kristalina Georgieva, the IMF's managing director, adding that it was "a testament to Ethiopia's strong commitment to transformative reform". News of the deal came after Ethiopia floated its currency - which analysts say was a key step in securing the loan. Monday's announcement saw Ethiopia's currency, the birr, lose nearly a third of its value against the dollar. The IMF said it would immediately release about \$1bn to help Ethiopia's "balance of payments needs and provide support to the budget". Ethiopia - Africa's second most-populous country - has also been in talks with its international creditors to restructure its debt. In December it became the third African country in three years to default on its sovereign bond.—APP

Filipinos join global pro-Palestinian movement

MANILA : Young Filipinos on various university campuses have joined the global pro-Palestinian student movement, calling for the boycott of the Israel regime. A media report on Monday showed a video of a student-gathering on campus calling for a cultural and academic boycott of Israel and its supporters, as well as an end to the genocide in Gaza and illegal occupation of Palestinian land. Pro-Palestinian student leaders and activists have doubled down on their efforts to raise awareness about the months-long Israeli regime forces genocide of Palestinian people, mostly helpless women and children, trapped in the besieged Gaza Strip. Student organizers have been calling for rallies in solidarity with the Palestinians, drawing their peers attention to the ongoing resistance movements in Palestine struggling for liberation. By comparing the Palestinian cause with the Philippines' history and experience of occupation and colonialism, they hope to engage more people and inspire further collective action in their community. Student organizer Raphael Joury Gavino from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) told media that he believes the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict is rooted in US imperialism.—APP

Pezeshkian hails Yemen, Ansar Allah ready to defend Lebanon

Iran's president the Yemeni spokesperson for Ansar Allah for Yemen's steadfastness in the face of the Israeli occupation

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN : Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian praised the Yemeni forces' operations against the Israeli occupation and in support of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, calling for increased cooperation among Islamic nations to end the oppression of Muslims. He made these comments on Monday during a meeting with Mohamed Abdel-Salam, the spokesperson for Yemen's Ansar Allah Resistance movement, in Tehran. Pezeshkian said, "Actions taken by Yemen in support of the Palestinian nation are very important and effective, and have clearly pressured the Zionist regime and its supporters," adding that, "The steadfastness of the Yemeni nation in the face of pressures and the animosity of arrogant powers is very valuable and commendable." The president emphasized that unity and coordination among Muslim countries could thwart the enemies' plots, stating,



"Unity and cohesion strengthen the power of Islamic nations." He also discussed the Tehran-Sanaa relationship, expressing hope for its fu-

ture enhancement. Mohamed Abdel-Salam, who arrived in Tehran earlier on Monday for Pezeshkian's swearing-in ceremony set for Tuesday af-

ternoon, also commended the strong and deeply rooted relationship between the two countries. He said "I hope our cooperation will further expand

to serve the mutual interests," stressing that "Yemen will continue to coordinate [efforts]... with Iran in different fields to confront common challenges." "Yemen ready to defend Lebanon against aggressors" Earlier on Monday, Yemen's Al-Masirah television network cited Mohamed Abdel-Salam as saying his country is ready to defend Lebanon against the aggressors amid Israeli threats. He stressed that Yemen's stance on any Israeli aggression on Palestine or Lebanon is "crystal clear" and that "Yemen will stand by Lebanon in defending itself against any Israeli aggression." His comments come amid increasing tensions between "Israel" and the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon-Hezbollah, following a rocket attack on Saturday that killed 12 people and injured 40 others in Majdal Shams, a town in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. While "Israel" has blamed Hezbollah for the attack, the Lebanese Resistance movement has firmly denied all such allegations.

