



Islamabad POST

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Malaysian PM pledges support for Bangladesh interim government

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Thai court dismisses PM Srettha

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Morne Morkel appointed India's bowling coach

Detailed News On Page-06



Urges nation to support govt PM Shehbaz: Good news on power prices coming soon

He also saluted Olympic hero Arshad Nadeem who won a gold medal for Pakistan in Paris Olympics and was present in the ceremony along with his mother

MAHNOOR ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday, congratulating the nation on the 78th Pakistan Independence Day, urged the people especially the youth to support the government in its efforts to make the country, prosperous, stable and peaceful. He said the youth were the bright future of the country who could play their role in the country's development. "The next few years are crucial for you and the country, so only focus on your studies and attaining skilled-based education, and do not indulge yourself in the negative agenda of the enemy who is out to target you and utilize your capabilities in anti-state activities," he asked the youth while addressing a ceremony held here in connection with the independence day celebrations. Unfortunately, he said the enemy was now using digital terrorism tools to sabotage the country's development journey. On the occasion of the Independence Day, the prime minister extended his heartfelt felicitations to the people of Pakistan and paid homage to the immense sacrifices of forefathers and countless unsung heroes of the Pakistan Movement, who fought tirelessly for an independent country for millions in South Asia, where they could live according to their beliefs and values. As envisioned by Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Pakistan emerged as an independent and sovereign state on the map of the world on 14th August 1947 through the unwavering and steadfast leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and unmatched sacrifices of our ancestors, he added. The prime minister highlighted that although during the past 77 years, the country's journey had not been exemplary but it was also the fact that it managed to

survive due to the resilience, its people had shown through natural disasters and economic and social challenges. "We should learn from our past and move forward with the renewed pledge and resolve to take the country on the path of prosperity and development," he added. He said although, today, the people were much worried about inflation, electricity bills, unemployment and other issues, but he was very concerned about providing maximum relief to the people. On the occasion, he also paid tribute to the people belonging to various sectors including sports, education, health, etc. He also saluted Olympic hero Arshad Nadeem who won a gold medal for Pakistan in Paris Olympics and was present in the ceremony along with his mother. The prime minister resolved that in order to fulfill the dream of Quid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, he would continue hard work for the country's development. He said that currently electricity bills was the biggest concern of everybody and without reducing the electricity tariffs, Pakistan's industry, agriculture, and exports could not grow. "The government is working day and night to resolve this issue," he said assuring that in few days the government will give the nation a good news of significant cut in electricity tariffs. Furthermore, he said that he would address the nation in few days in which he would present a five-years economic plan of the country. PM Shehbaz Sharif, on the occasion, also condemned the ongoing Israeli barbarism on the Palestinians saying that the "massacre of thousands of innocent Palestinians has diminished our pleasures on the occasion of independence day". Similarly, he also expressed the government's resolve to stand by the Kashmiri brothers and sisters until the resolution of the issue according to the will of the people of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K).



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif with the singers and students who performed at the Independence Day event. – DNA

Indian army captain killed in IIOJK

The fighting comes as the region prepares for the expected announcement of the first local assembly elections

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Soldiers in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir battled unidentified attackers on Wednesday, the army said, with a captain killed in clashes in the disputed territory. The Indian army, in a post on social media platform X, offered its "deepest condolences" over the death of the officer. The violence is the latest in a string of clashes in the Hindu-dominated southern Jammu region this year. Gunbattles erupted last Tuesday in forests near the tourist resort of Patni Top and local media reported a civilian and a suspected attacker were also wounded. Muslim-majority Kashmir has been divided between India

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CM KP announces Rs 5 million for Arshad

"We'll invite Arshad Nadeem to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to impart the training of javelin throw to our youth," the CM said

DNA

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Wednesday announced Rs5 million for Olympian gold medalist Arshad Nadeem. Addressing an event, he said that the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is promoting the sports activities in the province. "There is a need to bring our youth closer to sports instead of drugs," said the chief minister. The chief minister added that he will give prize money to the star athlete from his

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Vows to deepen ties with Pak Secy Blinken felicitates Pakistanis celebrating Independence Day

"We look forward to continuing a partnership that makes both countries more secure, as we strengthen our shared commitment to democratic principles and respect for the rule of law," he said

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has extended felicitations to the people of Pakistan on the occasion of country's 78th Independence Day on Wednesday. In a statement, Secretary Blinken stated that for the past 77 years, the ties between the peoples of the two countries had served as the foundation of their bilateral relationship. "In the year ahead, we will deepen the US-Pakistan partnership and expand our people-to-people ties to build a more prosperous future for both our nations," he added. "We look forward to continuing a partnership that makes both countries more secure, as we strengthen our shared commitment to democratic principles and respect for the rule of law," he said and added "I wish all those celebrating today – in Pakistan, the United States, and across the world – a joyous Independence Day." In a video message, US Senator Van Hollen said, "Hi, I'm Chris Van Hollen and I'm proud to represent the great state of Maryland in the United States Senate. And I'm very pleased to join all of you in celebrating Pakistan's Independence Day. "Over the past 77 years, the people of the United States and the people of Pakistan have built strong bonds of friendship. And I look forward to doing my part to continue to strengthen our relationship.

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PTA head summoned over social media disruption in Pakistan

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly's Standing Committee on IT has sought an explanation from the Chairman of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Hafiz Rehman, regarding the ongoing nationwide social media disruption. As per details, the committee, chaired by Amin ul Haq, has asked Rehman to provide reasons for the disruption in social media services. The committee has also requested details about the nationwide internet service disruption and weak mobile signals. The Attorney General of Pakistan has also been invited to the committee's meeting, scheduled for August 21 at the Parliament House. It is pertinent to mention here that internet services are currently down across Pakistan, with the exact cause of the disruption yet to be identified. Preliminary reports suggested that the disruption is likely linked to international traffic rather than the local network. Notably, Meta platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram,

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Adiala Jail deputy superintendent arrested Muhammad Akram faces charges of acting as a messenger of PTI founder, say sources

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Adiala Jail's deputy superintendent Muhammad Akram has been taken into custody on charges of aiding incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, sources told DNA on Wednesday. Akram was re-

moved from his post on June 20, while Deputy Superintendent Judicial Tahir Siddique Shah replaced him as security supervisor of PTI founder Imran Khan. The Punjab home department (prison section), through a notification, had removed Muhammad Akram, directing him to leave the charge and report to the Prisons Department, Lahore.

