



Islamabad POST

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CPSC roundtable emphasizes Pak-ASEAN strategic interests

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ECP asked to salvage its reputation

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Imane Khelif wins women's semi-final

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'Will sack PTI activists if found involved' Imran Khan 'ready to tender conditional apology' over May 9

PTI founder's apology linked to alleged involvement of his party protesters that can be ascertained via CCTV footage

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan on Wednesday announced seeking a conditional apology over the May 9 riots, saying that the CCTV footage of the violent protests should be produced beforehand. In a statement, the jailed former prime minister said that he would apologise if the PTI activists were found involved in the violent protests that broke out in the country last year following his arrest from the Islamabad High Court (IHC) in a corruption case. The violent protests saw attacks on public properties including military installations in many parts of the country, prompting the civil and military leadership to try the rioters under the Army Act. The PTI chief, who has been incarcerated in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, has time and again distanced his party from the protests, alleging that the riots were pre-planned and staged to launch a crackdown on the opposition party. "I will sack and myself seek punishment for the PTI members if they were found involved [in the May 9 incidents]," he added. Apparently referring to his arrest on May 9 last year, the PTI founder lamented that he was "dragged" by Rangers. "There is no respect for a popular person in Pakistan and globally," he added. "Don't you feel obliged to apologise to me?" asked the PTI founder. The latest statement came as the PTI founder has apparently lowered his political rhetoric lately and offered to hold talks with the military. Ahead of Monday's anniversary of his jailing on dozens of charges ranging from corruption to leaking state secrets, Khan told Reuters that it would be "foolish" not to have "excellent" relations with the army. He also stated in a written response to Reuters questions that he held no grudges against the

Continued on Page 06

PTI moves top court against election act bill

Plea filed by Barrister Gohar Khan under Article 184(3) of Constitution wants legislation to be declared "null and void"

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Wednesday filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the amendments to the Election Act 2017 — aiming at "circumventing" the apex court's July 12 ruling on the reserved seats issue — which were passed by both the National Assembly and the Senate on Tuesday. The plea filed under Article 184(3) of the Constitution by PTI Chairman Gohar Khan via lawyer Barrister Salman Akram Raja urges the apex court to declare the Elections (Second Amendment) Bill, 2024 bill "null and void". Tabled by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)

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Dar, OIC SG call for ceasefire in Gaza

Ishaq Dar praised the OIC for its efforts for peace in the Middle East

NEWS DESK

JEDDAH: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar today met with OIC Secretary General Hissein Ibrahim Taha on the sidelines of the Open-Ended Extraordinary Meeting of OIC Executive Committee in Jeddah. They discussed the situation in Gaza and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Ishaq Dar discussed with the Secretary General the ongoing genocide of the Palestinians and dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and the West Bank. They stressed the urgency of a ceasefire and unhindered supply of humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people. Ishaq Dar praised the OIC for its efforts for peace in the Middle East and expressed full support of Pakistan for its initiatives. He appreciated the historic role of the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir and the Special Envoy for Jammu and Kashmir for

Continued on Page 06



JEDDAH: The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Hissein Ibrahim Taha, received in his office today Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. — DNA

Parliament is a superior institution

Reserved seats granted to party having no representation: Tarar

Parliament has a jurisdiction of legislation and makes laws

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Atta Tarar raised the question on the Supreme Court's verdict on reserved seats to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying how a party could have reserved seats which didn't have representation in Parliament. In a press conference in Islamabad, he cleared the air on the Election Amendment Bill, saying it was approved with the majority vote from both houses of Parliament, National Assembly and Senate. He insisted that a rule mandating a party member to join a new party within three days had been made law now. He argued that how could a candidate change his party after submitting an affidavit. "Parliament is a superior institution having a jurisdiction of legislation, it has made a rule, a law," Federal Minister Atta Tarar asserted. Atta Tarar reiterated that a party could get reserved seats on representation in the Parliament

Continued on Page 06

We won't be convinced with mere announcements

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: People are suffering from corruption and incompetence of the government, Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman here said on Wednesday. Jamaat Islami's protest sit-in against expensive electricity and taxes has been continued for 13th day. "We will not be convinced with mere announcements," JI leader said, demanding the government to take steps to address the problem. "The government's committee met us yesterday. They asked us to accept their stance," Hafiz Naeem said. "We told them to give your contentions in writing, we will consult over it."

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Arshad Nadeem asks nation to pray for his success



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's superstar athlete Arshad Nadeem in a video message from Paris asked the nation for prayers ahead of the javelin final at the Paris 2024 Olympics. "Thank you for your prayers, and please continue praying for my success in the final," he said in a video message on Wednesday. A day earlier, the 27-year-old cruised into Thursday night's final with a solid 86.59m throw at the Stade de France, his first and only attempt of the qualifier round, which was also his season's best. Assalamu alaikum, Allah has blessed me with a lot of honour, thanks to your prayers," he said. "I have qualified for the [javelin] finals of the Paris 2024

Continued on Page 06

UK braces for more anti-Muslim protests

Far-right groups plan demonstrations on Wednesday in more than 30 locations, with immigration lawyers and buildings hosting asylum seekers as primary targets, according to posts on messaging app Telegram leaked to the British media

DNA

LONDON: Thousands of riot police stood ready on Wednesday as Britain remained on alert for disturbances during far-right protests across the country. Nightly riots, during which mosques and migrant targets have been attacked, erupted after three children were murdered on July 29.

Police said they were investigating several racially motivated hate crimes in Belfast on Tuesday, including an attack on a young boy that left him with minor facial injuries. Far-right groups plan demonstrations on Wednesday in more than 30 locations, with immigration lawyers and buildings hosting asylum seekers as primary targets,

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Briefs

Langrial appointed new FBR chairman

Notification says Rashid has been appointed as chairman of Federal Board of Revenue

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has appointed Rashid Mahmood Langrial of the Pakistan Administrative Services (PAS) to head the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). The grade-21 officer "is transferred and posted as Chairman, Federal Board of Revenue, under Section 10 of the Civil Servants Act, 1973, with immediate effect," the notification, issued today by the Establishment Division from the Cabinet Secretariat, read. Sources reported earlier today that the PAS officer's name had been proposed to the prime minister for the top slot of the government body.

Aliya Hamza released from jail

Her release orders were submitted earlier in the day and she left the jail with her family

DNA

GUJRANWALA: In the May 9 riots case, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Aliya Hamza was released from Gujranwala Central Jail following the court's order. Her release orders were submitted earlier in the day and she left the jail with her family. The Lahore High Court had barred law enforcement agencies from arresting Hamza in any case till August 29. LHC's Justice Ali Baqar Najafi issued the ruling while hearing a petition filed by Hamza Jameel, Aliya Hamza's husband, who sought protective bail to prevent further arrests in cases she was unaware of.

Pak stands with Bengalese FO seeks details of US charges against Pakistani man

US charges Pakistani man with alleged ties to Iran in foiled assassination plot, that Iran denied

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office spokesperson said that Islamabad was in touch with the authorities in Washington and awaiting further details after reports emerged of a Pakistani national's alleged involvement in the foiled assassination attempt on former US president Donald Trump. In a statement, FO spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said: "We have seen the media reports. We are in touch with the US authorities and await further details." The spokesperson said that they have also noted the statements by US officials that this is an ongoing investigation. "Before giving our formal reaction, we also need to be sure of the antecedents of the individual in question," she added. A Pakistani man with alleged ties to Iran has been charged in the US in connection to a foiled plot to assassinate a US politician or

Continued on Page 06

Bangladesh interim govt likely to be sworn in today

General Waker-Uz-Zaman says Nobel laureate Yunus will lead Bangladesh through a "democratic process"

AGENCIES

DHAKA: Bangladesh army chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman said Wednesday that a new interim government was likely to be sworn in on Thursday evening after Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus returned to the country. "We are trying our best to hold the oath-taking ceremony tomorrow," the general said in a televised

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Afghan envoy calls for strong regional cooperation

Says trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan continues despite everyday challenges, with Afghanistan being one of the top markets for Pakistani exports, showing a 6.7% increase last year

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Ahmed Shakeeb, Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's envoy to Pakistan gave an exclusive interview to a social media platform. The interview is reproduced here for readers' interest. Mawlawi Sardar Ahmad Shakeeb was born on November 11, 1978, in the Shah Joy district of Zabul province, Afghanistan. Growing up in a region with rich cultural and historical significance, he developed a deep appreciation for his country's heritage and values from an early age. Mr. Shakeeb pursued his education with a focus on Shariah Law, culminating in his graduation in 2015 with a degree equivalent to a Master's. His academic journey equipped him with a comprehensive understanding of Islamic jurisprudence, which would later become integral to his professional endeavors. With a keen interest in media and politics, Mr. Shakeeb embarked on a career that spanned over two decades, marked

by his active involvement in various capacities. He served as a member of the Media Commission of the Islamic Emirate, where he contributed significantly to shaping public discourse and communication strategies. Throughout his career, Mr. Shakeeb held diverse roles, including spokesperson and operator for the Al-Samood Arabic website. He also distinguished himself as the author of Al-Emara, demonstrating his prowess not only in communication but also in analytical thinking and writing.

Here are excerpts from the interview
1- Some complaints and issues currently exist between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is crucial to address the underlying factors of these problems to manage them effectively. Linking security issues to other areas like the movement of people, trade, and transit can exacerbate the situation. Instead, focusing on enhancing people-to-people interactions, facilitating trade and transit, dispelling negative perceptions through official channels, and reducing visa and travel barriers can build trust and gradually resolve issues. This approach avoids blame, which



harms trade, affects refugees, disrupts transit, and other areas. Emphasizing solutions that benefit the public and improve regional connections through trade can help resolve these issues over time.
2- The relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan is crucial for regional connectivity and prosperity. Positive relations

between the two countries lead to mutual benefits, improved trade and transit, and regional economic integration. Conversely, tensions negatively impact both nations and the broader region. Strengthening these ties not only benefits Afghanistan and Pakistan but also enhances connections with Central Asian countries, Iran, China, and the entire region.

3- Trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan continues despite everyday challenges, with Afghanistan being one of the top markets for Pakistani exports, showing a 6.7% increase last year. However, progress on high-level energy and infrastructure projects is stalled due to some issues that Pakistan links with its domestic security concerns. Afghanistan, now in a phase of peace, presents significant investment opportunities for Pakistani companies in sectors like energy, construction, mining, agriculture, and industry. These investments could enhance bilateral relations and positively impact both nations.

4- China, a major regional and global economic power, has historically maintained strong relations with Pakistan

and shown keen interest in Afghanistan's economy and investment opportunities. With its Belt and Road Initiative, China aims to strengthen regional ties and expand its economic influence. Given its strong connections with both Pakistan and Afghanistan, China can play a constructive role in improving relations between the two countries, facilitating economic programs, and advancing bilateral and regional prosperity.
5- The region has significant opportunities to become a central economic hub, uniting Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, Iran, and Central Asian countries. Prioritizing economic and trade initiatives over political and security issues is crucial for implementing major projects like Trans-Afghan, CASA-1000, TAPI, TAP, Chabahar Port, and the Wakhan Corridor. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan aims to serve as a point of economic connectivity and foster relations globally. Strong regional cooperation around these economic opportunities can also help mitigate security threats and other challenges.