Maduro decries right-wing plot, boots 7 envoy for interference

Venezuela has requested that Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Peru, Panama, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay withdraw their

WEB DESK

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro asserted in a press briefing on Tuesday that the far-right "did everything possible to implement a violent scenario by sabotaging public services such as electricity and causing the suspension of the elections," emphasizing that "this plan was known before, during, and after July 28." Maduro stated that "90% of those involved in violent acts are drug addicts, hired daily to carry weapons." The Venezuelan President revealed that authorities have "identified and arrested those responsible for the violent, ter-

rorist, and criminal attacks," noting that "80% of them have criminal records, while others recently returned to the country on flights from the United States." He emphasized, "I am obliged to tell you the truth, and it is our duty to listen, arm ourselves with patience, reassurance, and strength. We know this plot, we know how to face these situations, and we know how to defeat violence." Attacks and riots in Venezuela On the ongoing attacks and riots in Venezuela, Foreign Minister Ivan Gil commented on the issue, stressing that the rioters' assaults included "burning state centers, beating people for supporting Chávez,

destroying buses, torching workers' vehicles, and shooting at innocent people." Gil labeled the attackers as "the most extreme enemies of democracy globally, describing them as fascists who will not be allowed to return." On his part, Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino confirmed that 23 soldiers were injured, some by firearms, in the attacks. In a press statement, Padrino assured that "the soldiers are receiving medical care" and emphasized, "We will not allow Venezuela to revert to the turmoil of 2014, 2017, and 2019." Venezuela requested that Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Peru, Panama, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay

Vietnam coal mine collapse kills five

HANOI : A coal mine collapsed near Vietnam's Ha Long Bay after heavy rain killing five people, state media reported Tuesday. The accident happened Monday at a mine operated by the Hon Gai Coal Company, a unit of Vietnam's state coal miner Vinacomin, VNExpress news site said. Early Tuesday morning a rescue team pulled out the bodies of the miners, who were aged between 23 and 47 years old. Two killed, 20 injured in India train derailment According to disaster authorities, heavy rainfall was reported in Ha Long City, in northern Quang Ninh province, at the time of the accident. The torrential rains caused landslides, and several homes were flooded. Other parts of the country's north have also experienced heavy rain for days, triggering flash floods and landslides. On the outskirts of Hanoi, several communities have been living in floodwater for a week. Scientists have warned that extreme weather events globally are becoming more intense and frequent due to climate change. Deadly mining accidents are not infrequent in Vietnam, which despite ramping up its green credentials still relies heavily on coal-fired power plants. Seven others have died in mine accidents in Quang Ninh province since April. Last year, accidents claimed at least 10 workers' lives at Vietnam's state-run coal and mining group, local reports said.—DNA

Third child dies following mass stabbing in UK

SOUTHPORT, UK: A third child died on Tuesday and five others remained critically injured after a knife attack on a Taylor Swift-themed dance event in a quiet seaside community in northern England, police said. The nine-year-old girl died in hospital early Tuesday, Merseyside Police said, as the force confirmed that two victims who died in the "ferocious" stabbing spree Monday were also girls, aged six and seven. Eight other children suffered stab wounds during the attack in Southport, near Liverpool, which has shocked the UK and beyond. Two adults were also in a critical condition after being injured. A 17-year-old male suspect from a nearby village arrested shortly after the incident remained in custody, police added, as they warned against speculating about his identity or details of the investigation. "This incident is not currently being treated as terror-related and we are not looking for anyone else in connection with it," Merseyside Police said in its latest update. Hours earlier, US pop star Swift took to social media to say she was "completely in shock" over "the loss of life and innocence, and the horrendous trauma inflicted on everyone." "These were just little kids at a dance class. I am at a complete loss for how to ever convey my sympathies to these families," she added on Instagram. Visiting the scene of the attack to lay flowers and meet local officials, interior minister Yvette Cooper said police were pursuing "every single avenue" as part of "a serious criminal investigation."—APP



Tengah : High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq calls on President Tharman Shanmugaratnam at the President's Office in Singapore.—DNA

BD calls day of mourning for victims of unrest

Student rallies against civil service job quotas sparked days of violence that killed at least 206 people, including several police officers,