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Briefs

Rulers deviated from ideology of Pakistan

We couldn't reach our destination during last 77 years: JI emir

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Hafiz Naeem Rehman said that we couldn't reach our destination during last 77 years. In his statement on the Independence Day, Hafiz Naeem said that our rulers deviated from the ideology of Pakistan and two-nation theory. He added that Pakistan has lot of challenges but our rulers lack the vision to run the country. "There is a need to remind our children the sacrifices rendered by our elders for this homeland," said the JI emir. Hafiz Naeem said that our rulers are distributing laptops in the name of promoting IT.

'Curse of terrorism to end soon'

CM Shah expressed fever over martyrdom of four FC personnel in South Waziristan

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah expressed fever over the martyrdom of four FC personnel in South Waziristan. The Chief Minister prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured and expressed his condolences to the families of the martyrs. Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said that Pakistan is going through the most sensitive situation and at this time the nation needs to be united. He said that endless sacrifices have been made for the stability of the country. CM Shah said that he was sure that they would end the curse of terrorism and move the country towards prosperity.

No place of violence

Theory of disgruntled individuals holds no significance: DPM Dar

"Pak will become the fortress of Islamic nations so that every individual can lead a peaceful and prosperous life"

DNA

QUETTA: Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday asserted that there was no place for violence in the country, nor does the theory of disgruntled individuals hold any significance. "Pakistan will become the fortress of Islamic nations so that every individual can lead a peaceful and prosperous life." He made these remarks while addressing a flag-hoisting ceremony at the lawn of the Balochistan Assembly in connection with the country's 77th Independence Day. The event was attended by National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Balochistan Assembly Speaker Captain @Abdul Khaliq Achakzai, provincial ministers, advisors, parliamentary secretaries, Chief Secretary Balochistan,

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PTI announces public gatherings in three major cities

SHAMIM SHAHID

BUNER: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Wednesday announced that it will hold public gatherings in three major cities. Addressing a flag-hoisting ceremony at the DC Office Buner, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said that the party will be holding public gatherings in three major cities including Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi. He said that the PTI will hold rallies in the three major cities after their power show in Swabi.

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President confers national awards on 104 Pakistanis, foreigners

Nishan-e-Pakistan to be posthumously awarded to former PM Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for his public services; Pakistan hockey team captain also gets award

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday announced the conferment of Pakistan's national awards on 104 Pakistanis and foreigners, in recognition of their services, excellence, and sacrifices in their respective fields. The awards were announced on Pakistan's 77th Independence Day which will be presented to the awardees at an investiture ceremony on March 23, 2025. The president conferred the awards to individuals in the fields including science and engineering, education, medicine, arts, literature, sports, social services and philanthropy, entrepreneurs, taxpayers and exporters, public service, gallantry, and services to Pakistan. The president conferred Nishan-e-Pakistan award on the former

president and prime minister of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in recognition of his public services. He announced Hilal-e-Imtiaz award for Olympian Arshad Nadeem, who recently bagged a gold medal in Paris Olympics and Sitara-e-Imtiaz for mountaineer Murad Sadpara in the sports category. President Zardari conferred Nishan-e-Imtiaz posthumously on late Nasir Kazmi for services in the field of literature and Hilal-e-Pakistan on Saudi Prince Abdulaziz Bin Salman Al Saud for his services to Pakistan. He announced Nishan-e-Khidmat for Sultan Ali Allana, the chairman of Habib Bank Limited, in recognition of his public services. In recognition of their excellence in the fields of science, the president conferred Hilal-e-Imtiaz on Aamir Hafeez

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President of JazzCash, joins Forbes Finance Council

ISLAMABAD: President of JazzCash, Pakistan's largest fintech platform, Murtaza Ali, has been accepted into the Forbes Finance Council, the foremost community of financial services professionals worldwide. Murtaza's selection to the Council comes as recognition of his outstanding performance in the fintech and telecommunications sectors said a news release. With over 25 years of experience, Murtaza has consistently demonstrated his ability to drive business growth and innovation. His leadership at JazzCash, a joint venture between Jazz and Mobilink Microfinance Bank and part of the VEON Group, has been instrumental in transforming the digital financial services landscape in Pakistan. As a Council member, Murtaza will have access to exclusive opportunities designed to enhance his professional influence. He will engage with other respected leaders in private forums and members-only events and share his insights as a fintech expert on Forbes.com and in Q&A panels. "It is an honor to join the Forbes Finance Council and contribute to the global conversation on fintech and digital financial inclusion," said Murtaza Ali. "At JazzCash, we are committed to bringing digital financial services to every Pakistani, especially the unbanked and underbanked. I look forward to sharing our experiences and learning from other leaders to continue driving innovation and growth in the sector."—APP

Pak Day celebrated at SNGPL office

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm at the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) Regional Office in Rawalpindi. The celebrations commenced with a Guard of Honor presented by a well-coordinated contingent of security guards. Chief Engineer Allaud Din Khan attended the flag hoisting ceremony as the chief guest. A large number of employees, including senior officials and school children, participated in the ceremony. Following the flag hoisting, Chief Engineer Allaud Din Khan, along with CBA Senior Vice President Malik Yasir and other representatives of SNGPL's employees' union, celebrated the event by cutting a cake to commemorate the victory of the Muslims of the subcontinent in securing an independent state. In his speech, Allaud Din Khan highlighted the significance of Pakistan Day, recalling the efforts and sacrifices of the Muslims of the subcontinent in their struggle for a free homeland. He reiterated that, as directed by the management, SNGPL would leave no stone unturned in strengthening Pakistan's economic sector and facilitating its valued domestic consumers. He urged all participants to make every effort to strengthen the country, making it truly an independent and self-sufficient state, he added.—APP

PODA marks 77th Independence Day with nationwide plantation drive

PODA CEO Sameena Nazir emphasized the importance of practical plantation education in schools, highlighting the need for children to understand the critical role of trees in protecting our environment amidst current climate risks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of the 77th Independence Day, PODA, supported by its Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Change Education Program and its extensive network of women leaders across the country, celebrated with an impactful plantation drive. In the series of event students, families, and youth participated enthusiastically in various cities. Prior to the Independence Day, PODA organized activities at its Islamabad office and at the PODA Climate Smart Sustainable Agriculture Farm in Chakwal. Here, volunteers and students learned to prepare seedballs of jamun, moringa, peach, and various vegetables for the transplantation drive. A key plantation event