— Source IICR

LDA seals 47 properties

LAHORE: The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) teams continue their operation against illegal constructions, illegal commercial use and commercial fee defaulters. On Wednesday, LDA teams sealed 25 properties due to non-payment of commercial fees in Blocks A, B, C, G, E, F, M, and the Civic Center of Gulshan Ravi. In another operation, Town Planning Zone II sealed 22 properties in various blocks of Mustafa Town and Allama Iqbal Town. The sealed properties include private schools, marriage halls, offices, pharmacies, academies, shops, offices, clinics, and others. These sealed properties were defaulters of millions of rupees against commercialization fees. The operation was conducted under the supervision of Chief Town Planner One Asad Zaman, Director Town Planning Zone One Ayesha Matarir, and Director Town Planning Zone Two. Multiple notices had been issued to these properties before the operation. On the instructions of DG LDA Tahir Farooq, actions against illegal constructions and commercial fee defaulters are continue across the city.—APP

1,085-litre substandard milk confiscated

LAHORE : Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin inspected dairy shops in the upscale areas of Gulberg II and III, Lahore, along with DG Punjab Food Authority Asim Javed and Dairy Safety teams. The quality of milk and yogurt was checked at several shops, and during the inspection of 20 milk shops, eight were fined and 11 were issued improvement notices. A total of 1,085 litres of substandard milk was confiscated in the provincial capital. The minister said that fines were imposed due to unhygienic freezers, use of smelly wooden sticks, and poor sanitation arrangements. Citizens can get their milk tested for free at Punjab Food Authority offices. Free milk testing facilities are available in all districts of Punjab. The public is requested to report complaints against elements selling fake and adulterated milk in their surroundings on the toll-free number 1223.—APP

Agriculture scientists urged to held in sector development

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, on Wednesday urged agriculture scientists and policymakers to actively contribute to the improvement of the local agriculture sector to ensure food safety and security in the country. Speaking at the inauguration of the seed potato complex and the International Symposium on Seed Potato Production and Supply Chain, the minister highlighted that despite Pakistan's agricultural economy, the country continues to import food items.—APP

MoU signed between Istanbul, Lahore medical universities

LAHORE : A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed for cooperation between the medical universities of Istanbul and Lahore on Wednesday. Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salmaan Rafique signed the MoU on behalf of the University of Health Sciences (UHS) Lahore during a meeting with faculty members from both UHS Lahore and Istanbul University of Health Sciences, Turkiye, according to a handout issued here on Wednesday. The meeting was chaired by Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Salmaan Rafique, who attended directly from Istanbul University of Health Sciences. Kemalitan Aydin, a well-known Turkish politician, also attended the meeting. During the event, the Vice-Chancellors of UHS Lahore and Istanbul University of Health Sciences briefed attendees on the educational facilities available at their respective institutions.—APP

Korean ambassador visits Radio Pakistan headquarters

The Director General PBC, Saeed Ahmed Sheikh briefed the Ambassador about the history of Radio Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Republic of Korea Park Ki Jun visited the Radio Pakistan headquarters. The Director General PBC, Saeed Ahmed Sheikh briefed the Ambassador about the history of Radio Pakistan. The DG also arranged a guided tour for the visiting diplomat of various sections of Radio. The Korean ambassador thanked the Director General and the management of PBC for hosting him. The ambassador expressed his keenness to promote communication and digital linkage between Korea and Pakistan. It may be mentioned here that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 1983, the bilateral ties between the two countries have been gradually expanded in areas of trade, investment, human exchange, and development cooperation. The Republic of Korea remains committed to fostering mutual exchange with Pakistan across multiple domains, including economic, cultural, tourism, and other fields. Pakistan's Kashmir narrative has the benefit of truth, needs to be amplified by informed youth Islamabad, August 7: In today's narrative-driven era, Pakistan must leverage its advantage of truth and Kashmiri support to amplify its pro-Kashmir stance and employ proactive diplomacy at all levels. Engaging informed youth in advocacy efforts is crucial to keeping the issue prominent on the international stage. This approach is vital for countering Indian narratives that portray the Kashmir issue as an internal matter and downplay human rights violations. As Indian coercive methods and narratives have failed to suppress the Kashmiri struggle, Pakistan's focus



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Republic of Korea Park Ki Jun talking to the Director General of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation Saeed Ahmed Shaikh during his visit to PBC Headquarters.— DNA

and raise awareness among youth about the Kashmir issue. The event was chaired by Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam, member of the National Assembly, and addressed by Khalid Rahman, chairman IPS, Dr. Shahzad Iqbal Sham, senior research fellow IPS, Saleem Bismil, former secretary, Government of AJ&K, Dr. Noor Fatima, associate professor and chairperson, Department of International Relations and Political Science, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Farzana Yaqoob, former minister of AJK and IPS research associate, Zaman

Bajwa, executive director, YFK, and others. Dr. Shazia stressed the need for consistent and proactive international diplomacy on the Kashmir issue, advocating for engagement beyond political leaders to every level of society. She underscored the importance of bridging the communication gap between youth and leaders and utilizing contemporary tools for effective representation. It is important to understand that the Kashmir issue has dual dimensions, i.e. real estate and human beings, said Bismil. He pointed out that while India may claim the land,

it has failed to win the hearts and minds of the Kashmiri people. He stressed that this is a silver lining and Pakistan, with the advantage of truth on its side, must mobilize its youth to propagate its narrative. Quoting Arundhati Roy's critique of India's self-proclaimed democracy as the "biggest lie", Dr. Noor emphasized that Indian narratives cannot hide the severe human rights abuses in occupied Kashmir. She stressed the necessity of a multifaceted approach and the mobilization of international support to address the situation.

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Pakistan's Kashmir truth amplified by informed youth

ISLAMABAD: today's narrative-driven era, Pakistan must leverage its advantage of truth and Kashmiri support to amplify its pro-Kashmir stance and employ proactive diplomacy at all levels. Engaging informed youth in advocacy efforts is crucial to keeping the issue prominent on the international stage. This approach is vital for countering Indian narratives that portray the Kashmir issue as an internal matter and downplay human rights violations. As Indian coercive methods

and narratives have failed to suppress the Kashmiri struggle, Pakistan's focus on narrative building and youth engagement can effectively attract global attention and support. This was discussed by speakers during a session "Kashmir's Struggle after the Revocation of Articles 370 and 35A" held at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad, in collaboration with the Youth Forum for Kashmir (YFK). The event featured a short documentary on the Kashmiri struggle post-2019, titled "Kashmir: A Paradise, Colonized", as well as the announcement of the winners of an essay competition organized by YFK to engage

Relations and Political Science, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Farzana Yaqoob, former minister of AJK and IPS research associate, Zaman Bajwa, executive director, YFK, and others. Dr. Shazia stressed the need for consistent and proactive international diplomacy on the Kashmir issue, advocating for engagement beyond political leaders to every level of society. She underscored the importance of bridging the communication gap between youth and leaders and utilizing contemporary tools for effective representation.—APP

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Resolving GB's issues federal govt's top priority: Muqam

ISLAMABAD : Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engr. Amir Muqam, on Wednesday said addressing the issues of Gilgit-Baltistan was a top priority for the federal government and assured to apply their resources to advance growth and well-being in the region. Minister Muqam chairing a high-level meeting at the Gilgit-Baltistan Council highlighted the region's vast potential to emerge as a premier global tourist destination. Additionally, he pointed out the area's rich mineral resources and

hydropower capabilities, vowing to harness these assets for regional development. Amir Muqam assured that issues faced by Gilgit-Baltistan's traders would be resolved amicably in accordance with existing rules and laws, and that all stakeholders would be kept informed and involved. The Federal Minister also promised that the federal government would provide substantial relief to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. He announced that the issue of wheat provision had been addressed, with a subsidy on wheat now in place.—APP

Exploding Lithium batteries of solar panels erupted H-9 inferno

The Report revealed that as many as 625 stalls were affected out of the total 2,743 in almost all the sections of the Bazaar

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD :The H-9 inferno erupted on July 10th that turned a large number of shops, makeshift stalls, pushcarts, and merchandise to ashes, occurred due to exploding Lithium batteries attached to solar panels after it got overheated owing to excessive charging. The Municipal Corporation Islamabad (MCI)'s Directorate of Emergency and Disaster Management in its report submitted to the Parliamentary Committee revealed that there was no electricity supply to the

Bazaar as it was a one-day operations trading hub. The Report revealed that as many as 625 stalls were affected out of the total 2,743 in almost all the sections of the Bazaar, even though there were trained individuals capable of undertaking fire fighting efforts the massive scale of fire left all helpless. The remaining 2,118 stalls were saved due to effective fire fighting operations conducted by the authorities that involved 31 fire tenders, 255 firefighting staff including 12 from MCI, four from Rawalpindi Administration, four from Pakistan Navy, two from Pakistan Air

Force, nine from other departments and 16 water tankers in the entire operation. An official from the Directorate of Emergency and Disaster Management, MCI claimed that the department was working out proper solutions to address fire risks and was mulling over a centralised electricity supply system or complete wrap-up of operations at night to be ensured. Moreover, he said a committee of the vendors was formed to ensure localised awareness and mitigation efforts against fire hazards in the bazaar. The Islamabad Capital Territory Administration (ICT

Admin) official claimed that Rescue 1122, basically the Emergency and Disaster Management wing of MCI has 10 fire brigades to manage the entire federal capital which was insufficient to manage the present scale of the metropolis' population and sprawling infrastructure. However, in 2022, two episodes of mass fire in H-9 Bazaar had occurred after the UPS batteries had blown off, he added. He informed that there was no insurance for the solar panels of shops that got impacted by fire and since it was a temporary bazaar, all electricity connections were removed after repeated fires.



ISLAMABAD : H.E Donald Armin Blome, Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan calls on Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain.—DNA

Jazz xlr8 partners with GSMA innovation fund to support high-potential startups

ISLAMABAD: Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator, through its startup accelerator program 'xlr8', has partnered with the GSMA Innovation Fund to identify and support high-potential startups, especially in emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), health, education, entertainment, and digital lifestyle. This strategic collaboration aims to foster innovation and stimulate large-scale socio-economic and environmental impact said a news release. Under the partnership, Jazz's xlr8 program will support the GSMA Innovation Fund startups by providing Jazz expertise in digital platforms which are based on building and launching Pakistan's largest homegrown apps like SIMOSA and Tamasha, access to Jazz's 71 million users based on intelligent segmentation, specialized mentoring from Jazz domain experts, extensive digital growth & data analytics and platform architecture expertise.—APP

Rescue 1122 put on high alert amid recent rains

DNA

RAWALPINDI :Rescue 1122 has been put on high alert due to recent rains in Rawalpindi. Rescue personnel have joined their duties on assigned areas surrounding Nalla Lai and other low-lying areas for safety measures including Katarian and Gawalmandi. Rescue personnel will remain on duty at these places during the rains. Media Coordinator Rescue 1122 Rawalpindi Muhammad Usman informed that all the officers and personnel were present at the field round the clock to serve the public. He advised that people should be very careful during the rains. He advised parents not to allow children to go near drains and electric poles. Residents living near drains must be careful. Drive at low speed. Do not go under weak and dilapidated roofs during rain. He said that in case of any emergency, people must report immediately on the rescue helpline; 1122. MULTAN : District Emergency Officer (DEO) Dr. Muhammad Hussain Mian said that the Rescue 1122 responded to over 10000 help-seeking calls in Multan and rescued over 12000 people during July 2024.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days**AUGUST**

- Aug 01/China
Armed Forces Day
- Aug 01/Switzerland
National Day
- Aug 01/Lebanon
Armed Forces Day
- Aug 01 /Syria
Armed Forces Day
- Aug 4/Bukino Faso
National Day
- Aug 09 /Singapore
- Aug 15/DPR Korea
Independence Day
- Aug 15/India
Independence Day
- Aug 15/Poland
Armed Forces Day
- Aug 17 /Indonesia
Independence Day
- Aug 24/Ukraine
Independence Day
- Aug 25/Uruguay
Independence Day
- Aug 30 /Turkey
Armed Forces Day
- Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic
Independence Day
- Aug 31/Malaysia
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
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
CAA.....9281092

**Hospitals**

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

**Departments**

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

PM kicks off monsoon tree plantation drive

Prime minister said he had directed the concerned departments and institutions to plant at least 100 million saplings across the country including Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) to save the country from the impacts of climate change

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday launched the countrywide monsoon tree plantation drive by planting a sapling here. Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister said he had directed the concerned departments and institutions to plant at least 100 million saplings across the country including Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) to save the country from the impacts of climate change that badly hit the country in 2022. He said the tree plantation would also help reducing air pollution. The prime minister directed the relevant authorities in the federal and provincial governments to play their role in spreading the plantation drive to every corner to make Pakistan a green and pollution-free country. He also asked all Pakistani citizens to help the government by fully participating in the plantation drive to save the country from climate change disasters and provide a healthy environment. On the occasion, the prime minister was also briefed about the area-wise plantation targets across the country.



China-Pak e-commerce platform join hands to make industrial upgrading

IBI will join hands with the Pakistani government to tailor global one-stop full-chain services for various industrial chains in Pakistan backed by its superior advantages in digital economy, industrial Internet, cross-border presence of industrial belts and other aspects, thus spurring the collaborative and innovative development of industrial and supply chains”

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China-Pak e-commerce platform has joined hands to make industrial upgrading, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday. Recently, Beijing-based high-quality industrial Internet enterprises IBI and the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications of Pakistan officially established strategic cooperation relations. Beijing Toodudu E-commerce Co., Ltd., a core subsidiary of IBI, signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Pakistani company Michael & Parker. “It is a vital stride taken by IBI to actively respond to China’s Belt and Road Initiative, as well as promote regional economic cooperation and development,” an official introduced. “IBI will join hands with the Pakistani

government to tailor global one-stop full-chain services for various industrial chains in Pakistan backed by its superior advantages in digital economy, industrial Internet, cross-border presence of industrial belts and other aspects, thus spurring the collaborative and innovative development of industrial and supply chains.”