FOREIGN DESK

DHAKA : Bangladesh's government called for a day of mourning Tuesday for victims of violence in nationwide unrest, but students denounced the gesture as disrespectful of classmates killed during clashes with police this month. Student rallies against civil service job quotas sparked days of violence that killed at least 206 people, including several police officers, according to an AFP count of police and hospital data. The clashes were some of the worst of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 15-year tenure but her government has since largely restored order with mass arrests, troop deployments and a nationwide internet shutdown that was rescinded on Sunday. Her administration said the violence, destruction of government buildings and "terrorist activities" at the height of the unrest would be solemnly marked on Tuesday with prayers in mosques around the nation. However, Students Against Discrimination, the group that organ-

ised the initial protests, said the government's announcement was of ensuring justice for the mass murders committed by the state

EU slams 'use of excessive force' against BD protesters

BRUSSELS : EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Tuesday condemned the "use of excessive" force against protesters in Bangladesh after days of violence that killed at least 206 people, according to an AFP count. The violence erupted after student rallies against civil service job quotas this month and the death toll based on police and hospital data includes several police officers. Critics say the quota is used to stack public jobs with loyalists of the ruling Awami League party. Borrell expressed his deep concern over the deaths of officers as well as the "torture, mass arrests and damage to property that have taken place". He called for an investigation and for those responsible to be brought to justice. "There must be full accountability for the numerous instances of use of excessive and lethal force by the law enforcement authorities against protesters and others," he said in a statement. Bangladesh protests quelled but anger, discontent remain "We will follow closely the actions of the authorities in the context of this crisis and, with the fundamentals of EU-Bangladesh relations in mind, expect all human rights to be fully respected," he added. The clashes were some of the worst of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 15-year tenure but her government has since largely restored order with mass arrests, troop deployments and a nationwide internet shutdown that was rescinded on Sunday.—APP

intended to deflect blame for the death toll from police. "Instead forces, students have been cruelly mocked," Mahin Sarker, one

of the group's coordinators, said in a statement. More than 10,000 people have been arrested in the wake of the unrest, according to the Daily Star newspaper, prompting criticism from rights groups of the extent of the police dragnet. The mass arrest and arbitrary detention of student protesters is a witch hunt by the authorities to silence anyone who dares to challenge the government," Amnesty International's Smriti Singh said in a statement. Troops are still patrolling urban areas and a nationwide curfew remains in force, but the latter has been progressively eased since the start of last week in a sign of the government's confidence that it was in control. Protests began this month over the reintroduction of a quota scheme reserving more than half of all government jobs for certain groups. With around 18 million young Bangladeshis out of work, according to government figures, the move deeply upset graduates facing an acute jobs crisis. Critics say the quota is used to stack public jobs with loyalists of the ruling Awami League. The Supreme Court drastically cut the number of reserved

jobs after the unrest but fell short of protesters' demands to scrap the most contentious aspects of the system. Hasina, 76, has ruled Bangladesh since 2009 and won her fourth consecutive election in January after a vote without genuine opposition. Her government is accused by rights groups of misusing state institutions to entrench its hold on power and stamp out dissent, including the extrajudicial killing of opposition activists. Protests had remained largely peaceful until attacks on demonstrators by police and pro-government student groups. "There must be full accountability for the numerous instances of use of excessive and lethal force by the law enforcement authorities against protesters and others," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in a statement Tuesday. Hasina's government has accused opposition parties of hijacking the protests to cause unrest. Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan told reporters at the weekend that security forces had operated with restraint but were forced to open fire to defend government buildings.