DGSE hosts Independence Day event for special education talents

Sheikh Azhar Sajjad lauded the performances of the children, acknowledging their hard work and dedication, and extended his appreciation to the audience for their presence and support

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE) hosted a lively and inspiring function on the eve of Pakistan's 77th Independence Day, showcasing the talents and patriotism of students from various special education centers. The event, held with great enthusiasm, was graced by the presence of Syed Junaid Akhlaq, Senior Joint Secretary for the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, who served as the chief guest. The program featured a variety of performances, including passionate speeches on independence, beautifully choreographed tableaux, and spirited renditions of national songs. The enthusiasm and energy of the students brought a festive atmosphere to the celebration, reflecting their deep love for the country. Ms. Fehmida Hassan, Country Director of Christian Blind Mission (CBM), and Sheikh Azhar Sajjad, Director General



of DGSE, were among the distinguished guests in attendance. They, along with the chief guest, distributed school uniforms to the differently-abled students, further highlighting the importance of inclusivity and support for these children. In his remarks, Syed Junaid Akhlaq commended the students for their outstanding performances and honored them as the

true chief guests of the ceremony. He remarked, "This country is a gift and blessing from Allah. Our beloved country has faced challenges since its inception, which can only be overcome by adopting the principles given by Quaide-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah: unity, faith, and strength." He emphasized that by adhering to these principles in daily life, Pa-

kistan can overcome poverty, unemployment, and terrorism. He also stated that the spirit of patriotism and love for the country is just as strong among differently-abled persons as it is among others, and they have an equal role in the prosperity and progress of the nation. He called for continued support and encouragement for these students, recog-



nizing their potential to contribute meaningfully to society. Sheikh Azhar Sajjad, Director General of DGSE, expressed his gratitude to all participants and attendees in his welcoming address. He lauded the performances of the children, acknowledging their hard work and dedication, and extended his appreciation to the audience for their

presence and support. He noted, "Today is a significant day as independence is a crucial milestone in the history of nations. We must thank Allah for blessing us with an independent country to live in." He further urged that "our life and death should be for our country" and praised the differently-abled individuals who consistently strive for the progress and

well-being of Pakistan. The event concluded on a high note, with the audience applauding the vibrant and heartfelt performances. The DGSE's commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for differently-abled children was evident throughout the program, making it a memorable celebration of Pakistan's independence.

ICCI 2nd Tourism summit Air connectivity key to unlocking GB's tourism potential: speakers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador and Business leader while addressing the second Tourism Summit under the auspices of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), stressed for increasing the direct flight and modernization of tourism infrastructure in Gilgit-Baltistan for promoting tourism industry in the Province. In the summit organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), the speakers emphasized on increasing air connectivity with the countries of the world for the promotion of tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan. During their address, the speakers said that Gilgit-Baltistan has the potential of tourism including medical and cultural tourism, mining and precious stones, minerals and nat-

ural resources, hydropower, fruits and food and water resources and many other sectors. The speakers gave a plan of action for the promotion of tourism and said that for elevating tourism sector in Gilgit-Baltistan, global marketing, training of local people in the tourism and hospitality sector, environment-friendly infrastructure is necessary. In his inaugural address on this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Gilgit-Baltistan is a peaceful region, which is the most popular region for tourism in the world, where the people are hospitable and generous. He said that 65% of the total population in Gilgit-Baltistan consists of youth, for which training in the field of tourism is very important for the promotion of tourism in this region. He said that the government needs more

steps to connect Gilgit-Baltistan with the international world by land and air routes so that tourism can be developed here. He said that there is a lot of potential for adventure tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan, in which the role of famous mountaineer Sajid Sadpara and his family is very important. He said that air connectivity of Gilgit-Baltistan with the world is very important so that the fresh fruit and dried fruit here can be delivered to international markets including Central Asia, Saudi Arabia and the European Union. He said that the role of business community is very important for the promotion of tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan and public-private partnership is very important. He said that tourism, mining and precious stones sector has a lot of potential in Gilgit-Baltistan and development of modern technology in these sectors is necessary.

Flag hoisting ceremony held at Governor House

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: A dignified flag hoisting ceremony was held at the Governor's House in Peshawar on Wednesday on the occasion of Independence Day. The governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, conducted the flag hoisting ceremony. The event saw the special participation of Consul Generals from the United States of America, Iran, and Afghanistan. Provincial Assembly member Ahmad Karim Kundi, along with the staff of the Governor's House and other distinguished guests, also attended the ceremony. During the ceremony, the Consul Generals from the three countries joined Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and other attendees in chanting "Pakistan Zindabad" (Long live Pakistan). Following the flag hoisting, special prayers were offered for the country's development and prosperity. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi extended his heartfelt congratulations to the entire nation on Pa-

kistan's Independence Day. He paid tribute to the martyrs of the Pakistan Army, police, and Army Public School, expressing his gratitude. Kundi emphasized the need for peace, prosperity, and development in the province and called for collective efforts to honor the sacrifices that led to the country's independence. In his message on Independence Day, Governor Kundi congratulated the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the merged districts. He highlighted that the free nation is a result of the great sacrifices and sustained struggle of our ancestors. Kundi reaffirmed his commitment to advancing the country along the path of development in line with the principles of Quaide-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He stressed that the principles of unity, faith, and discipline are essential for securing Pakistan's rightful place among the nations. As a nation, Kundi pledged to fulfill the dreams of Pakistan's founder and work towards building a prosperous, peaceful.