Shaza Fatima Khwaja, Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications of Pakistan, fully affirmed the achievements made by IBI in digital economy, industrial Internet, cross-border industrial belts, and elaborated in detail the difficulties and challenges currently faced by Pakistan in these fields. She expressed the hope that IBI could deeply participate in Pakistan’s economic construction. According to mutual agreement, IBI will partner with local core enterprises to supports its businesses in Pakistan by

giving full play to its mature resources in digital economy and robust digital technology advantages. It will work together with the Pakistani government to advance cooperation in cross-border integrated service platform, supply chain collaboration platform, cross-border barter platform, cloud factory program, enterprise promotion and talent exchange, thus promoting the global presence of more enterprises based in both China and Pakistan. Guests attending the signing ceremony included Shaza Fatima Khwaja, Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications of Pakistan, Ghulam Qadir, Commercial Counsellor at Pakistani Embassy, Erfa Iqbal from the Prime Minister’s Office of Pakistan, Liu Junzhai, Director and Senior Vice President of IBI, and Danyal, Vice President and General Manager of Cross-border

E-commerce of Toodudu. So far, cross-border e-commerce has become a bellwether in China’s economic growth against the trend while facing a global downturn. The latest data shows that in the first half of 2024, China’s cross-border e-commerce imports and exports reached RMB 1.22 trillion, a year-on-year increase of 10.5%, 4.4 percentage points higher than the overall growth rate of China’s foreign trade in the same period.

The volume of cross-border mail and parcels supervised by Chinese customs reaches more than 7 billion pieces per year, with an average of 20 million parcels are transported to all parts of the globe by train, plane and ship every day. Specifically for the scale of China-Pakistan e-commerce trade, the figure is about USD 3.5 billion in 2021 and is expected to grow to about USD 60 billion by 2030.

PTA, NCSW, GSMA host workshop on bridging mobile gender gap

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) and Global System for Mobile Communication (GSMA) Action Collation for bridging the digital divide organized a one-day workshop titled “Bridging the Mobile Gender Gap”. The workshop featured participation from representatives of the Ministry of Information Technology & Telecom, Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Defense, Universal Services Fund, Ministry of Human Rights and other government and private entities said a news release issued here on Wednesday. The workshop aimed to address the digital gender divide in Pakistan by

bringing together government and civil society stakeholders to improve gender in ICTs. Key discussions focused on strategies to enhance women’s access to mobile technology and digital services, emphasizing creating inclusive policies and fostering a supportive ecosystem. On this occasion, Chairman PTA, Maj. Gen. (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman, said that this initiative is a vital step towards addressing the digital gender divide in Pakistan. He further added that this workshop marks the beginning of our collective journey towards a more inclusive and equitable digital future for all. On the occasion Nilofar Bakhitar, Former Federal Minister of Women Development Department and Ex-Chair of NCSW, emphasized the critical need for digital inclusion of women, highlighting that

gender equality in the digital realm is essential for economic and social development. During the event, Julain Gorman, Head of APAC GSMA highlighted the discussion on leveraging global expertise and collaborative efforts to tailor solutions specifically for enhancing women’s inclusion and empowerment in Pakistan. Participants engaged in interactive sessions, exploring best practices for empowering women through mobile technology and ensuring their participation in the digital economy. The workshop also highlighted successful case studies from other countries that have made significant progress in bridging the mobile gender gap. The workshop concluded with the distribution of certificates to the participants and shields to the GSMA and NCSW officials.—APP

Tax dept partners with ICT admin

ISLAMABAD: The Income Tax Department is expanding its efforts to register all market workers in the Federal Capital, aiming to increase the tax net with support from the district administration. In a recent meeting with the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, officials from the Income Tax Department outlined plans to include all market workers in the tax system, said the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration. This initiative seeks to bring a broader range of individuals, including street vendors and those selling vegetables and fruits, under the tax umbrella. The department emphasized the need for collaboration with the district administration to ensure the success of this effort. The district administration has pledged its support to help implement this tax registration drive. This move aims to improve tax compliance and broaden the tax base.—APP

Pakistan embassy observes Youm-e-Istehsal in Ottawa

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan High Commission in Ottawa and its three Consulates in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver observed “Yaum-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir” to commemorate the fifth anniversary of India’s illegal and unilateral actions of August 05, 2019. On this day India’s BJP-RSS government scrapped the special constitutional status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by revoking Article 370 and 35-A of the Indian Constitution, a press release issued on Wednesday said. Photographic exhibitions were organized to express solidarity with Kashmiris in the face of Indian atrocities which were attended by a large number of audience. Additionally, a documentary illustrating the crimes committed in IIOJK, was unveiled, granting attendees a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by the Kashmiris. In a video message on this occasion, the Acting High Commissioner Faisal Kakar said, “the illegal and unilateral actions of Modi government have opened a new chapter in the tortured history of the occupied territory. The gross and systematic human rights violations committed with impunity by 9 lac Indian occupation forces have escalated since 2019.” Kakar reiterated, “India is trying to consolidate the occupation and impose what it ominous refers as “Final Solution” to the occupied territory through a mix of legal, administrative, demographic and electoral measures.” “A key element of India’s so-called “Final Solution” is to transform Kashmir from a Muslim majority State to a Hindu majority territory in blatant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. Hence, it is imperative for the international community to recognize and confront the rampant human rights abuses occurring in the area,” he added. The acting high commissioner reaffirmed Pakistan’s unflinching support to the brave and resilient Kashmiri people in their struggle for freedom from illegal Indian occupation. He demanded immediate lifting of the military siege and communications blackout, rescinding India’s illegal and unilateral actions, release of illegally arrested —APP

Digitization of economy inevitable for national development: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday emphasized the crucial role of digital technology in driving economic growth, transparency and good governance. “Digitalization of the economy is inevitable for achieving the national development,” he said while addressing the first National Digital Summit. He highlighted the importance of leveraging technology to address pressing issues, promote transparency, and foster economic development. He advocated for adopting digital technologies to enhance infrastructure, human resource development and digital literacy. The minister stressed the significance of collaboration between educational institutions and the tech industry, saying it was essential for promoting professional and digital skills among youth. He informed the gathering that the government was taking the required measures to promote digital skills among young people. The minister also mentioned that the government was strengthening cybersecurity to protect citizens, businesses and government institutions. Furthermore, he said efforts were being made to promote digitalization in rural areas and ensure affordable internet access. He emphasized the need for public-private investment in making technological advancements and encouraged startups, small and medium enterprises in this sector.—APP

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Briefs

Safi
condemns
India's use of
pellet guns
in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: Ghulam Mohammad Safi, convener of All Parties Hurriyat Conference-AJK chapter, has strongly condemned India's use of pellet guns in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), stating that it was prohibited globally and violated international laws. Addressing a cultural, organized by Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) in connection with Kashmir, Safi emphasized, "Thousands of children have lost their sight due to pellet gun injuries and that India's actions have crossed all limits of oppression." He questioned India's motives, saying, "It knows Kashmiri children do not support India and instead want to sacrifice themselves for Pakistan." He expressed confidence that Kashmir's freedom was inevitable, saying, "No matter how deep the darkness is, eventually the sun of Kashmir's freedom will rise." The event, among others, was attended by Raja Khan Afsar, Najib Al-Ghafoor, Intiaz Wani and Raja Bashir Osmani.—APP

Director
PDMA as-
sures prompt
action on rain
emergencies

ISLAMABAD: Director Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Hamidullah Malik Wednesday assured that all relevant departments, divisional, and district administrations are maintaining close coordination to effectively address emergency situations arising from rain incidents and reconstruction of damaged buildings that pose a danger to the public. Talking to PTV news channel, he said with a proactive approach, the authorities are working together to mitigate the impact of rain-related disasters and ensuring the safety of citizens.

The PDMA has already alerted all rescue services, including machinery and personnel from Rescue 1122, to be ready for deployment, adding, the authority has urged citizens to exercise caution and stay away from electric poles and hanging wires, as well as avoid dirty and dilapidated buildings during the monsoon season.—APP

Govt.
committed to
Digital Pakistan
vision: Shaza
Fatima

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, on Wednesday reaffirmed the government's commitment to fulfilling the vision of Digital Pakistan.

Addressing the first-ever Digital Nation Summit hosted by GSMA, she highlighted the robust measures being taken under the direction of the Prime Minister to ensure digital transformation. "We aim to bridge the digital divide between urban and rural areas," she said. "We are digitizing the economy, governance, and society," she added.—APP

Chevening scholarship
opens window for Pakistanis

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The British High Commission invites ambitious mid-career Pakistani professionals to apply for a fully funded one-year master's degree in the United Kingdom. Applications to the UK's prestigious Chevening Scholarship have now opened. Tuition fees, living expenses and travel costs are all fully covered through the scholarship. Applications are open until November 5, 2024. The scholarship is open to any Pakistani mid-career professional with at least 2 years of work experience. More information on eligibility requirements, and the application portal, can be found on www.chevening.org. Applications to the South Asian Journalism Programme, a short-term fellowship with the University of Westminster where mid-career professionals can hone their skills and meet leaders in UK journalism, are also open. They close on 5th October 2024. As are applications to the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies fellowship, where fellows gain access to leading scholars focussing on the Islamic world while completing a 5-month research project. Applications close 5th November 2024. Chevening scholars have gone on to become prominent leaders in Pakistan. Successful applicants will join a pool of nearly 2,000 Pakistani Chevening alumni who are leaders across a range of sectors. High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, encourages potential applicants: 'Chevening produces changemakers and leaders. It offers an exceptional academic opportunity and helps connect emerging leaders from across the globe. I urge those looking to elevate their careers to seize this



opportunity and apply.' Amal Durrani, Chevening scholar 2022 and alumni of SOAS, University of London said: The Chevening scholarship, a highly competitive opportunity,

opens doors to world-class education and brings incredible networking and career opportunities - making you stand out! It made my dream of studying in the UK a reality

and helped me secure a role at UNDP within three months of returning. You should apply if you're passionate about making a difference and achieving your dreams.

'We will not allow strategic
stability equation to be disturbed'

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

ISLAMABAD: Speaking at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Lt. Gen Khalid Kidwai, Advisor to National Command Authority and former DG SPD, asserted that 'Pakistan's entire spectrum of deterrence—from strategic to operational and tactical, combined with its ready nuclear capability—demonstrates Pakistan's resolve to protect its land from any kind of external aggression'.

He emphasized that 'Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) doctrine has been effectively countering India's aggressive designs and keeping its 'Cold Start Doctrine or 'Proactive Operations' under check.

Given the role and importance of Pakistan's nukes in maintaining strategic stability in South Asia, Gen

Kidwai, termed Pakistan's strategic weapons, especially the Tactical Nuclear Weapons, as 'weapons of peace' as they had been effectively ensuring strategic equilibrium in the region. He also noted that 'Pakistan's nuclear program enjoys a wide national consensus as being central to Pakistan's national security', and was indeed an inherent strength. Commenting on the dynamic and elusive nature of changing geo-political realities in the region, he said that 'it has increasingly become Pakistan's responsibility not to allow the strategic stability equation to be disturbed to its disadvantage'. Gen Kidwai criticized India's mantra of 'Ghar mein ghus k mareng' (will chase infiltrators inside Pakistan) as mere political rhetoric stemming from frustration over Pakistan's strong nuclear capabilities

that deterred one of the world's largest militaries. He told the participants that Pakistan has always shown restraint and maturity as a responsible nuclear power in defusing Indian-generated tensions, and preventing them from spiraling into potential catastrophe as was evident from the Balakot incident in 2019. Gen Kidwai underscored that Pakistan's strong nuclear capability had constrained India's conventional military options, leading India to engage in 5th generation warfare against Pakistan. Countering the Indian propaganda onslaught, he emphasized the need for 'increased vigilance and preparedness'. He noted that the retaliatory options of Offensive-defence were valid for countering that hybrid strategy since 'Defensive-defence alone could not do so. While endorsing Gen Kidwai's statement,

Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Professor and Dean of Social Sciences at QAU, said that Pakistan must adopt a multi-pronged strategy to counter India's propaganda machine. He also noted that the growing US defense collaboration with New Delhi to counter China was further complicating South Asia's already fragile security environment, highlighting the necessity for nuclear diplomacy.

Earlier, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of IRS, cautioned that India's increasing defense procurement and advanced weaponry posed new threats to South Asia's stability, beyond the threat of direct confrontation. He also highlighted the desirability of resumption of dialogue and revival of confidence-building measures amid region's increasingly fragile strategic environment, for which the onus was on India to adopt a more conducive approach.