McDonald's hit by first sales drop since 2020

LONDON : The McDonald's fast food chain has experienced its first decline in global sales in almost four years, significantly affected by a boycott campaign initiated by Palestinian supporters around the globe amid the ongoing Israel's war on Gaza. McDonald's worldwide sales dropped by 1% in the April-June period, marking the first decline since the fourth quarter of 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and government-imposed restrictions, the company reported on Monday. The ongoing anti-Israel boycott was not addressed in the report explicitly, which instead attributed the decline to customers being "more discriminating with their spend." McDonald's blamed the decline in sales to a decrease in US customer traffic, partially mitigated by price increases, as well as the continued impact of the war in West Asia and reduced demand in China. The report showed that the net income of McDonald's decreased 12 percent to a little over \$2 billion in the second quarter of the year. The global decline in comparable sales, which covers company-owned and franchised stores open for at least 13 months, marks the first fall since the last quarter of 2020. "While quarterly revenue of \$6.49bn was roughly unchanged from a year ago, net profit declined 12 percent to \$2.02bn, missing Wall Street expectations," said Chris Kempczinski, the company's chief executive.—Agencies

RSF bombardment in Al Fasher kills 65

KHARTOUM : At least 65 people, mostly children, have been killed since Saturday in bombardments by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Al Fasher city in Sudan's Darfur region, according to activists. The Al Fasher Resistance Committees said in a statement on Monday that "in just three days the RSF have killed more than 43 children, 13 women and nine men among the people of Al Fasher". They added that "more than 70 rockets were launched in just one day by the Janjaweed militias at hospitals, homes, mosques and markets", in a reference to the RSF, who are descendants of the Janjaweed militias which began terrorising Darfur in 2003. "Today is one of the bloodiest days in Al Fasher, for the civilian population, the mosques and the hospitals, especially the Saudi hospital", the governor of the Darfur region Mini Minawi wrote on social media site X. A medical source in the Saudi Hospital, which was the target of heavy fire, earlier said artillery shelling killed 22 people on Saturday. "The silence of the international community is shameful", he said.—APP

Türkiye neutralises over a dozen PKK terrorists

ANKARA : Turkish security forces have "neutralised" 13 PKK terrorists in airstrikes in northern Iraq. The terrorists were detected in the Gara and Haftanin regions of northern Iraq and "neutralised", Turkish National Defence Ministry said on X on Tuesday. "We are continuing and will continue our fight with great determination and resolve to rid our nation of the scourge of terrorism," said the ministry. "We are making northern Iraq a tough place for terrorists" it further added. Irak' n kuzeyini teröristlere dar ediyoruz! Kahraman Türk Silahlı Kuvvetlerimiz, Gara ve Haftanin bölgelerinde tespit etti i 13 PKK' l teröristi düzenledi i hava harekât yla etkisiz hale getirdi. PKK teröristleri often held in northern Iraq to plot cross-border attacks in Türkiye. Turkish authorities use the term "neutralise" to imply the terrorists in question surrendered or were killed or captured. In its more than 35-year terror campaign against Türkiye, the PKK— listed as a terrorist organisation by Türkiye, the US, and EU — has been responsible for the deaths of more than 40,000 people, including women, children, and infants.—APP

Briefs

Turkish Navy Ship arrives Karachi

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Turkish Navy Ship, TCG KINALIADA (F-514) arrived Karachi for a goodwill visit which was received by Pakistan Navy Ship at sea and later welcomed at Karachi port by senior Pakistan Navy officials along with diplomatic staff of Turkish Consulate here on Tuesday. During stay at the port, the Commanding Officer of Turkish Ship will call on Pakistan Navy Field Commanders and other dignitaries to discuss matters of mutual interest, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

With an aim to strengthen mutual cooperation and integration between the two navies, joint interactions including planning of coordinated sea patrol and discussions on other professional topics will also be conducted. In order to pay homage to the Founder of Pakistan, the Turkish Navy delegation will also lay floral wreath at Mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam.

Imran should apologise to families of martyrs

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Senior Punjab Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb says PTI founder Imran Khan, who once said "I will not apologise," is now resorting to pleas and requests. Responding to the statement of the PTI founder, the senior provincial minister said that the self-proclaimed revolutionary wants negotiations with the army about what? He should apologise to the army for ransacking the statues of martyrs, attacking GHQ and air bases, and setting the Lahore Corps Commander's house on fire.