Over 100,000 appeared in ambridge exams

KARACHI: Cambridge International Education today released the results of its largest-ever June exam series for Cambridge IGCSE, O Level and International AS & A Level worldwide. In Pakistan, more than 100,000 students at 683 schools sat Cambridge O Levels, IGCSEs, or International AS & A Levels., said a statement issued on Tuesday. At Cambridge O Level and IGCSE, Pakistan Studies, Islamiyat, Mathematics, English Language and Urdu as a Second Language were the most popular subjects. At Cambridge International AS & A Level, Physics, Mathematics, Business, Chemistry and Computer Science were the most popular subjects. Business overtook Chemistry this year, and Computer Science rose up the ranks to enter the top 5, replacing Economics. Rod Smith, Group Managing Director for International Education at Cambridge, congratulated students in Pakistan on their exam results and praised the dedicated teachers for their support.—APP

USAID provides health care equipments to flood-affected areas

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The United States Government, through USAID, has handed over 5,000 lady health worker kits, 90 maternal, neonatal, and child health packages, and 120 birthing stations to improve health services in eleven flood-affected districts of Sindh and Balochistan. These supplies, part of USAID's \$27.8 million investment in the health sector's flood response, will enable lady health workers and health facilities to provide better health services to more than 80,000 children and 100,000 married women of reproductive age, said a press release. The devastating floods in June

2022 severely disrupted health services in Sindh and Balochistan, affecting over 13 million people and exposing them to waterborne and vector-borne diseases. "This crisis worsened issues in routine immunization, maternal health, and child malnutrition. In response, USAID and its partners assessed health commodity needs in the hardest-hit districts and identified critical shortages. The commodities delivered during the handover reflect the needs of these communities and align with national priorities. Speaking at the handover ceremony, USAID Mission Director Kate Somvongsiri emphasized the long-term impact of this assistance. "The donation of \$2.3 million in equipment

marks a significant investment in strengthening the health resilience of flood-affected communities in Sindh and Balochistan." "By enhancing health service delivery and ensuring the availability of essential commodities, we can save lives and build resilience against future crises," remarked Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath, Coordinator to Prime Minister, MoNHS-RC. Speaking on the occasion Minister for Health and Population Sindh Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho said that this assistance has been pivotal in improving Pakistan's health system's capacity to respond to public health emergencies and ensure continuity of essential health services.

PPAF organizes free medical camp in Upper Kohistan

ISLAMABAD: To mark the Independence Day celebrations, the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) in partnership with Saik Development Foundation (SDF) Wednesday organized a free medical camp at the Basic Health Unit (BHU) in Jalkot, Upper Kohistan. The camp has been organized as part of the ongoing Pakistan Independence Day campaign in collaboration with the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and Paigham-e-Pakistan. The camp provided medical services to 200 patients, with free medicines distributed to all. A team of medical specialists, including MBBS doctors and technicians, ensured the provision of quality care.—APP

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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

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Monal.....0334-5421812



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Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
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MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
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RGH.....9290301-7
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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ISSI celebrates Independence Day under theme “Mera Pakistan”

The singing of patriotic songs by the young Interns filled the atmosphere with a distinct sense of unity and pride. Their performances were met with deep appreciation, reflecting the collective national spirit that defines Independence Day celebrations in Pakistan

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) marked Pakistan's Independence Day with a vibrant celebration under the theme “Mera Pakistan.” The event, held at the ISSI was a tribute to the rich diversity, cultural heritage, and indomitable spirit of the Pakistani people. With the active participation of ISSI Interns, the festivities were imbued with youthful energy, creativity, and an unshakable belief in Pakistan's progress and prosperity. The Interns presented a series of short videos, delivered passionate speeches, and performed milligram (national songs). The videos depicted the multifaceted identity of Pakistan, highlighting the cultural richness of various regions across the country. The celebration also highlighted the vital role of women in the nation's progress and paid homage to important personalities who have played a pivotal part in shaping Pakistan's history. It was also emphasised that the Independence Day reminded us of the just struggle of the Kashmiri people and that Pakistan will remain in abid-



ing solidarity with them until they realised their inalienable right to self-determination. The singing of patriotic songs by the young Interns filled the atmosphere with a distinct sense of unity and pride. Their performances were met with deep appreciation, reflecting the collective national spirit that defines Independence Day celebrations in Pakistan. Director General of ISSI, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his address, extended heartfelt congratulations

on the occasion of Pakistan's Independence Day. He commended the Interns for their creative contributions and the meaningful content they produced. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood also took the opportunity to share a historical perspective on the Pakistan movement, especially the rationale for the demand for a separate homeland for Muslims in the subcontinent. In this regard, he particularly highlighted the role of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Allama

Mohammad Iqbal, and Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. All these leaders initially started as proponents of Hindu-Muslim unity but eventually changed their views after the majority community's rigid and inflexible attitude. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood stressed that the Independence Day was both a youm-e-tashakkur (Day of thanks-giving) and youm-e-tajdeed-e-ehad (Day of renewing pledge). Thanking the founding fathers for their courage, wis-

dom and foresight as well as the martyrs for their invaluable sacrifices, and renewing the pledge to build Pakistan according to the Quaid's vision. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasised the importance of hope and resilience, stressing that despite the challenges Pakistan has faced, the nation has tenaciously moved forward and made relentless efforts to realise its fullest potential. He noted that Arshad Nadeem's remarkable achievement in the Paris Olympics testified to this spirit, which had made the Independence Day celebrations that much more cherished. Chairman BoG, ISSI, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, lauded the efforts of young participants and shared his thoughts on the Pakistan movement and Pakistan's history since Independence. This was followed by a cake-cutting ceremony in which the research faculty, staff and Interns participated. The ISSI Independence Day celebration concluded with a renewed sense of patriotism and a collective resolve to contribute towards the development of Pakistan in all domains. The event was a fitting tribute to the nation's history and a hopeful look towards its future.

Ethiopian Ambassador felicitates Pakistani nation on Independence Day

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Envoy and Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula on Wednesday felicitated the Government and people of Pakistan on their 77th year of Independence. He says the past years were a testament to the growing bilateral relations between the two countries. The Ambassador has been deeply impressed by its impressive history, rich culture and heritage and on top of that its remarkable people who achieved brilliance in every walks of life ranging from science and technology to politics, diplomacy and sports, a reflection of which has been witnessed a couple of days back in Paris 2024 Olympics with one of its heroes Arshad Nadeem bringing gold medal to this nation. “The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan are two brotherly



nations and share a strong brotherly bond which is deeply rooted in shared history, cultural and political values and common goals of development and prosperity,” he remarked.

The Ambassador expressed gratitude to the Government and people of Pakistan for their warm hospitality and camaraderie extended to him and his team during his stay in this country. “The exchange of knowledge, experiences, and appreciation of each other's cuisine and culture has been an enlightening journey for me, so far. Pakistanis are a lovely nation, and I am grateful for the friendship and cooperation extended to my country in the areas of politics, economy, science and technology and climate change,” the Ambassador noted. He assured that the Government of Ethiopia is committed to further strengthening and deepening the bilateral relations between the two countries. “By taking special initiatives and fostering robust cooperation in various fields, we can propel our nations towards a new era of enhanced partnership and mutual prosperity,” he added.