NDMA advisory
highlights' rain with
thundershowers

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)'s National Emergencies Operation Center on Wednesday anticipated that rainfall and thundershowers were expected in most parts of the province over the next 24 to 48 hours. Consequently, scattered rainfall with chances of heavy falls is expected in the Hazara division, Malakand division, Bannu, Peshawar, Kohat, Swabi, Swat, Mansehra, Haripur, Dera Ismail Khan, and surrounding areas. Low-lying areas likely to face urban inundation during the rainfall spell, the NDMA news release said. "The public is advised to stay informed by keeping track of weather updates and alerts. NDMA has launched the Pak NDMA Disaster Alert application, available on the Google Play Store and iOS App Store, to provide timely alerts, advisories, and guidelines to the public. "Ensure roofs and windows are properly sealed to prevent water leakage. Clear gutters and drainage systems to avoid water accumulation. Secure any loose items outside that could be blown away or damaged by strong winds and heavy rain. Do not attempt to walk, swim, or drive through flooded waters. "Use alternative routes to avoid areas prone to flooding. Be aware of open manholes and submerged obstacles. Unplug electrical appliances during heavy rains to avoid short circuits. Do not touch electrical equipment with wet hands," it said. The NDMA has issued instructions to all relevant departments to take necessary precautions to mitigate the possible effects of flooding and extreme weather.—DNA

Mohsin Naqvi
approves
grant project
of 200-acres
for Zoo

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday approved a grand project of 200-acres of international standard zoo and a safari park in Islamabad, set to house 5,000 animals and birds from around the world. He said that it would be a grand project to establish Pakistan's first international standard zoo and safari park in Islamabad where 200-acre facility will be home to 5,000 animals and birds, with 2,000 to be introduced in the first phase. The minister directed the registration of the zoo and safari park with the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums and instructed officials to finalize all matters related to the project swiftly. The foundation stone of the project is expected to be laid down in October. The project, reviewed in a meeting chaired by Minister Naqvi at the CDA headquarters, aims to increase tourism in Islamabad and provide world-class recreational facilities to citizens. Chairman CDA Mohammad Ali Randhawa briefed the meeting on the project's details. This development marks a significant step towards enhancing Islamabad's recreational infrastructure and promoting tourism in the capital city.—APP

Two children
drown in rain
drains

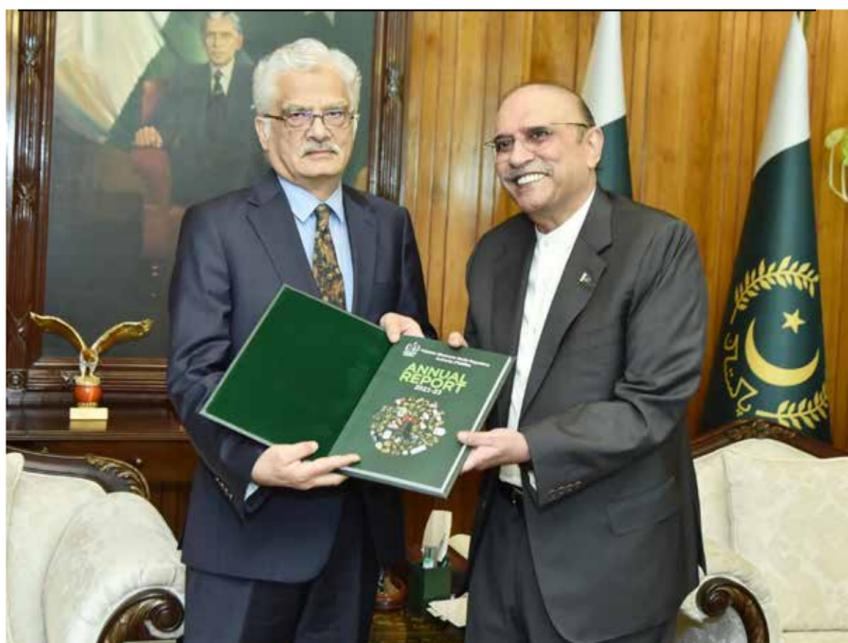
RAWALPINDI: Flooding in drains due to heavy rain on Wednesday morning claimed two more lives. The incidents occurred in two different areas where search and rescue operations have been initiated by the District Emergency Service-Rescue 1122. According to the details, an 8 year old child was crossing a floody street and slipped in deep water which swept him away, in Boston Khan Road. The CCTV footage shows two children trapped in water, trying to escape the heavy water flow. Both the children tried to cross the water, during which one child drowned into the drain while the other survived. In another tragic incident, a 5 years old girl drowned in an open drain near the Adyala Road area. The spokesman Rescue 1122, Muhammad Usman informed APP that search and rescue operations were initiated in both areas immediately. He further said that the names of both the kids remained unknown.—APP

AIU awards financial
assistance to 206 students

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) has awarded final project grants to 31 students and merit-based scholarships to 175 students of BS, MS and PhD programmes of the Spring 2024 semester. A ceremony was held at the university's main campus, presided over by Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood. In his address, Dr. Nasir Mahmood stated, "The university is committed to providing quality education as well as financial assistance to ensure that no child in Pakistan is deprived of education." He highlighted the university's financial assistance schemes, including merit-based scholarships, need-based support, earn-to-learn programs, final-year project grants, and free education for students from Balochistan, FATA, and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB).

Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood also noted that over the past two years, the universi-

ty has allocated 120 million PKR to these schemes, benefiting more than 200,000 students. Chairman of ASSF, Dr. Irshad Ahmad Arshad praised the students' hard work and dedication. He reaffirmed that the AIU is committed to bringing quality education to the students' doorsteps, a commitment that has been recognized internationally. The Vice-Chancellor not only encouraged the students but also assured them that whenever there is a need for achieving the noble goal of education, the Open University will be at the forefront in providing both financial support and an excellent environment, he maintained. He commended the dedication of the Directorate of Students Affairs team and congratulated them on organizing a successful ceremony. The event concluded with the Vice-Chancellor distributing awards to the students and expressing gratitude to the guests and participants.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), Mr Muhammad Saleem, presenting the PEMRA Report 2021-23 to President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.—DNA



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Giving birth under the hell

RASHA Mahmoud will never forget that bitter day, the day when labor pains came to her amid the falling bombs. "The situation was difficult to describe, I felt like my heart was going to stop." Rasha says that on the evening of June 20th, she felt terrible pains in her lower abdomen and knew it was the onset of labor pains. But the sounds of the Israeli bombardment on the Salehi towers in Al-Nuseirat made her freeze in her place - she was neither able to scream nor had the strength to move, while the ambulances kept coming and going to transport the wounded and the martyrs. Rasha (30 years old) is not new to childbirth, as this was her fourth delivery, but it was the first time she experienced the pain of labor and the horror of war together. "I had heard and read the testimonies of women and girls who lived through this experience in previous wars on Gaza, but I never imagined I would live this moment inside a beach tent." Rasha's husband went out to look for a vehicle to take them to Al-Awda Hospital west of the Al-Nuseirat camp, but that was not easy. "The area looked like ghosts except for the sound of the drone and the explosions of the bombs." She adds, "My husband was confused, not knowing what to do, between his fear for me and his concern for our children whom we would leave in the tent, until we dared to call our neighbor and ask her to take care of them until we returned." She pointed out that as soon as they arrived at the hospital, the Israeli warplanes bombed a neighboring house. "Fear filled the place and the hospital was crowded, and the birth was difficult despite being a normal delivery. I tried to go to the bathroom before delivery but I couldn't because of the long queue of the displaced." When asked about her biggest concerns at that moment, she says, "I was afraid of losing the fetus, afraid for my children whom I had left behind. I wished my mother was with me in these difficult moments. I could hear the screams of the injured children and women as they cried from the horror of the bombardment." She continues, "I prayed to God that the war would end before my due date. Giving birth during war is a suffering that does not stop there. I searched the market for health supplies for me and my child, but many are missing from the markets, and here is my son Muhammad, who has already passed his first month in the hottest months of the year." The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that around 20,000 children were born in the hell of the Israeli genocide war on Gaza since its outbreak on October 7, 2023, with a child being born every 10 minutes in these horrific conditions. A UN agency also pointed to the presence of about 50,000 pregnant women in the Gaza Strip. She added, "How can the child's father compensate his son for the lack of breastfeeding when artificial milk is not available in the markets and is sold at very high prices, where one is sold for about 60 shekels, and if I get one of what the international institutions offer, it barely lasts a week." Sarah also pointed to the difficulties faced by women during childbirth, where the targeting of hospitals in the Gaza Strip casts a gloomy shadow on postpartum care for the mother, exposing her to complications such as bleeding, infections, or postpartum depression, which is extremely dangerous if it befalls the mother in these circumstances.



Failure of US industrial policy

VERY now and then, away from the public eye, people in high places let their guard down and speak the truth among friends and colleagues. So it was with Anja Manuel, executive director of the Aspen Security Forum. She was addressing an elite bipartisan gathering on foreign policy in the United States last month, and she just confirmed what many people in China have called America's "Do a Tonya Harding". (If you don't get the reference, I will just let you google it yourself.) Manuel said: "Let's keep sight of the goal. The country that leads in technology tends to lead the world ... The United States and our friends and allies have been the undisputed technology leaders for decades and now we have someone who is running the race and running really fast and that's China. "So the goal here should be for the US and our friends and allies to run faster in this race. There's two ways to win a race: one, you hobble the other guy and Alan [Estevez, the undersecretary of commerce for industry and security] and his team are working on that. There's another way to do it, which is to run faster ourselves." The first way is sometimes called "China containment", the second is industrial policy. It's worth noting that Manuel once worked as a special assistant to the current ambassador to China Nicholas Burns, who was back then the undersecretary for political affairs responsible for Asia policy. You may wonder where his protégé got her "Tonya Harding" philosophy from. A key aspect of containment when it comes to technology has been denying China access to advanced semiconductors. Like a medieval pope, that involves forcing allies and their companies not to sell advanced chips to China on pain of excommunication from Washington. But if the Chinese space programme is any guide, US attempts at technological isolation will just end up encouraging China to build its own home-grown chips industry. "There are strong indications that the controls are expediting China's indigenous development of its own semiconductor supply chain," wrote a group of researchers in national security and technology at Georgetown University. "As a result, US actions may impede Chinese innovation and growth only in the short term, and thereafter actually speed up its technological advance." The analysis, published in Foreign Affairs last month, is titled, "The limits of the China chip ban: Washington's export controls could end up helping Beijing." But America's attempt "to run faster", as Manuel puts it, has been hitting bumps lately. After pressuring Taiwan's TSMC to start chip foundry production in the US, the premier chip maker is facing repeated delays, cost overruns and difficulty in hiring skilled US workers. But Intel, the once famous icon of the PC revolution, may be an even better cautionary tale. You would think industrial policy means funding and promoting new and innovative firms, rather than a company in decline. Not to this US president. If you trust Pat Gelsinger, Intel's current CEO, the firm was on the verge of being sold off when he took over three years ago. He may have a rosy view of his tenure but the market's view, as shown in stock prices, is anything but.

The High-Stakes Political Maneuvering

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The reasons behind this drastic measure are multifaceted, encompassing concerns about potential challenges to the established order, perceived threats to national security, and a desire to consolidate power. The military's involvement in this decision highlights the intersection of politics and defense in contemporary governance. In many countries, the military plays a pivotal role in shaping political outcomes, either directly or indirectly. The government's collaboration with military establishments in this...