Aurangzeb said that instead of negotiations, he should apologise to the families of the martyrs for the May 9 fiasco. The organised plan of May 9, the desecration of the martyrs' memorials, and the attacks on the installations and GHQ are not a criticism but attacks on the state. A fascist speaks only for power, she added.

'PTI will be in power in December'

SHAMIM SHAHID

MARDAN: PTI's senior leader and former speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser advised PM Shehbaz Sharif and CM Maryam Nawaz to wrap up their baggage as PTI will be in power in December. The former speaker Qaiser while addressing the Lawyers Convention in Mardan said that the National Assembly is a Form 47 Assembly. The supremacy of law, he said, is being affected by the legislation federal law minister Azam Nazir Tarar is moving. The legislation the present Form 47 Assembly passes has no standing.

Israeli army killed 255 in Khan Yunis ground operation

The tally of the Israeli aggression on Gaza surges to 39,400 martyrs, 91,000 wounded

NEWS DESK

GAZA: Gaza's Government Media Office (GMO) said that the Israeli occupation army's eight-day ground operation in the eastern areas of Khan Yunis killed 255 Palestinian civilians and wounded more than 300 others, adding that at least 30 other people are still missing. In a statement on Tuesday, GMO said that the Israeli army committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in Khan Yunis. GMO affirmed that the Israeli army destroyed in Khan Yunis at least 31 inhabited homes over the heads of their residents, while 320 homes and buildings sustained different levels of damage in Israeli aerial and artillery attacks.

The Israeli army also destroyed vital sectors and facilities in the east of Khan Yunis governorate and obstructed coordination efforts to reach and evacuate dozens of victims who were either killed or injured during the aggression, according to GMO. GMO held the Israeli occupation government and the US administration fully responsible for the massacres that happened in Khan Yunis, calling on the international community, its tribunals and the world's free countries to take legal action against Israeli war criminals to curb their crimes and massacres in Gaza. As the US-backed Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip entered day 298 on Tuesday, aerial and

Hamas calls for intl. probe of raped by Israeli guards

DOHA: The Palestinian Hamas resistance movement has demanded an international investigation into the conditions of Palestinians being held in Israeli prisons after several Israeli reservists were detained for gang raping a Palestinian detainee at a detention center in the southern part of the 1948 occupied lands. "We demand an international committee investigate these horrific and brutal crimes against the prisoners," Hamas said in a statement. It stressed the need for the international community, the United Nations and rights groups to devote their attention "to conditions at the occupying regime's prisons and follow up on the unknown fate of those who are currently forcibly disappeared." Additionally, Head of the official Commission of Detainees' and Ex-Detainees' Affairs, Qadura Fares, urged the international community to "urgently intervene to stop the unprecedented crimes committed against Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails." "The farce that the occupation military police came up with, and their detention of several soldiers aim to mislead world public opinion," he said. Fares went on to lament that the Israeli crimes against Palestinian detainees "no longer have any conceivable limits." According to the Israeli Army Radio, ten soldiers were detained for questioning as part of an investigation into the gang rape of a Palestinian detainee from Gaza at the notorious Sde Teiman Prison in the Negev Desert. Israeli public broadcaster KAN, citing a security source, said the Palestinian man was taken to a hospital with severe injuries to an intimate body part and unable to walk due to his medical condition. Located in the southern sector of the 1948 occupied territories, the Sde Teiman was used by the Israeli military as a camp for holding Palestinians captured during its bloody onslaught against the Gaza Strip. According to Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR-I), an Israeli human rights group, "dozens" of incarcerated Palestinians from both Gaza and the West Bank have died in Sde Teiman and other Israeli detention centers due to the prevention of basic medical care, beatings, sleep deprivation, attacks with dogs, sexual abuse, and hunger. - Agencies

artillery strikes continued to pound and target different areas and massacre more civilians. Reporters for the Palestinian Information Center (PIC) said that the Israeli occupation army continued to bomb homes and attack citizens in different areas of Gaza during the past 24 hours.