AIOU celebrates Independence Day with patriotic fervor

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on Wednesday marked Pakistan's Independence Day with enthusiasm and national pride. The celebration commenced with a Guard of Honor presented to Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, by a well-coordinated contingent of the university's security guards. Following the Guard of Honor, the Vice-Chancellor hoisted the national flag to the tune of the national anthem, accompanied by collective prayers for the stability and prosperity of the country. The event also featured a seminar titled “August 14: Day of Renewed Commitment,” organized by the Department of History in collaboration with the Directorate of Student Advisory and Counselling Services. In his address, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood emphasized the importance of adhering to the principles of Quaid-e-Azam to make Pakistan a beacon of peace and progress. He urged the youth to channel their passion towards the country's development, stating that nations progress when their youth are determined to move forward. Speakers at the seminar included AIOU Registrar, Raja Umar Younas, Director General of Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqeer Ahmed Khan, Chairperson of the History Department, Dr. Kishwar Sultana, and Senior Faculty Member, Dr. Abdul Basit Mujahid. They called for a renewed commitment to realizing the dreams of Pakistan's founders and working for the nation's progress with unity and discipline. The celebration concluded with the Vice-Chancellor cutting an Independence Day cake alongside participants and children, who enthusiastically chanted slogans of “Pakistan Zindabad” (Long Live Pakistan).—DNA

Mohsin congratulates nation on Independence Day

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi has extended heartfelt congratulations to the nation on the eve of Independence Day. He said, “we are grateful to Allah Almighty that we are living in a free homeland. He said that we must learn the value of freedom from the enslaved nations.” He emphasized that we must appreciate the true value and dignity of our free homeland. He also highlighted that millions of Muslims sacrificed their blood to light the flames of freedom. He paid rich tribute to the unparalleled sacrifices of those who were martyred in the Pakistan Movement. He also honoured the great sacrifices of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the peace of the homeland.—APP

AJK celebrates Pak Independence Day

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on Wednesday celebrated Pakistan's 77th Independence Day with traditional national fervor, renewing the pledge to continue the struggle for self-determination and freedom for the entire Jammu and Kashmir state to accede to Pakistan. According to APP Correspondent, National flag hoisting ceremonies marked the day, with AJK Ehtesab Court Judge Raja Faisal Majeed Khan hoisting flags at the AJK High Court building. Similar ceremonies were held across the district with enthusiastic participation from the public including children. District and Session Judge Raja Ather Ali Khan, senior officers and members of the legal fraternity attended the ceremonies. A colorful ceremony was also held at the Municipal Corporation lawn where District Council Chairman Raja Naveed Akhter and others hoisted flags. A grand tree plantation ceremony was held at the Mirpur Municipal Corporation lawns where local dignitaries planted saplings to mark the occasion. Speakers emphasized that Pakistan is incomplete without Kashmir and felicitated the people of Pakistan and AJK on this historic day. Various social, political and public representative organizations hosted special meetings across AJK to celebrate Jashan-e-Azadi-e-Pakistan with enthusiasm and devotion.—APP

CASS unveils untold, unseen of Quaid-e-Azam legacy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted an enlightening guest lecture on 13 August 2024, exploring the untold and unseen dimensions of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's life and leader-

ship. The event focused on the lesser-known aspects of the legacy of Pakistan's founding father. Wing Commander Amir Qayyum, Deputy Director of Research at CASS, Lahore, delivered the introductory remarks, emphasising the importance of understanding the intricate layers of Mr Jinnah's character to fully

appreciate his monumental contributions to the nation. Air Commodore Khalid Chishti (Retd), a distinguished authority on Quaid-e-Azam's legacy, delivered the guest lecture. His presentation provided fresh perspectives on the early life, legal career, and political journey of the nation's founder, uncovering less-

er-known facets of Quaid-e-Azam's life. He also delved into the principles upheld by Mr Jinnah and highlighted the key characteristics of his multifaceted personality that empowered him to lead the struggle for an independent Pakistan. In the end, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President of CASS, Lahore, delivered the closing remarks, extending gratitude to Air Commodore Chishti (Retd) for his illuminating presentation. He expressed his deep admiration for Mr Jinnah's steadfast principles, tireless work ethic, and visionary outlook, emphasising that his legacy stands as a powerful reminder of the values of unity, faith, and discipline. The guest lecture was attended by scholars, members of the academic community and Pakistan Air Force (PAF) officers who praised the speaker's contribution to a deeper understanding of Mr Jinnah's enduring legacy.



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Briefs

Federal Minister urges unity

ISLAMABAD: On Pakistan's 77th Independence Day, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh called for unity and collective effort to drive the nation's progress. During the 77th Independence Day celebrations, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh highlighted the importance of freedom and the sacrifices made by the country's founders in establishing the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. On the occasion, he emphasized the need for all citizens to put aside their differences and work together for the development, stability, and security of the nation. Sheikh reaffirmed his commitment to following the guiding principles of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, pledging to perform his duties with honesty and integrity for the betterment of Pakistan. —APP

NDMA warns depts concerned as monsoon rains expected

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Wednesday urged all relevant authorities and the public to take necessary precautions to mitigate the potential impacts of flooding and landslides as National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) of the NDMA anticipated further rains in various parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from August 14-18. Moderate to heavy rains are expected in Hazara, Malakand Division, Peshawar, Bannu, DI Khan, Hangu, Haripur, Kohat, Kurram, Lucky Marwat, Mohmand, Orakzai and Waziristan areas, a news release said. "Rain may cause urban flooding in various cities and flash flooding in hilly areas, flow of water in the streams and nullahs is also expected to increase," the NDMA said. The NDMA issued instructions to all relevant departments to alert Emergency Response Teams and mobilized resources to ensure a swift response to any arising situations. —APP

NUST observes Independence Day

ISLAMABAD: National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) observed Pakistan's Independence Day with patriotic zeal and enthusiasm. In a celebratory event held at the university's main campus, the chief guest Maj Gen Dr. Saeed ur Rehman Sarwar HI (M), DG Projects NUST, hoisted the green and white flag in the presence of an overwhelming number of NUST students, and families of faculty and staff. Children from the NUST community, with their captivating speeches and rendition of national songs, paid glowing tribute to the forefathers for their immeasurable sacrifices to make Pakistan a reality. The chief guest, in his insightful speech, encouraged every member of the society to contribute to nation building in their respective roles. —APP