IN a dramatic development within Pakistani politics, the government of Pakistan, with the apparent backing of the military, is considering an outright ban on the political party led by ousted former Prime Minister Imran Khan. This move comes in the wake of the explosive riots that erupted on May 9, 2023, which have been attributed, at least in part, to Khan's alleged incitement. The government's proposed actions also include charging Khan and other prominent figures in his party with treason, reflecting the gravity of the political and legal crisis at hand. Imran Khan, who served as Pakistan's Prime Minister from 2018 until his ousting in a no-confidence vote in April 2022, has remained a polarizing figure in Pakistani politics. His party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has continued to be a significant force, advocating for Khan's return to power and analyzing the current administration. The riots on May 9 were particularly violent and destructive, with widespread reports of property damage and clashes with security forces. These disturbances have been framed by the government as part of a broader destabilization effort spearheaded by Khan and his party. The decision to pursue a ban on PTI is not merely a political maneuver but also carries significant legal and constitutional implications. In Pakistan, political parties are integral to the democratic process, and the banning of a major party such as PTI would have far-reaching consequences for the country's political landscape. Such a move would not only eliminate a key player from the political arena but could also lead to increased polarization and unrest among Khan's supporters. The treason charges being considered against Khan and his party leaders are particularly serious. Treason in Pakistan's legal framework is a grave accusation, typically associated with actions deemed to threaten the sovereignty or integrity of the state. If Khan and his associates were formally charged, the legal proceedings would likely be highly contentious and closely scrutinized both domestically and internationally. The charges would need to be substantiated with concrete evidence linking Khan's actions directly to the riots and other alleged destabilizing activities. The role of the military in this political drama cannot be overstated. In Pakistan, the military has historically played a powerful role in politics, and its involvement in this case suggests a significant level of support for the government's stance. The mili-

tary's concurrence with the proposed ban and legal actions against Khan indicates a coordinated approach between the civilian and military branches of government, aimed at addressing what they perceive as a serious threat to national stability. The potential banning of PTI and the treason charges against Khan raise important questions about the state of democracy and governance in Pakistan. Critics argue that such actions could undermine democratic institutions and civil liberties, particularly if they are seen as politically motivated rather than based on genuine legal concerns. On the other hand, supporters of the government and the military might view these measures as necessary steps to restore order and prevent further chaos. As Pakistan navigates this complex and volatile situation, the international community will be watching closely. The outcome of these legal and political maneuvers will likely have significant implications for Pakistan's political stability and its relations with other countries. The unfolding events underscore the intricate interplay between politics, law, and military influence in one of South Asia's most strategically important nations. In recent times, the political landscape of many nations has been marked by intense power struggles and dramatic shifts. One of the most striking examples of this phenomenon can be seen in the ongoing efforts to remove a prominent political figure and his party from the national stage. The government and military establishments, determined to maintain control and stability, have resolved that Khan and his party must be permanently removed from the political scene. This decision reflects a broader strategy to eliminate any threats to their authority and prevent the possibility of Khan ever wielding legislative power or forming a government again. Khan, a figure who once commanded significant political influence and popular support, now finds himself at the center of a high-stakes battle for political survival. The government's stance is unequivocal: Khan's removal is not just a matter of political rivalry but a strategic imperative. The reasons behind this drastic measure are multifaceted, encompassing concerns about potential challenges to the established order, perceived threats to national security, and a desire to consolidate power. The military's involvement in this decision highlights the intersection of politics and defense in contemporary governance. In many

countries, the military plays a pivotal role in shaping political outcomes, either directly or indirectly. The government's collaboration with military establishments in this case underscores the gravity of the situation and the perceived need for a decisive response. The military's influence extends beyond traditional defense roles, affecting political dynamics and policy-making processes. The determination to ensure that Khan and his party are permanently excluded from power speaks to a broader strategy of political consolidation. By removing Khan from the equation, the government aims to eliminate a key challenger and secure its position in the legislative and executive branches. This move is part of a broader pattern observed in various political contexts, where incumbent powers take drastic measures to neutralize potential rivals and maintain their dominance. The implications of this decision extend beyond the immediate political landscape. The removal of Khan and his party could have far-reaching consequences for democratic processes, political pluralism, and civil liberties. In democratic societies, political competition and the presence of diverse voices are essential components of a healthy political system. The exclusion of a significant political figure raises questions about the health of democratic institutions and the extent to which political dissent is tolerated. Moreover, the removal of Khan and his party could have ripple effects on public sentiment and societal cohesion. Political decisions that appear to be driven by a desire for absolute control can contribute to a sense of disenfranchisement and alienation among segments of the population. Public trust in institutions and governance can erode when political processes are perceived as being manipulated or suppressed. The government's and military establishments' decision to permanently remove Khan and his party from the political scene represents a significant moment in the nation's political trajectory. It reflects a broader strategy of consolidating power, addressing perceived threats, and shaping the future political landscape. While this move may achieve short-term objectives, it also raises important questions about the health of democratic institutions, the role of military influence in politics, and the broader implications for political pluralism and public trust. The unfolding situation will undoubtedly continue to shape the nation's political discourse and governance in the years to come.

From Democratic hero to autocratic ruler

Saima Afzal

She emerged as a staunch advocate for democracy and human rights in the late 20th century, following the assassination of her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding leader of Bangladesh. With a vision to restore democracy and fight authoritarian rule, Hasina galvanized public support and led her party, the Awami League, to victory in the 1996 elections. Her leadership was seen as a fresh breeze in a country yearning for democratic governance and stability. In her early years in power

HASINA Wajid, once celebrated as a beacon of hope and a champion of democracy in Bangladesh, has resigned, marking the end of a controversial era. Her journey from a pro-democracy icon to an autocratic ruler encapsulates the tumultuous political landscape of the country and raises significant questions about the nature of power and governance. Hasina Wajid's political journey began with promise and inspiration. She emerged as a staunch advocate for democracy and human rights in the late 20th century, following the assassination of her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding leader of Bangladesh. With a vision to restore democracy and fight authoritarian rule, Hasina galvanized public support and led her party, the Awami League, to victory in the 1996 elections. Her leadership was seen as a fresh breeze in a country yearning for democratic governance and stability. In her early years in power, Hasina Wajid implemented significant reforms aimed at improving the economy, education, and healthcare. Her administration's efforts to enhance women's rights and social welfare programs earned her accolades both domestically and internationally. Under her leadership, Bangladesh made strides in achieving higher literacy rates and economic growth, solidifying her reputation as a progressive and forward-thinking leader. However, as her tenure progressed, cracks began to appear in Hasina Wajid's democratic facade. Accusations of corruption, nepotism, and election rigging started to surface. Critics argued that her government was increasingly using state machinery to suppress opposition voices and curb dissent. The judiciary, media, and civil society organizations began to feel the weight of governmental pressure, with many instances of censorship and intimidation coming to light. One of the key indicators of her shift towards autocracy was the 2014 and 2024 elections, which were marred by allegations of widespread voter suppression and manipulation. Sheikh Hasina's party, the Awami League, has secured a fourth consecutive term in the 12th parliamentary election,

which recorded the second lowest voter turnout since democracy was restored in 1991, according to the Daily Star. The main opposition party boycotted the election, leading to a landslide victory for the Awami League but raising serious doubts about the legitimacy of the electoral process. Subsequent elections only reinforced these concerns, with international observers highlighting numerous irregularities and abuses of power. As her government grew more repressive, public discontent simmered beneath the surface. Protests became more frequent, with citizens demanding greater transparency, accountability, and an end to authoritarian practices. The dismantling of democratic institutions and the erosion of civil liberties led many to view Hasina Wajid as a ruler more interested in maintaining power than upholding the democratic principles she once championed. Amid escalating violence that has claimed around 300 lives in two weeks, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India, landing in Agartala. The country is experiencing its worst violence in history, with lethal force used by police against protesters. Bangladesh Army Chief General Waker-uz-Zaman announced the formation of an interim government to restore peace and investigate the recent killings, urging citizens to trust the army. The turmoil, triggered by job quota protests despite economic growth, reflects deep-seated social unrest and dissatisfaction with Hasina's autocratic governance, media curbs, and a crackdown on political rivals. International human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, have expressed deep concerns about the rise of fascism under Sheikh Hasina's regime, citing harassment of dissenting journalists, writers, intellectuals, and teachers. The misuse of laws such as the Digital Security Act (2018) and the Info & Communication Technology Act (2006) has led to the arrest of over 2,200 individuals, severely restricting freedom of expression. The decline in media freedom is stark, with Bangladesh falling from 121st to 162nd in the RSF World Press Freedom Index since 2009, reflecting an

increasingly repressive environment for journalists under Hasina's leadership. Domestic issues in Bangladesh are affecting historical perspectives, particularly regarding the 1971 independence from Pakistan. Sheikh Hasina's resignation raises questions about her father's legacy and India's role in the war. Various analysts argue that India's involvement was motivated by strategic interests rather than pure altruism, challenging the view of India as Bangladesh's liberator and suggesting that it exploited the situation to weaken Pakistan and boost its own regional power. The resignation also revives debates about the Pakistan Army's actions during 1971, with some suggesting that current issues in Bangladesh under Hasina's rule validate Pakistan's historical positions and question the simplicity of the narrative blaming Pakistan. Hasina's close ties with India have led to accusations that her government prioritized Indian interests over Bangladesh's sovereignty, contributing to the discontent leading to her resignation. This moment offers an opportunity for Bangladesh to reassess its historical narratives and governance issues, striving for a balanced understanding of its past while moving towards a democratic and just future. In a nutshell, the perpetrators of the recent brutalities in Bangladesh must face justice and be held accountable. The new government has an opportunity to achieve this by inviting the UN to form a commission of inquiry and fully cooperating with the process. The international community should also advocate for this to uphold global justice and accountability. The success of the new leadership will hinge on the trust and confidence it can build with the people. The interim and subsequent governments will face significant challenges in stabilizing the economy and recovering the state amid global economic and political chaos. The only way out of this volatile situation is by ensuring public participation in decision-making and transitioning to a democratically elected, transparent, and accountable government as soon as possible.

Briefs

Imran Khan
'ready to
tender
conditional...

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United States, whom he has also blamed for his 2022 ouster from the PM Office. "Given Pakistan's geographical position and the military's significant role in the private sector, it would be foolish not to foster such a relationship," Khan wrote in replies relayed by his media and legal team. "We are proud of our soldiers and armed forces," he said. Khan said his criticisms since his ouster had been directed at individuals, not the military as an institution. "The miscalculations of the military leadership shouldn't be held against the institution as a whole." Last week, Khan offered to hold "conditional negotiations" with the military — if "clean and transparent" elections were held and the "bogus" cases against his supporters were dropped. "We are open to any dialogue that could help improve the dire situation in Pakistan," he said, adding that it was useless to open any such talks with the coalition government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, which he says does not enjoy public backing because he claims it won a stolen election in February.

PTI moves
top court
against...

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lawmaker Bilal Azhar Kiyani last month, the legislation sailed through the NA as well as the Senate amid stern resistance from the opposition benches. The move drew a strong reaction from the PTI, as once it comes into effect following the president's assent, it would seemingly "reverse" the Imran Khan-founded party's resurrection in the assemblies as it provisions a prohibition on independent candidates from changing party affiliations at a later stage from the one mentioned in their affidavits initially. Last month, the SC had declared PTI eligible for reserved seats after which the Election Commission of Pakistan notified as many as 93 lawmakers from three provincial legislatures as PTI members.

FO seeks
details of US
charges...

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government officials, the Justice Department said on Tuesday. Asif Merchant, 46, sought to recruit people in the US to carry out the plot in retaliation for the US killing of Iran's Revolutionary Guards' top commander Qasem Soleimani in 2020, according to a criminal complaint. Merchant, who prosecutors allege spent time in Iran before traveling to the US, was charged with murder for hire in federal court in New York's Brooklyn borough. A federal judge ordered him detained on July 16, according to court records. "For years, the Justice Department has been working aggressively to counter Iran's brazen and unrelenting efforts to retaliate against American public officials for the killing of Iranian General Soleimani," Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement.

Bangladesh
interim...

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briefing. "We might do it at around 8:00pm (1400GMT). Around 400 hundred people will likely be present." Yunus will lead Bangladesh through a "democratic process" when he arrives in the country to helm an interim government, army chief Waker-Uz-Zaman said Wednesday. "He is very eager to do this," the general said in a televised address to the nation. "I am certain that he will be able to take us through a beautiful democratic process and that we will benefit from this." Yunus, who is set to lead a caretaker government after mass protests ousted the premier, called on compatriots Wednesday to be "ready to build the country", ahead of his hugely anticipated return.

Hazara, Legacy march into semis of football championship

Legacy FC showcased their dominance with a 3-0 victory over TWK. Eman, Kayanat, and Alina each scored a goal, demonstrating exceptional skills

USAMA ARSHAD

ISLAMABAD: The National Women's Football Club Championship 2024 final group stage concluded today with two thrilling matches at the Jinnah Sports Complex, Islamabad. Legacy FC and Hazara Quetta WFC emerged victorious, securing their places in the tournament's semi-finals. Legacy FC showcased their dominance with a 3-0 victory over TWK. Eman, Kayanat, and Alina each scored a goal, demonstrating their exceptional skills and teamwork. In the last group match of the final stage, Hazara FC faced off against Highlanders FC in a closely contested battle. Hazara FC emerged victorious with a 2-1 win. Farišta and Sadiqa were the goal scorers for Hazara, while Sosan opened the scoring for the Highlanders. Karachi United will face Legacy FC in the first semi-final of the National Women's Football Club Championship 2024 on August 8 at 5:30 PM at Jinnah Football Stadium, Islamabad followed by the second semi-final between Karachi City FC and Hazara Quetta WFC at 8:30 PM. The final will be played on Saturday 10 July.