According to media sources, the Israeli army bombed a group of citizens at the entrance of an-Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, killing at least 10 citizens and injuring others. Casualties, including martyrs, were also reported following Israeli attacks on homes belonging to the families of Nofal and Rizq in Block 1 in al-Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza.

Several bodies of martyrs were evacuated today from bombed areas in Rafah in southern Gaza. The Israeli army attacked a gathering of citizens near Our Home Association in the west of al-Saftawi rotary in northern Gaza, killing one of them. Meanwhile, medical sources said that 37 martyrs were evacuated from Bani Suheila and al-Qarara areas in the east of Khan Yunis after Israeli forces withdrew from them. A warplane bombed a house near Street 8 in the south of Gaza City, killing eight civilians, while another aerial attack on an apartment in Hamad City in Khan Yunis claimed the life of one citizen and injured six others. A number of civilians were also killed or injured when a warplane bombed a house belonging to the family of Abu Daqqa in eastern Khan Yunis.

Tribal clashes in Kurram come to halt, says DC

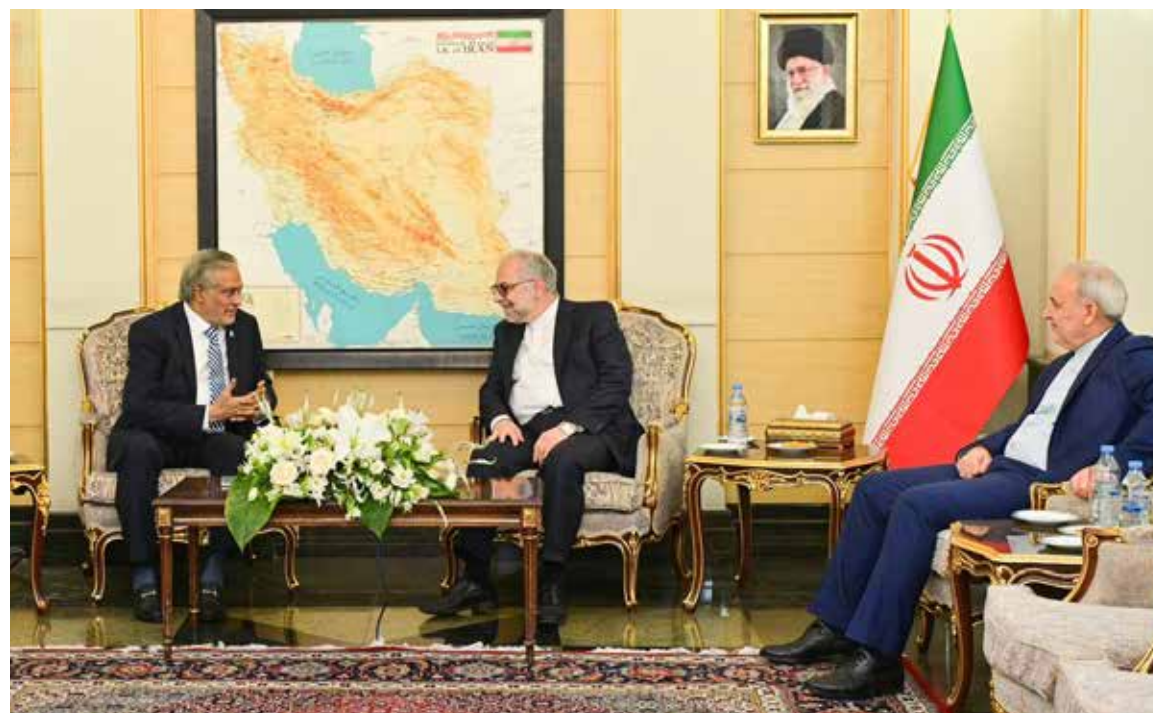
KURRAM: Tribal clashes which have been ongoing for the past seven days in different areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram District claiming 49 lives and leaving more than 200 people injured have come to a halt, the deputy commissioner (DC) said on Tuesday. According to the police and district administration, armed clashes between Boshetra and Maleekhel tribesmen had begun on the evening of July 24. Similar tribal clashes had erupted in the region last year as well, leading to sporadic violence that claimed 25 lives.