China and Pakistan join hands in flaxseed to reduce oil imports

ISLAMABAD, Aug. 14 (): China and Pakistan have joined hands to enhance production of flaxseed that will help reducing oil imports, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday. Recently, the newly-unveiled Flax Study Research and Innovation Hub between China and Pakistan by Gansu Academy of Agricultural Sciences (GAAS) and Sindh Agriculture University, Tandojam (SAU) is expanding the horizons of agricultural cooperation between the two countries. The two sides are working together on variety selection and breeding, planting technology improvement, etc., aiming to reduce both countries' dependence on imports when it comes to edible oil. "Pakistan is one of the largest importers of edible oil across the globe,

Ahsan Iqbal urges unity, consistent policies on I Day

He stressed the need for rejecting extremism, policy inconsistency and any other factors that impeded national development and prosperity. "Let Pakistan grow

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday called upon the nation to demonstrate greater unity and steadfastness to ensure sustained development through consistent policies. "Let us pledge to advance Pakistan's development with a continuity of policies and commit to avoiding any compromise on it," he said in a message marking the 77th Independence Day. He stressed the need for rejecting extremism, policy inconsistency and any other factors that impeded national development and prosperity. "Let Pakistan grow," he urged. The minister noted that achieving development goals would require peace, stabil-

ity, uninterrupted policy continuity and ongoing reforms. "We envision a Pakistan where education, development, and employment opportunities are accessible to all, without discrimination," he said. He highlighted that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government was working to foster an investment-friendly environment conducive to business growth, innovation and ample employment opportunities. "We aim for Pakistan to gain prominent recognition and a leading position in global competition through our quality, productivity and innovation," he elaborated. Ahsan Iqbal reiterated the PML-N government's commitment to elevating Pakistan's standing among the nations and aligning it with leading



countries in the development race. Reflecting on the past, he recalled that the founding fathers of Pakistan established an Islamic state with principles of passion, determination, unity and faith, making significant sacrifices. The minister pointed out

the persistent internal, regional and global challenges. Among these, he identified stabilizing the economy and achieving development goals as the most pressing. He lamented that political instability, inconsistent policies, disruptions in the democratic process, extremism and terrorism had hindered development progress in the past. He noted that countries that gained independence after Pakistan have advanced significantly in development. "However, I am pleased to note that Pakistan now has a government that comprehends the economic, social and institutional needs of the country and is supported by a team of seasoned experts," he remarked. Meanwhile, Minister for Industries, Production and National Food Security Rana

Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday urged for collective efforts towards achieving a prosperous, peaceful and united Pakistan. Felicitating the nation on the country's Independence Day, he emphasized the crucial role of the youth in driving Pakistan's progress, urging them to harness their potential and contribute to the country's growth through their tireless efforts and unwavering commitment. He stressed that Pakistan was earned through the immense sacrifices and tireless efforts of our forefathers. "We pay tribute to the sacrifices of our forefathers," he remarked. He said, "We must work together to become a brave nation that stands tall against current challenges and builds a bright future for our beloved country."

Ishaq Dar inaugurates NADRA's new registration centers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday inaugurated 21 new NADRA registration centers and six new mobile registration vehicles in Balochistan during a ceremony held at CM Secretariat here. National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti, provincial ministers, parliamentary secretaries, assembly members, NADRA officials, were also present. Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar expressed satisfaction with the provision of new NADRA registration centers and MRVs in the province. He instructed federal institutions to fully cooperate with the provincial government in providing services to the remote areas of Balochistan. Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, on the occasion hoped that the establishment of new registration centers in 21 tehsils of Balochistan's remote areas would facilitate the public in obtaining registration and identity cards.

Taraar grieved over demise of senior journalist Akhlaq Bajwa

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Taraar on Wednesday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of senior journalist Akhlaq Ahmed Bajwa. The minister expressed his heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the family of the deceased. "Late Akhlaq Ahmad Bajwa rendered valuable services in the field of journalism," he said adding the vacuum created in journalism due to his death cannot be filled. Attaullah Taraar said, "The journalistic services of the deceased will always be remembered." He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan Irena Gancheva posing for a picture on the occasion of the 77th Independence Day of Pakistan.— DNA

Senator Talal congratulates nation

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, Senator Talal Chaudhry congratulated the nation and paid glowing tributes to the visionary founders of Pakistan and the brave martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country's freedom. Talking to a Private news channel, he emphasized the need for collective efforts and a shared sense of purpose and reiterated his commitment to building a prosperous Pakistan, urging all citizens to work together towards a brighter future. He called on the government, opposition, and citizens to put aside their differences and work together towards a common goal. He said that because of the untiring struggle and sacrifices of our forefathers, today we are breathing in a free country. He said the purpose of celebrating Independence Day was to reaffirm the commitment to the country's prosperity, development, and peace. Senator Talal

vowed to work tirelessly towards creating a brighter future for all Pakistanis, where every citizen has access to equal opportunities, resources, and services. He urged the nation to rekindle the same spirit of unity, determination, and perseverance that characterized the Pakistan Movement. "We must renew our commitment to the ideals of our founding fathers, who fought for a separate homeland where Muslims could live with dignity and freedom," he said. He further stressed that the development and progress of Pakistan is a collective responsibility, requiring the efforts of every citizen, institution, and government. "We must work together to address the challenges facing our country, including economic disparities, social injustices, and political polarization," Senator Talal said. "By doing so, we can build a prosperous Pakistan that is just, equitable, and prosperous for all," he added. —APP

Cake designers make Pakistan's birthday sweeter

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan marks its birthday today, the sweet aroma of patriotism wafts through the air where confectionery artists across the country were seen busy in crafting masterpieces with cake designs that reflect the nation's spirit, making the occasion even more unforgettable. Cake shops across the country are witnessing a surge in demand for custom cakes. From Lahore to Karachi, and Islamabad to Peshawar cake shops are working overtime to meet the orders, said a report aired by a Private news channel. Cake cutting ceremonies have become an integral part of Independence Day celebrations, said Hassan, an event organizer. It is a way to show unity, solidarity and cakes are the perfect centerpiece, he added. Cake shops are also offering special discounts and packages for Independence Day, said a customer. "I ordered a cake for my family gathering and got a great deal", she added. The boom in cake shops and cake cutting ceremonies is not just limited to major cities. Even small towns and villages are getting in on the action, with local bakeries and sweet shops offering their own special Independence day treats, said a cake seller. Cakes are a big part of our celebrations, and this year we wanted to do something special, said Ali, a local resident who ordered a custom cake for his workplace celebration. The attention to detail is impressive, said Sarah, a customer who ordered a cake for her family gathering. The cake designer incorporated the Pakistani flag's colors and even added a small edible Quaid-e-Azam portrait, she added. Cake cutting ceremonies are a wonderful way to boost morale and foster a sense of unity among our team members, said a government employee. Cake cutting ceremonies remind us of the sacrifices made by our forefathers and the importance of protecting our nation's freedom, said a teacher. "We make it a point to hold a cake cutting ceremony every year on Independence day to celebrate our nation's freedom and sovereignty", said a banker while attending a ceremony. "Cake cutting ceremonies are an excellent way to involve our families and loved ones in our Independence day celebrations," said a student.—DNA