PCB announces Pakistan squad for Bangladesh Tests

LAHORE : A 17-member Pakistan squad for the ICC World Test Championship fixtures against Bangladesh was announced by the Pakistan Cricket Board's men's national selection committee today. The first Test will be held at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium from 21-25 August, while the second Test will take place from 30 August-3 September in Karachi. The Pakistan Test side's training camp will start at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on 11 August and will be supervised by red-ball head coach Jason Gillespie and assistant coach Azhar Mahmood. The Bangladesh cricket team is scheduled to touch down in Islamabad in the wee hours of 17 August and expected to train in the

same afternoon. **Pakistan squad** Shan Masood (captain), Saud Shakeel (vice-captain), Aamir Jamal (subject to Fitness), Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Kamran Ghulam, Khuram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Huraiera, Mohammad Rizwan (wicket-keeper), Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfaraz Ahmed (wicket-keeper) and Shaheen Shah Afridi. Shan Masood will lead the squad, while left-handed middle-order batter Saud Shakeel has been named as vice-captain. "Saud takes over from Shaheen Shah Afridi as part of the selectors' strategic decision that is aimed at managing Pakistan's lead fast bowler's

workload management during the period from 21 August 2024 to 5 April 2025 in which Pakistan is scheduled to play nine Tests, 14 T20Is and, at least, 17 ODIs," the PCB said in a press release. "Of the 17 players picked for the first Test series of the 2024-25 season, 13 players were involved in Pakistan's last series against Australia in December/January 2023-24. Mohammad Huraiera, Kamran Ghulam and Mohammad Ali have been rewarded for their consistent performances in the domestic circuit as well as for Pakistan Shaheens, while Naseem Shah is returning to the red-ball side after 13 months. "Kamran Ghulam aggregated 1,025 runs in 11 first-class matches in the 2023-24 season and then

had scored 148 runs in three innings against Bangladesh 'A' in Darwin last month, including 100 not out in the first match. He was part of the squad for the home series against New Zealand in December/January 2022-23 but didn't feature in the drawn two-match series. "Fast bowler Mohammad Ali has been recalled after last featuring in the opening two Tests against England in 2022. He took 24 wickets in six first-class matches in the 2022-23 season, followed by 47 wickets in 14 first-class matches in the 2023-24 season. In the two four-day matches against Bangladesh 'A' in Darwin, Ali took nine wickets, including six for 63 in the second innings of the second match. — DNA

SL win ODI series over India for first time since 1997

COLOMBO : Sri Lanka have won the ODI series over India for the first time since 1997 as they defeated Rohit Sharma and Co. by 110 runs in the third ODI on Wednesday in Colombo. The hosts won the three-match ODI series 2-0, having tied the first game and defeating India by 32 runs in the second ODI. Chasing a target of 249, India's batting line-up collapsed as they were bowled out for 138 in 26.1 overs. India's captain, Rohit Sharma, was the highest run-scorer for the visitors, contributing 35 off 20 balls to the total. Veteran batter Virat Kohli also failed to stay at the crease and was dismissed after scoring 20 runs off 18 balls. Sharma's dismissal followed by Kohli's wicket triggered a collapse in the middle order as Rishabh Pant (6), Shreyas Iyer (8), and Axar Patel (2) succumbed to Sri Lanka's spin attack. Washington Sundar made 30 off 25 balls before his dismissal, leaving India at 138 for nine in 26 overs. Kuldeep Yadav was dismissed on the very next ball, the first of the 27th over, as Sri Lanka secured a historic ODI series win against India. For Sri Lanka, Dunith Wellalage claimed a five-for, while Jeffrey Vandersay took two wickets. Batting first, the hosts posted a total of 248 for seven in their 50 overs after their opening pair provided a strong start. Pathum Nissanka and Avishka Fernando gave Sri Lanka a start of 89 in 19.4 overs before the former was dismissed after scoring 45 off 65 balls. His batting partner Fernando fell just four runs short of a well-deserved century, departing after scoring 95 off 102 deliveries. — Agencies

Athletics-Dominant Thomas lands first 200m global title

PARIS: American Gabby Thomas finally claimed the global title she has promised for so long when she delivered a dominant performance to take Olympic 200 metres gold on Tuesday, denying silver medalist Julien Alfred a sprint double. Thomas, 27, took bronze in Tokyo and silver in last year's world championships, but gold had eluded one of the sport's most recognisable athletes and she had been vocal about her quest for an Olympic title. Advertisement * Scroll to continue In control of the final throughout the race, Thomas came home in 21.83 seconds and broke into a wide smile of disbelief, hands on her head, as she crossed the finish line. "Honestly, I kind of blanked out for all of it, I can't even remember what I was doing, I just wanted to win," said Thomas. "The only moment I remember was crossing the finish line and being in disbelief, that was it." Alfred, who claimed Saint Lucia's first Olympic medal when she won the 100m on Saturday, was fastest out of the blocks but was a clear second in 22.08, with Brittany Brown taking bronze for the U.S. in 20.20. Scroll to continue "I'm tired. Long five days," Alfred told reporters. "I did feel ready for the 200m tonight. I feel good, no complaints at all. This means a lot. First Olympics, to go back with gold and silver, I can't ask for more than that." Thomas arrived in Paris with the world's fastest time this season of 21.78 and made an emphatic statement in Monday's semi-finals when she pulled away from the field with ease over final 50m to cross line smiling in 21.86 seconds. — Agencies

Khelif wins women's semi-final amid gender dispute

"I just had the performance I was looking to deliver today to make the fans happy," says Khelif after win

PARIS: Imane Khelif, the boxer at the centre of a gender dispute, beat Thailand's Janjaem Suwannapheng by unanimous decision in a welterweight semi-final fight at the Paris Olympics on Tuesday to progress to the women's final at Roland Garros. Khelif, a silver medalist at the 2022 worlds, and Taiwanese boxer Lin Yuting have been in the spotlight at the Olympics as part of a storm that has dominated headlines and been the subject of much discussion on social media platforms. "I don't want anything to be said about the controversy," Khelif said after her win. Khelif and Lin were disqualified by the International Boxing Association from the 2023 World Championships in New Delhi, with the body saying

in a shambolic press conference on Monday that a sex chromosome test had ruled both of them ineligible. At those World Championships, Khelif beat Suwannapheng by unanimous decision in the semi-finals before being disqualified. Suwannapheng competed in the final after Khelif's disqualification and won silver. Khelif and Lin are competing in the Olympics after the International Olympic Committee stripped the IBA of its status as the sport's governing body in 2023 and took control of organising the boxing in Paris. The IOC has rejected the results of the IBA-ordered tests as arbitrary and illegitimate, saying there was no reason to conduct them. At these Games, the IOC is using

boxing eligibility rules that were applied at the 2016 and 2021 Olympics which do not include gender testing. Fan support Algerian fans flocked into a repurposed Court Philippe Chatrier, devoid of its iconic red clay, looking to support Khelif and screamed "Imane, Imane, Imane" ahead of the bout, while also booing Suwannapheng on entry. In a cautious first round, both boxers attempted to keep their distance and engaged sparingly, but Khelif used her jab to better effect than her Thai opponent. Suwannapheng connected with a big right hand in the second, but the rangy Algerian's excellent technique allowed her to keep landing shots and sweep the judge's scorecards. — Agencies

ICCI addresses Chinese business challenges in Pak

ICCI President warmly thanked the Chinese delegation for their steadfast dedication to strengthening business-to-business ties between Pakistan-China

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A 13-member Chinese business delegation, led by Chairman Pakistan-China Business Forum Ejaz Sheikh, visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Wednesday. The delegation was warmly welcomed by ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, former presidents, executive members, and prominent business leaders. During the visit, the Chinese delegation expressed strong interest in availing business opportunities in Pakistan, aiming to fortify bilateral business-to-business relations and exploring new avenues for cooperation. During the meeting, the Chinese delegation brought to the attention of ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari the challenges they face while operating in Pakistan. Specifically, they highlighted the requirement to stay in five-star hotels, which can be cost-prohibitive for many Chinese business travelers. Additionally, they expressed concerns about the mandatory use of bulletproof vehicles for transportation, citing its impracticality for every Chinese businessman visiting Pakistan. The delegation sought ICCI's support in addressing these issues which are proving hurdles in carrying out businesses in Pakistan. ICCI

President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari warmly thanked the Chinese delegation for their steadfast dedication to strengthening business-to-business ties between Pakistan and China. He assured the delegation that the ICCI would promptly bring the highlighted issues to the attention of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, the Interior Minister, and all relevant authorities to ensure swift resolution and facilitate ease of doing business in Pakistan. Furthermore, President Bakhtawari warmly invited the Chinese business community to consider the ICCI as their

home, welcoming them to visit and explore opportunities at their leisure. "Nasir Qureshi, Council Member of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, underscored the vast business and investment potential of Pakistan, emphasizing the exceptional relations between Pakistan and China. He expressed the enthusiasm of the Pakistani people to further strengthen this bilateral relationship, taking it to unprecedented heights. Additionally, Qureshi assured the visiting Chinese delegation that their concerns, pri-

marily related to security, would promptly be brought to the attention of the relevant authorities at the highest level, ensuring a secure and conducive environment for Chinese investors and businessmen in Pakistan. The former President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Secretary General United Business Group (FPCCI, UBG) emphasized the remarkable strength of Pakistan-China ties, reassuring the Chinese delegation that the ICCI would take concrete steps to address their concerns. He said that an ICCI delegation will meet the Interior Minister, aiming to apprise him of the challenges faced by Chinese businesses and collaborate on finding effective solutions to enhance the ease of doing business in Pakistan. Tariq Sadiq, former President ICCI, praised China's pivotal role in Pakistan's development, highlighting the need for Chinese investors to prioritize SMEs development and technology transfer. By doing so, he emphasized, Chinese businesses can catalyze meaningful growth, strengthen B2B ties, and cultivate a more balanced and prosperous partnership between Pakistan and China. Ejaz Sheikh, Chairman of the Pakistan-China Business Forum, expressed his sincere appreciation to President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and the ICCI team for their exceptional hospitality.



We won't be convinced with mere...

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"The government if wants to end the sit-in, it should resolve the issue," he said. "We will begin our march at Murree Road tomorrow." JI leader said while elaborating the next steps of the party's protest. "We will stage sit-in in Lahore on August 11, in Peshawar on 12 and Multan on 16 August", he said. "If they won't accept, we will give a peaceful appeal to people, requesting them not to pay the electricity bills," he warned.

UK braces for more anti-Muslim protests

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according to posts on messaging app Telegram leaked to the British media. The government has said 6,000 specialist police are on standby to deal with the disorder, which has seen more than 425 people arrested and at least 120 charged, according to the latest police figures. The violence broke out after girls aged nine, seven and six were killed and five more children critically injured during a knife attack at a Taylor Swift dance class in Southport, northwest England. False rumours initially spread on social media saying the attacker was a Muslim asylum seeker. The suspect was later identified as 17-year-old Axel Rudakubana, born in Wales. UK media reported that his parents are from Rwanda. Despite the police statement, initial disturbances in Southport centred around a mosque, and widespread violence has rocked England and Northern Ireland since.

Dar, OIC SG call for ceasefire...

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supporting the legitimate right of self-determination of the Kashmiris as reflected in various OIC resolutions and statements. Islamophobia, discrimination, and violence against Muslims were also discussed in the meeting. The Deputy Prime Minister also lauded the appointment of OIC Secretary General's Special Envoy on Islamophobia and expressed the hope that the Special Envoy would steer the campaign to address this important issue.

Arshad Nadeem asks nation to pray...

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Olympics; this is the result of your prayers," he said. "I'm ecstatic that with the help of your prayers, I qualified for the final in my first throw only." Nadeem said, now Pakistan's sole medal-winning chance as the last athlete to compete in Paris. "Please continue praying for me."

Reserved seats granted to party...

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according to the constitution and a political party provided a list of candidates for reserved seats in the Parliament. He argued that Sunni Ittehad Council chairman didn't contest the party election nor have representation in Parliament, then how could the party have reserved seats. A party didn't request relief but provided relief by granting reserved seats, Tarar added. Information minister insisted that the SC couldn't interfere in the constitution. He asserted that two judges of SC raised key questions, and the apex court hadn't issued the detailed verdict for 15 days. Tarar also lambasted the PTI, a political party that was doing political point scoring on the situation of 1971 and current situation of Bangladesh. Federal minister berated Imran Khan and his party for declaring Sheikh Mujeebur Rehman a hero, saying, Imran Khan compared himself with Mujeebur Rehman and his party leaders asserted that their leader was like Mujeebur Rehman.