Despite recent efforts from a jirga of elders from the Hangu and Orakzai districts to secure a ceasefire this time, fighting continued, with both sides resorting to using heavy weapons to target each other's positions. Soon the hostilities spread to other areas, including Peshawar, Tangi, Balishkhel, Khaar Kalay, Maqbal, Kunj Alizai, Para Chamkani, and Karman. "Both tribes have agreed to a ceasefire and the clashes have been halted since last night," Kurram DC Javedullah Mehsud told media. The parties were made to clear the bunkers [and] security forces have been deployed there, while no gunfire was reported at five locations of Kurram District," he asserted. - Agencies

Police arrest mastermind of honey trap gang

DNA

LAHORE: Lahore police have arrested the mastermind of the honey trap gang in Pakistani drama writer Khalilur Rehman Qamar kidnapping case. As per details, Hassan Shah, along with his accomplice Rafique, were taken into custody in Peshawar by Lahore police. The police reported that the suspect was the central figure in a gang comprising 12 members, including women. The police had previously arrested 12 suspects, including a woman, in connection with the case. The suspect allegedly leaked a compromising video of Khalilur Rehman Qamar. According to the suspect's statement to the police, Qamar raised an alarm about being kidnapped due to the release of these inappropriate videos.



TEHRAN: Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar meets Former Iranian FM Javad Zarif at the sideline of oath taking ceremony of President of Iran Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian. - DNA

Pak aims for B-rating to reenter int'l markets

NAZIR SIYAL

Karachi: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb addressed the Executive Committee of the Pakistan Banks Association (PBA) on Tuesday, highlighting key initiatives and discussing the macroeconomic situation in the country. The PBA meeting was attended by all prominent members, including presidents of all leading banks of Pakistan, along with the Chairman PBA and President of the Bank of Punjab Zafar Masood, Chairman FBR, Minister of State Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik, as well as the Director to Finance Minister Mr. Sheharyar Ahmad. Muhammad Aurangzeb stated, "It is encouraging to see the private sector taking proactive steps in advancing financial and technological infrastructure. The collaboration with SIFC and the focus on corporate farming are critical for our economic growth." The Finance Minister (FM) further stated that extensive talk has been conducted on the Macro aspect, but moving on the external financing front, the government is comfortable with the current situation. We are moving forward with the IMF draft resolution. The Minister also emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships, particularly with HBL and NBP, stating, "We need to create capacity and move forward. The FM laid emphasis on aiming to get back into the International Capital Markets and ensure we reach the ranking of B- to reach the minimum ranking for any finance sector to enter the International Capital Markets, as we currently acquired a rating of CCC+." The Minister continued discussing the macroeconomic situation. "We are aware of the current challenges, but with the IMF's core approval, we believe the situation is manageable. It is essential to continue focusing on agriculture and support initiatives like SIFC." He further noted, "We are urging the private sector to take ownership and lead these transformations." The Minister also emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships, particularly with HBL and NBP, stating, "We need to create capacity to get the cash flow lending moving and move forward."

93 killed, dozens trapped in India landslides

NEW DELHI: At least 93 people have been killed and dozens are still feared trapped after heavy rains triggered massive landslides in the southern Indian state of Kerala. The landslides struck hilly areas in Wayanad district in the early hours of Tuesday. Rescue operations are under way, but are being hindered by heavy rains and the collapse of a crucial bridge. "The situation continues to remain very grave. The casualties may go up," V Venu, the state's top civil servant, told media. The landslides are the worst disaster to hit Kerala since 2018, when deadly floods killed more than 400 people. Officials say more than 200 army personnel have been deployed to assist security forces in search and rescue efforts. Chief Minister Pinarai Vijayan told a press conference that Tuesday's "landslide has wiped out an entire area". Local hospitals are treating at least 123 injured, and more than 3,000 people have been rescued and moved to 45 relief camps, he said. Apart from 65 confirmed deaths in Wayanad, 16 bodies have been found in the Chaliyar river, which flows into neighbouring Malappuram district. - Agencies