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Tactical calculations shaping ME security

YEARS of experience have taught me to be cautious about two events that invariably dominate the news: a US presidential election year, and major global sports events, such as the World Cup and the Olympics, which capture public attention for about a month. This year, we have a US presidential election and have just had the Paris Olympics. Since Oct. 7, a series of major events has unfolded rapidly, with significant consequences, but no real efforts or strategic plans to resolve them. In the Middle East, it seems the region's players and their regional backers are moving without clear direction. Their actions are mostly tactical, lacking any clear vision for lasting solutions. What appears to be a mutual effort to maintain "rules of engagement" barely hides the reality that some stronger players, benefiting from global ties, are escalating tensions. Israel's leadership feels unbound by any commitment to a peace process that the ruling far right has never genuinely supported. The assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, even while Hamas holds Israeli hostages, highlights that the captives' fate is not a top priority for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his supporters, who are focused on dismantling the Palestinian people, their identity, and their cause. Meanwhile, there has been much talk about the "unity of the fronts" in support of Hamas, reflected in recent military actions. However, none of these actions compares to what Israel has done in the Occupied Territories, including Gaza, or to its strikes in Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, or the increasingly sophisticated assassinations in the capitals of what Tehran's allies call the "Axis of Resistance." This situation requires a rethinking of the terms "Axis of Resistance" and "unity of the fronts," especially as the gap between the intense rhetoric and the actual substance grows wider. At one time, we heard Iranian leaders claim that "eliminating Israel would take just seven minutes." Now, Tehran's allies are making strange statements, such as "our goal is to prevent Israel from winning." Moreover, the trust and coordination within the "Axis of Resistance" seem to be weakening, particularly in their responses to Israeli assassinations. It is clear from the reactions of Iran and Hezbollah that despite suffering significant losses, both are avoiding the confrontation that Netanyahu, supported by Washington, seems to be seeking. The reason is simple: Iran's leadership is more focused on "coexisting" with Israel under US-guaranteed terms, rather than engaging in a suicidal war. Even Washington does not want to dismantle the Tehran regime, seeing long-term strategic benefits in its survival. US policymakers have often said that the goal is not to change Iran's regime, but to change its behavior. This means Tehran must understand its limits, and avoid threatening Israel's existence or vital interests. In practice, this is exactly what Iran and its allies in Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria have done. Many are watching Syria closely after recent events. These include multiple Israeli operations, such as assassinations of Iranian leaders, and the mysterious disappearance of key political figures close to the Syrian regime.

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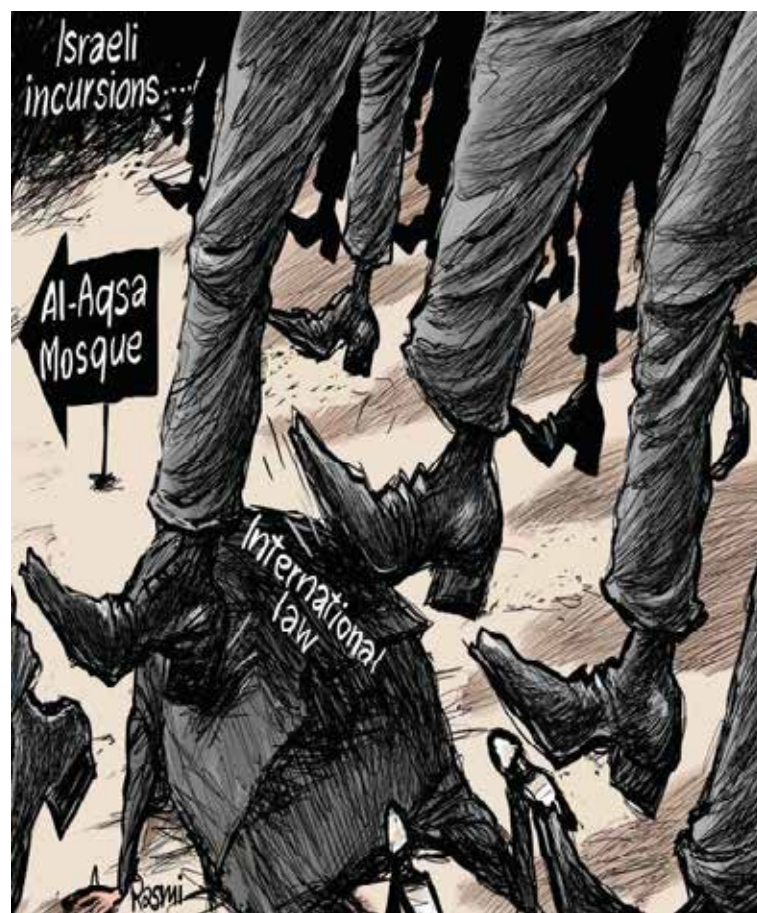
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Politicization of the Olympic Games