Briefs

Niger breaks off diplomatic ties with Ukraine

NIAMEY: Niger said Tuesday it was cutting diplomatic ties with Ukraine "with immediate effect", accusing Kyiv of supporting "terrorist groups", two days after Mali took a similar step. The decisions to break relations with Ukraine come in the wake of heavy losses suffered by the Malian army in late July at the hands of militants and separatist forces, which they blamed in part on Ukraine. Niger said it would ask the UN Security Council to debate Ukraine's "aggression", government spokesman Amadou Abdramane said in a televised statement. Niger and Mali are both run by military governments that took power in recent coups, went on to rip up defence agreements with France and turn to Russia for military help. Several soldiers from Russia's Wagner paramilitary group were reportedly killed alongside Malian soldiers during July's debacle in the north of the country. "The government of the Republic of Niger, in total solidarity with the government and people of Mali, decides in complete sovereignty to sever diplomatic relations between the Republic of Niger and Ukraine with immediate effect," Abdramane said. Mali's government spokesman Colonel Abdoulaye Maiga said Sunday that Mali broke off relations following remarks by Andriy Yusov, spokesman for Ukraine's military intelligence agency the GUR. Yusov was quoted by state media as saying: "The rebels received all the necessary information they needed," without elaborating. —APP

At least 2 people killed in German hotel collapse

BERLIN: Two people have been killed in Kröv, Germany, after a hotel building partially collapsed late on Tuesday night, while several others remain trapped under the rubble. Rescue operations are ongoing with more than 200 emergency services personnel at the scene. Located near the banks of the River Moselle, the hotel's roof collapsed at around 23:00 local time (21:00 GMT) on Tuesday, shattering windows as the top floor of the building collapsed onto the lower floor. Fourteen people were inside the hotel at the time of the incident, according to local police. A young Dutch family visiting the region was among those rescued on Wednesday morning. Five people were able to flee the building unharmed late on Tuesday night, but nine others were trapped under rubble. In a news conference on Wednesday fire inspector Jörg Teusch identified the two people killed as a man and a woman, who he said died during the night as a direct result of the building collapse. —APP

SA moves to implement national health bill

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa is moving ahead with implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI) bill, President Cyril Ramaphosa said, despite strong opposition from within and outside government. The NHI aims to provide universal coverage through a major overhaul of South Africa's two-tier system. Ramaphosa signed the bill right before the May election in which his African National Congress lost its parliamentary majority. "We have highlighted the social and economic value of affordable, accessible, quality health care that is available equally to all South Africans," Ramaphosa said in a speech on Tuesday evening, at the closing of an ANC policy meeting. "We will therefore proceed with the implementation of the National Health Insurance." Speaking earlier on Tuesday, Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi said that the section of the bill which outlines transitional mechanisms would be implemented "immediately". —APP

Naqvi secures relief for Pakistani pilgrims to Iraq

The quota for Pakistani pilgrims will be also increased and more visas be issued to Pakistani pilgrims this year than the last year

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Due to the personal efforts of Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi, Pakistani pilgrims traveling to Iraq will be provided significant facilities. In a meeting with Iraqi Ambassador Hamid Abbas Lafta at the Ministry of Interior, it was decided that the passports of Pakistani pilgrims traveling to Iraq by air will not be withheld. It was also decided in the meeting that instead of travel agents, the Iraqi Embassy will directly issue visas to pilgrims during the Arbaeen. Moreover, the quota for Pakistani pilgrims will be also increased and more visas be issued to Pakistani pilgrims this year than the last year. It was also agreed to operate special flights for pilgrims on the occasion of Arbaeen. Furthermore, it was also decided that in order to facilitate Pakistani pilgrims, all matters related to reopening the Iraqi consulate in Karachi would be resolved today. Interior Minister assured that the Ministry of Interior would provide all possible cooperation in this regard. In order to abolish visa fees for Pakistani pilgrims on the occasion of Arbaeen, Federal



Interior Minister will contact his Iraqi counterpart on telephone. During the meeting the repatriation of Pakistanis imprisoned in Iraq was also discussed. Interior Minister said that a Police Liaison

Officer would be appointed in Iraq in this regard. He also assured that strict action would be taken against agents charging extra fees from the pilgrims. Both sides also agreed to finalize the agreement

on visa exemption for diplomatic and official passport holders on priority basis. Federal Interior Minister thanked the Iraqi Interior Minister and the Iraqi Ambassador for the facilitation measures

and said that the decision to not take the passports from pilgrims traveling by air would provide great relief to them. The Iraqi Ambassador said that it would be ensured that Pakistani pilgrims are being provided similar facilities which are being provided to the pilgrims from other countries. On behalf of the Iraqi Minister for Interior, the Iraqi Ambassador presented the invitation to Federal Minister for Interior to visit Iraq. Immediately, after the meeting with the Iraqi Ambassador, Federal Interior Minister contacted the Federal Minister for Aviation Khawaja Muhammad Asif and it was agreed to allow Iraqi Airlines to operate special flights from today. In this regard, Iraqi Airlines will be officially allowed to operate special flights from today. Likewise, PIA will also operate special flights to Iraq and its final schedule will be issued by tomorrow. During the meeting, provision of all possible facilities to Pakistani pilgrims as well as matters of mutual interest were discussed in detail. Federal Secretary Interior Khurram Ali Agha and Additional Secretary Interior Rifkat Mukhtar Raja were also present in the meeting.

Russian, Jordanian FM call for cease-fire in Gaza

Sergey Lavrov and Ayman Safadi emphasize need for speedy de-escalation in Middle East

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: Russia and Jordan's foreign ministers called for a cease-fire between Israel and Palestine during a phone call Tuesday. The Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Sergey Lavrov and Ayman Safadi exchanged opinions on recent developments in the Middle East and emphasized the need for speedy de-escalation in the region. "Both Moscow and Amman urge all parties involved to exercise restraint in order to avoid catastrophic consequences for the entire Middle East," it said. The two top diplomats

agreed to stay in touch and continue efforts aimed at easing tensions in the region, it said. In a separate statement, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova warned that further escalation in the Middle East may lead to a major war. "The probability of such a dramatic scenario is high," she said. Fears have grown over a full-blown war between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah group amid a months-long exchange of cross-border fire. The escalation comes against the backdrop of an Israeli onslaught against Gaza which has killed more than 39,600 people

since last October following an attack by the Palestinian resistance group Hamas. Meanwhile, Pope Francis on Wednesday renewed his appeal to avoid escalation of conflict in the Middle East, Vatican News reported. "I reiterate my appeal to all parties involved to ensure that the conflict does not spread and to immediately cease fire on all fronts, starting from Gaza where the humanitarian situation is extremely serious and unsustainable," the pontiff said while addressing the weekly general audience. "I pray that the sincere search for peace will extinguish strife, love will over-

come hatred and revenge will be disarmed by forgiveness," he added. Israel has killed nearly 40,000 Palestinians in Gaza since the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas incursion. The relentless military campaign has levelled much of the territory and left most of the people homeless, and hungry. Tensions have grown after the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran's capital Tehran on July 31. Iran and Hamas have blamed Israel, which has neither confirmed nor denied responsibility. The pope also asked the faithful to join his prayers for the "war-torn peoples" of Ukraine, Myanmar and Sudan.

Danish PM's attacker gets jail term

COPENHAGEN: A Danish court on Wednesday handed a Polish man a four-month prison sentence and ordered him deported for punching the country's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen in June. The 39-year-old, who Danish authorities have ruled cannot be named in the media, was immediately apprehended after the alleged assault on June 7 in a Copenhagen square. "We have found you guilty of having punched the prime minister with a closed fist on the right shoulder," judge Jacob Scherfig told the man at the end of the trial Wednesday. The man, who has lived in Denmark for five years, will be deported after serving his sentence. In addition he will also be banned from re-entering the Scandinavian country for six years. During the two-day trial, he denied responsibility, saying he remembered coming face-to-face with the prime minister, whom he recognised, but not putting his hand on her. He said he believed the memory loss was the result of alcohol previously consumed starting to take effect, and the surprise of suddenly coming face-to-face with the prime minister. Frederiksen, 46, underwent a medical examination after the incident and was diagnosed with a "contusion on her right shoulder and a minor whiplash injury", her office said at the time. The man was convicted of violence against a public servant. He was also convicted of several counts of indecent exposure and fraud relating to other incidents. —APP

Heavy rains kill 17 in war-torn Sudan

KHARTOUM: Heavy rains have triggered building collapses that have killed 17 people in northern Sudan, as the country reels from almost 16 months of fighting between rival security forces, a medic told AFP Tuesday. "The number of victims has risen to 17," said an employee at a hospital in Abu Hamad, a small town in Sudan's River Nile state, some 400 kilometres (nearly 250 miles) north of Khartoum. "The power is out in the city and people are spending the night out in the open, dreading more rainfall," they said, requesting anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the media. Some 11,500 homes have already collapsed, the state's infrastructure minister Samir Saad told reporters Tuesday, and at least 170 people have been injured. Each year in August, peak flow on the Nile is accompanied by torrential rains, destroying homes, wrecking infrastructure and claiming lives, both directly and indirectly through water-borne diseases. The impact is expected to be worse this year after more than 12 months of fighting that has pushed millions of displaced people into flood zones. "Heavy rains caused most of the houses to collapse and all the shops in the market collapsed," a witness in Abu Hamad told AFP by telephone. Last week, a flash flood caused the deaths of five people in Port Sudan, on the Red Sea coast. Since July 7, torrential rains and flooding have killed more than 30 people across the country, Sudan's federal emergency operations centre said Tuesday. —APP

Africa mpox resurgence fuels alarm

ABIDJAN: Two years after a global outbreak, fears are rife that a new strain of mpox - previously known as monkeypox - identified in DR Congo and now also in several neighbouring countries could further spread. Deadlier and more transmissible than previous forms, the mpox strain surging in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) since September, known as the Clade 1b subclade, is spread person-to-person. The World Health Organization (WHO) said on Sunday it was considering convening an expert committee to advise on whether to declare an international emergency, as it did during the global mpox outbreak in 2022. The Clade 1b strain causes skin rashes across the whole body, unlike other strains where lesions and rashes are usually limited to the mouth, face and genitals. The African Union health agency, Africa CDC, registered 14,479 confirmed and suspected cases of the strain and 455 deaths in DRC as of August 3, representing a mortality rate of around three percent. But researchers in the vast Central African nation say the mortality rate from the strain can be as much as 10 percent among children. The Congolese government acknowledged last month an "exponential increase" in cases. —DNA

UN asks council to address famine crisis in Sudan

GENEVA: High-ranking officials from the United Nations have made a formal appeal to the Security Council to seek assistance in facilitating humanitarian aid access in Sudan, emphasizing the need for aid to reach the affected areas in order to combat the famine that has emerged in at least one location in North Darfur. Senior UN aid official Edem Wosornu told the Security Council on Tuesday that the occurrence of a famine signifies that "we did not do enough. It means that we, the international community, have failed." It also indicates in sufficient efforts, and a failure on the part of the international community to address the issue. She also said that a UN Sudan aid appeal for \$2.7 billion was only 32% funded. Stephen Omollo, a senior official from the UN World Food Programme, stated that in the absence of a ceasefire. —APP

Police arrest 3 suspects overacts of violence in Belfast

ANKARA: Three suspects were arrested in Belfast following the acts of violence that took over the Northern Ireland's capital city, police said Wednesday. "A car was hijacked by a group of masked men" on Tuesday evening, according to a statement, and was "deliberately driven at the front of a business ... causing minimal damage to the building ..." it added. "Three men, aged 26, 28 and 41 years, were arrested on suspicion of offences including criminal damage and remain in custody at this time," police noted. Rioters on Monday night threw petrol bombs, bottles, and bricks at police officers in Belfast, according to media reports. Violence broke out at night in a series of protests across the UK since last week and a crowd of over 200 people gathered outside the Islamic Center in Belfast. Riot police and drones were in the field, the Belfast Telegraph said, and police also used Attenuating Energy Projectile against rioters. Monday night's violence was mainly caused by loyalists who traditionally oppose Irish nationalists aiming for the unity of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The UK has been gripped by far-right riots for days, with violent mobs spewing racist and Islamophobic vitriol and targeting Muslims, minority groups, and migrants. The riots were fueled by online misinformation that a suspect arrested after a fatal stabbing in Southport, England, last week was a Muslim asylum seeker, a claim which was false. Three young girls were killed and five more children critically injured during a knife attack as they attended a dance class last Monday. Far-right groups are reorganizing for more violence targeting asylum and immigration centers in London and across the UK on Wednesday. —APP



OTTAWA Acting High Commissioner Faisal Kakar with Pakistani diaspora at a pictorial exhibition in Canada: —DNA

PNS Yarmook visits Bahrain, conducts naval exercises

Pakistan Navy is maintaining permanent presence in the Indian Ocean to keep the national and international Sea Lines Of Communications (SLOC) under surveillance

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship YARMOOK visited port Mina Salman of Bahrain and conducted bilateral exercises with friendly navies during deployment on Regional Maritime Security Patrol (RMSP). Upon arrival at port, the ship was received by senior officials of Bahrain Navy and officials of Pakistan Embassy. Later, Commanding Officer of PNS YARMOOK called on Commander Royal Bahrain Naval Force, Rear Admiral Ahmed Mohammad Ibrahim Al Bin Ali, Commander Royal Bahrain Coast Guards, Brig Saqib Qamar and other senior officials of Bahrain Navy. The Commanding Officer also visited HQ Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and called on Dy Commander