Pezeshkian takes oath as Iran's 9th president



FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian takes the oath of office before Parliament, with dignitaries from more than 80 countries attending the inauguration ceremony. Before the Holy Quran, Pezeshkian swore to safeguard the official religion of the country, Islam, and the Islamic Republic and the Constitution. "As I swear, in the presence of the Holy Quran and before the Iranian nation, I swear to Almighty God that I will safeguard the official religion, the system of the Islamic Republic, and the Constitution of the country," he stated. "I will dedicate all my abilities and qualifications to fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to me, and I will devote myself to serving the people and elevating the nation, promoting religion and eth-

ics, supporting righteousness, and expanding justice," Pezeshkian added. As stipulated in Article 121 of the Iranian Constitution, the presidential oath must be administered in Parliament, where the president takes the oath of office in the presence of legislators and members of the Constitutional Council alongside the Judiciary chief. The inauguration ceremony was attended by senior Iranian politicians, military officials, and members of Parliament as well as dignitaries from 88 countries. In his first speech after taking the oath of office, Pezeshkian urged the world to seize "this unparalleled opportunity" to work with Iran in tackling both regional and global challenges. "The world needs to seize this unparalleled opportunity to address regional and international issues through the collaboration of a powerful, peace-seeking, and dignified Iran," he said. The president promised to uphold Iran's dignity and interests in the world, describing "dignity, wisdom, and expediency" as the three pillars of his foreign policy approach. He affirmed that constructive engagement with the world would be the cornerstone of his administration's foreign relations. "In our vision, Pezeshkian said, Iran "engages constructively and effectively in international relations while emphasizing religious democracy, social justice, legitimate freedoms, the preservation of human dignity and rights, and social and judicial security." The president called for regional cooperation to create a region free from extremist influences, saying that radical voices should not overshadow the nearly two billion peace-loving Muslims. "Islam is a religion of peace," he said. "My government seeks a strong region where all neighboring countries can take joint steps towards economic development, progress, and the improvement of future generations' lives through synergy," he said. The Iranian president also wished for a world where "no Palestinian child's dreams are buried under the rubble of their homes." Pezeshkian formally started his four-year term on Sunday when Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei endorsed him as president following his victory in the July 5 runoff election. Pezeshkian takes over from his predecessor, the late President Ebrahim Raisi, whose death in a May helicopter crash sparked the early election. After the inauguration, the president is required by law to submit the final list of his cabinet to Parliament for approval within two weeks.

President Zardari for stronger cooperation with Commonwealth

Secretary-General Patricia Scotland said that Pakistan was facing huge challenges relating to Climate Change and was among the countries most vulnerable to its consequences

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has emphasized the need for stronger cooperation with the Commonwealth in areas of climate change, education, parliamentary exchanges and disaster preparedness. He called for enhanced interactions among parliamentary bodies, particularly young parliamentarians and students, to further strengthen and promote the bonds of friendship with Commonwealth member states. The president expressed these views while talking to a delegation led by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Patricia Scotland, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Tuesday. Welcoming the delegation, the president said that Pakistan, being the founding member of the Commonwealth, attached great importance to this organization for promoting cooperation among member states. The meeting exchanged views on the consequences of climate change for Pakistan. The president said that Pakistan had suffered a lot due to the impacts of climate change. He informed that over 2 million mangroves had been planted in Sindh to mitigate the impacts of climate change which had also earned \$ 27 million by trading carbon credits in the international market. He also mentioned that the Sindh government had started constructing 2 million flood-resilient houses in the wake of the floods of 2022. Secretary-General Patricia Scotland said that Pakistan was facing huge challenges relating to Climate Change and was among the countries most vulnerable to its consequences.

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