CMF, Commodore Mark Anderson. During the interactions, professional matters of mutual interests were discussed and enhancement of bilateral ties in all spheres was re-affirmed. During stay at port Mina Salman, Ambassador of Pakistan to Bahrain, Commander Maritime Coalition Forces, officials of Bahrain Navy, prominent businessmen, notables from Pakistani community, a large number of diplomats and Defence Attaché of friendly countries visited PNS YARMOOK. Various activities; including exchange visits on-board ships and orientation visits of military installations were also undertaken. Upon culmination of port visit, PNS YARMOOK conducted bilateral exercises with Royal Bahrain Navy Ship AL-MANAMA, US Ship

DANIEL INOUE and Japanese Maritime Self Defence (JMSDF) Ship, JS SAMIDARE. The exercises were aimed to develop synergy and mutual understanding among partner Navies while rehearsing interoperability to undertake joint operations in the region. Pakistan Navy is maintaining permanent presence in the Indian Ocean to keep the national and international Sea Lines Of Communications (SLOC) under surveillance. Pakistan Navy (PN) believes in collaborative efforts for maintenance of rule-based order at sea. PN actively collaborates with regional and international partners deployed in Indian Ocean to counter piracy and to undertake anti-narcotics operations for protecting global common interests. —APP

Briefs

Pemra chief calls on President Zardari

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) Chairman Muhammad Saleem called President Asif Ali Zardari at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. According to a press release, Saleem presented PEMRA Report 2021-23 to the president. Speaking on the occasion, Asif Ali Zardari stressed the need to discourage the spread of fake news and disinformation by promoting a culture of fact-checking and verifying information. He said the media should uphold the highest standards of journalism and promote tolerance, unity and ethical values in society. He said that modern communication technologies had opened up new challenges and the media was required to play a responsible and constructive role in shaping public opinion. A code of conduct regarding the spread of misinformation and propaganda should be observed, he further stressed. President Zardari also laid stress on building the capacity of Pemra by adopting modern tools and technologies and building a pool of talented human resources. He opined that the media should also raise awareness about socio-economic issues, besides promoting a soft image of the country. The Pemra chairman of briefed the president about the role and performance of the authority in the regulation and development of the media.

Defence ministry denies military interference in Adiala Jail

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has informed the Islamabad High Court (IHC) that the Ministry of Defence has strongly denied allegations of military interference in allowing visitors to meet the PTI founder, Imran Khan, at Adiala Jail. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq has directed that the Defence Ministry's letter be made part of the court record. Chief Justice Farooq presided over the hearing regarding the PTI founder's request for unobstructed meetings with his lawyers. The petition sought to prevent alleged interference by military officers, specifically majors and colonels, in the visitation process at Adiala Jail. "This case concerns military interference at Adiala Jail," stated advocate Shoaib Shaheen. Chief Justice Farooq inquired if the Defence Ministry's report had been received. The Deputy Attorney General responded that the ministry has termed the PTI founder's allegation as baseless. Advocate Shaheen noted that a copy of the Defence Ministry's letter had not been included in the court record.

CPSC roundtable emphasizes Pak-ASEAN strategic interests

H.E. Col. (Retd) Pengiran Haji Kamal Bashah Bin Pengiran Haji Ahmad, Chairman ACI and High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam to Pakistan, highlighted the bloc's commitment to stability, mutual cooperation, diversity, and inclusivity

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a roundtable titled "Pakistan and ASEAN: A Growing Partnership," as part of commemoration of ASEAN Day (8 August). The distinguished speakers included Heads of Missions of ASEAN member states in Islamabad and Pakistan's Heads of Missions in ASEAN capitals. Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Additional Secretary (Asia Pacific), MoFA, was the Chief Guest. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI, made remarks at the event, whereas Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director CPSC, moderated the session. Prominent civil servants, diplomats, academicians, civil society members, and media personnel attended the event. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasized the growing partnership between Pakistan and ASEAN, highlighting the collaborative efforts with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI). He acknowledged the leadership of ACI, which is presently chaired by H.E. Col. (Retd) Pengiran Haji Kamal Bashah Bin Pengiran Haji Ahmad and the valuable contributions of ASEAN Heads of Missions. Ambassador Mahmood underscored ASEAN's global salience, noting its economic prowess with a GDP of \$3.67 trillion and its strategic relevance in maintaining regional stability and economic integration, including through initiatives like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Ambassador Mahmood elaborated on Pakistan's historical engagement with ASEAN, being the oldest Sectoral Dialogue Partner. He highlighted the expanding scope of collaboration, including trade, counter-terrorism, security, and



people-to-people exchanges, with bilateral trade reaching nearly \$11 billion in 2022. Emphasizing the need for accelerated progress, he pointed to the importance of implementing Practical Cooperation Areas (PCA) and exploring linkages with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He also stressed the importance of moving towards graduating the Sectoral Dialogue to Full Dialogue Partnership. Lastly, Ambassador Mahmood reiterated ISSI's commitment to reinforcing efforts for strengthening Pakistan-ASEAN relations through ongoing ISSI-ACI dialogue, the 'ASEAN Corner', and ISSI-ASEAN think-tank network, fostering deeper ties for mutual prosperity and regional stability. H.E. Col.

(Retd) Pengiran Haji Kamal Bashah Bin Pengiran Haji Ahmad, Chairman ACI and High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam, highlighted the bloc's commitment to stability, mutual cooperation, diversity, and inclusivity, which have been instrumental in fostering a resilient region. Ambassador Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, High Commissioner of Malaysia, emphasized the robust bilateral trade that has reached \$1.5 billion in 2023-24. In her remarks, Ambassador Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, the Philippine Ambassador to Pakistan, highlighted severe impact of climate change on both the Philippines and Pakistan, advocating for robust climate action with ASEAN's support. Ambassador Wunna Han,

Republic of the Union of Myanmar, stressed the strong and multifaceted relationship between Pakistan and ASEAN member states that includes collaboration in areas such as education, religion, cultural exchanges and regional cooperation. Ambassador Pham Anh Tuan of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam underlined long-standing relations between ASEAN and Pakistan including in areas of mutual interest such as politics, culture, science, technology and education. Charge d' Affaires of the Republic of Indonesia, Rahmat Hindaarti Kusuma, and Ms. Kamolawan Sripolis, Charge d' Affaires of the Kingdom of Thailand, also spoke about growing Pakistan and ASEAN relations.

Shariat court releases murder convict

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Shariat Appellate bench on Wednesday released a murder convict after 27 years. The order was issued based on consent between the two parties. Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isahild bench of the Supreme Court also apologised for the delay in the delivery of justice. Muhammad Akram, a resident of Khanewal, was arrested in the murder case on 13 April 1997. The petitioner's lawyer during the hearing of the appeal said that an agreement has been reached between the criminal and the relatives of the deceased. Moreover, he said that the criminal also faced sentence. According to the order, an agreement was reached between the criminal and the heirs in 2018, but the court was not provided adequate assistance. The chief justice said the criminal has to spend so many years in jail. He referred to decisions in favour of acquittal based on consent while in some decisions punishment was awarded on the basis of consent. The chief justice further said that the court would decide the rules on this issue in another case.

Punjab govt requests military, rangers help

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: To ensure the peaceful observance of Chehlum of Imam Hussain (PBUH), the Punjab Home Department has requested the services of the army and Rangers. According to the Punjab Home Department, law-enforcement agencies will be deployed to ensure a peaceful Chehlum. The services of the army and Rangers have been requested from 17th to 27th of Safar-ul-Muzaffar, based on the needs of districts. The Punjab government has decided to deploy army and Rangers units in Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Gujrat, Attock, Jhelum, Chakwal, Sargodha, Khushab, and Bhakkar, as well as in Multan, Jhang, Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh, Layyah, and Bahawalpur. The army and Rangers have been called upon to assist the Punjab police with security for the Chehlum of Imam Hussain on the request of the Punjab police.

Accountability institution needs accountability: Shahid Khaqan

Suggested PTI to follow the constitution

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Awaam Pakistan Party Convener and former PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi lambasted National Accountability Bureau (NAB), claiming that Pakistan was such a state where the accountability institution itself needed accountability as it was corrupt. Talking to media outside Karachi's accountability court, he shared his ordeal in the justice system, his case was proceeding for four years and he was appearing on the 30th case hearing with no development in the case. He raised the question of accountability, saying who would give a response to him on who made cases against him and why made it, however, everyone was accusing others for cases against me. He stated that cases were being made on political grounds by NAB and alleged that NAB officers were making billions. Khaqan reiterated that NAB would be politicised against anyone and this institution would halt the running of state affairs. Talking about the issues of independent power producers (IPPs), he stated that investment and fuel in power plants was made in dollars and government policies on IPPs were inconsistent. He also shared the grievances of the public faced by overinflated electricity bills due to agreements with IPPs. He demanded transparency and accountability from the government on IPPs to expose agreements, who were the owners of power plants, and which rates were decided. However, he asserted that commission formation on the issues of IPPs wouldn't be sufficient as there was no transparency instead it would exacerbate inflation. He also gave the reference to K-Electric which was privatised and ran its affairs independently, however K-Electric created problems itself. Citing the situation of Bangladesh, the ex-PM also warned about the public outrage and advised to learn a lesson from it, saying, the constitution was violated and public opinion was disregarded in Bangladesh, and the political situation in Pakistan was moving towards that direction. Shahid Khaqan also suggested PTI to follow the constitution, it would be better for them and the country. He also highlighted the judicial system, stating, people would take over streets if they wouldn't get justice from courts. Earlier, ex-PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, PSO former MD Sheikh Imranul Haq and others appeared before the court pertaining to illegal recruitment of PSO MD reference against Shahid Khaqan. However, the court has adjourned the case hearing without any proceeding until August 9.

Fawad asks ECP to salvage its reputation

Politician's remarks come during appearance before ECP bench in contempt case

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry Wednesday urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to salvage its reputation by giving 41 seats of the National Assembly to his former party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). "The Election Commission should take concrete action and bring back its reputation. Give 41 seats to PTI," he said, during his appearance at the commission's headquarters in Islamabad today. The former PTI politician arrived at the ECP for the hearing - conducted by a four-member bench headed by Nisar Durrani - of the contempt case filed against him and PTI founder Imran Khan. The electoral body, in August 2022, had initiated contempt proceedings against them for insulting the commission and its chief during various public meetings, press conferences and several interviews in July 2022. According to the notice, politicians face the charges of passing unparliamentary, intemperate, and contemptuous remarks against the ECP on various occasions. Chaudhry, yet again, issued an apology to the electoral watchdog, as both he and Khan were charged with contempt for insulting the ECP and Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja. Following his request for pardon, the commission directed the politician to submit a written apology. Chaudhry was represented by his brother and lawyer Faisal Chaudhry.

Putin accuses Ukraine of 'provocation'

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin has accused Ukraine of launching "another major provocation", after defence officials said Ukrainian troops crossed into Russia's Kursk region on Tuesday. Moscow said troops, supported by 11 tanks and more than 20 armoured combat vehicles, crossed the border near the town of Sudzha, 10km (six miles) from the frontline. In televised remarks broadcast on Wednesday afternoon, Russia's Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov told President Putin that the "advance" into Kursk region had been stopped with Russian forces "continuing to destroy the adversary in areas directly adjacent to the Russian-Ukrainian border". Mr Gerasimov also said that up to 1,000 Ukrainian troops had entered the region with the aim of taking over the area around the town of Sudzha, and that Russian forces had already killed 100 men and injured another 215. Ukraine has yet to comment on the Russian allegations. Thousands of local residents have left their homes in the region, officials said. Speaking ahead of a meeting of the Security Council in Moscow, Mr Putin accused Ukrainian forces of "firing indiscriminately" at civilian buildings and residences. - Agencies

Finish ambassador meets Minister for Finance

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Finland to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Hannu Ripatti called on Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at Finance Division. The Finance Minister welcomed Ambassador Ripatti and shared updates on Pakistan's economic performance, highlighting rise in tax collection, increased remittances, and foreign exchange reserves exceeding USD 9 billion. He emphasized the positive evaluation from international credit rating agencies, which reflect the stability of Pakistan's economic environment. The Minister also discussed the successful conclusion of the 9-month SBA with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the recently finalized staff-level agreement for a 37-month IMF program. Additionally, the Minister outlined ongoing initiatives, including end-to-end digitization in the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to broaden the tax base, reforms in the energy sector, restructuring of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and focus on export-led growth. These initiatives are aimed at enhancing economic stability and promote long-term growth. The Finnish Ambassador expressed his appreciation for Pakistan's economic reforms and noted the improved fiscal situation of Finnish companies operating in Pakistan. The Minister thanked the Ambassador for Finland's con-



tinued support in the renewal of Pakistan's GSP Plus status, which benefits the country's export sector. The meeting underscored the strong bilateral relations between Pakistan and Finland, and the shared commitment to fostering economic stability and growth.



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