CHINA and the US were tied for first place in the gold medal count, each earning an impressive 40 golds at the recently concluded Paris Olympics. This has quickly become a public focus at home and abroad. Among the coverage, some American media outlets launched relentless attacks and criticisms against China, attempting to undermine China's standing on the international sports stage. Such smear not only desecrates the spirit of the Olympics, but also exemplifies the decline of US hegemonism. The Chinese version of VOA accused China of using the doping issue to attack the US and incite anti-American sentiments among the populace. Additionally, the Washington Post claimed in an op-ed that the 12 medals won by Chinese swimmers in Paris will forever "be tainted." The world has witnessed the sports spirit and competitive prowess shown by Chinese athletes in Paris. Take the Chinese swim team, despite being unfairly treated - undergoing almost 200 tests in 10 days - they have competed fairly and passed rigorous scrutiny, embodying the true spirit of sportsmanship. In the face of increased US efforts to discredit Chinese athletes with doping allegations while concealing its own doping scandals, many Chinese netizens have expressed indignation. This is a natural response of public sentiment seeking fairness in sports and has nothing to do with being "anti-US." Shen Yi, a professor at Fudan University, argues that the reactions from the Chinese public are a result of strong dissatisfaction with the US which exerted hegemony in the Olympic arena and abused doping regulations as weapons of unfair competition. The US media labeling this normal expression of emotion as "anti-US" is undoubtedly a cunning political maneuver, one that tries to categorize any voice discontent with US brazen practices as adversarial, and portray China as inciting anti-American sentiment and damaging China-US relations. Washington employs strategies of "suppression and defamation" against any potential rivals, and this practice has also spread into and tainted the Olympics arena. Whether in sports or other international affairs, US hegemonism has insidiously damaged justice and order. The US is not only unwilling to witness other powers emerge on the international stage, but also seeks to maintain its dominant position through political manipulation and media maneuvering. With China's rise, the US' hostility toward China has deepened in almost every aspect including sports. However, the frantic smearing, political manipulation and the evident unwillingness of the US to face up to challenges reveal its own lack of confidence and declining strength. The success of Chinese athletes at the Olympics not only serves as a testament to their hard work, but also stands as a powerful rebuttal to US hegemonism. While the Paris Olympics has concluded, the larger competition between the US and China is still underway. The US will continue to create barriers on China's track to hinder China's progress through dirty means, but ultimately will not succeed in pushing China out of the race.

USA's white gloves: Derailing regimes

Qamar Bashir



China is particularly worried about NED activities which are perceived as subverting state power, meddling in its internal affairs, inciting division and confrontation, misleading public opinion, and conducting ideological infiltration drawing strong condemnation from the Chinese civil society. In China, It funds organizations that document and expose human rights abuses, provide legal support to political and separatists activists, manipulate marginalized communities and promote grassroots activism. It encourages community organizing to undermine the Chinese political...

THE National Endowment for Democracy (NED), often referred to as the "White Gloves," is a nonprofit foundation established in 1983 and funded by the U.S. Congress. Its declared purpose is to support democratic governance worldwide by providing grants to political parties, civic groups, labor unions, and media organizations. These efforts are aligned with U.S. economic and security interests, creating trade and investment opportunities while reducing the influence of competitors in target countries, with China and Russia being primary focuses due to their perceived threats to U.S. strategic interests.

While the declared objectives of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) seem noble, its undeclared objectives can be daunting, raising concerns and potential dangers for target countries, including China, Hong Kong, Myanmar, Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, Tunisia, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Russia, Ukraine, Venezuela, Cuba, Nigeria, and the Congo, among others, covering almost all continents.

Since its establishment NED has received massive funding from the U.S. Congress. Though, funding also has two faces, declared funding is \$18 million per year, but undeclared fundings is provided to support special initiatives in specific countries of interest, such as Poland, Chile, Nicaragua, South Africa, Burma and specially China.

Analysts believe that NED's presence and activities in Pakistan contribute to a complex political landscape, which has been linked to PTI's allegations of a U.S.-initiated regime change. PTI, led by Imran Khan, has accused the U.S. of orchestrating his ousting as Prime Minister in April 2022 through a no-confidence motion. The Pakistani government and certain political factions view NED's activities as a form of U.S. interference in domestic politics. This perception is often based on the broader context of U.S. foreign policy and its history of involvement in regime change operations in Pakistan and other countries.

In Iran NED is accused of fomenting protests against hijab in 2022 by releasing batches of unverified information and pictures to incite public sentiments. NED regularly published commentaries on its Journal of Democracy to call for a regime change in Iran through human rights movement. NED is dubbed by Iranian media as a "National Enemy for Democracy" and "the NED Trojan" disrupting order and inciting unrest in Iran.

NED was also an instrument in fomenting Ukraine's

"color revolution and Orange Revolution in 2004. NED financed the Mass Media Institute to spread inflammatory information. NED spent tens of millions of dollars to coopt Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram to spread disinformation, heighten ethnic tensions in Ukraine, and stir up ethnic antagonism in eastern Ukraine.

In July 2023, the Journal of Democracy published five articles on Indian democracy under the theme of "Is India Still a Democracy," claiming that since Prime Minister Narendra Modi rose to power, his government has engaged in what is, by some accounts, a wholesale dismantling of democratic institutions, norms, and practices. In April 2024, the Journal of Democracy published an article "Why This Election Is India's Most Important," claiming that democratic governance in India has been steadily eroding since Modi's second term began and that the future of India as a plural, secular democracy could be on the line if Prime Minister Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party win a third consecutive term. This campaign finally eroded the mass popularity of the BJP in Election 2024 denying it majority in the parliament.

Like many other countries of the world, the activities of NED threatened China's Socialist rule by directly confronting with the Chinese system of governance which unlike democracies is based upon elections and selections, one party rule and centralized control credited with achieving rapid economic growth and maintaining social stability compared to democratic systems which advocates plurality, individual liberty and rule of law but face political gridlock and slower decision-making processes.

China is particularly worried about NED activities which are perceived as subverting state power, meddling in its internal affairs, inciting division and confrontation, misleading public opinion, and conducting ideological infiltration drawing strong condemnation from the Chinese civil society.

In China, It funds organizations that document and expose human rights abuses, provide legal support to political and separatists activists, manipulate marginalized communities and promote grassroots activism. It encourages community organizing to undermine the Chinese political and governance system. Additionally, it manipulates and adds toxic strands in the Chinese press by funding independent journalists and media outlets to encourage them to offer uncensored news and advocate for legal and judicial reforms. It funds specific programs

to manipulate ethnic and religious minorities, such as Tibetans and Uyghurs, and provides training and capacity-building to enhance their level of resistance against the Chinese Government.

To counter NED's toxic interference, China has implemented several concrete measures to counteract. It has enacted Foreign NGO Law in 2017 requiring all foreign NGOs to register with the Ministry of Public Security and obtain approval for their activities. It passed the National Security Law in 2015 to give extensive powers to the government to manage and control foreign influence, while the Cybersecurity Law of 2017 imposes strict controls on internet usage and data management, targeting online platforms and social media that might be used for organizing or promoting dissent. Administratively, China has restricted visas and expelled individuals associated with NED and intensified surveillance of Chinese citizens and organizations receiving foreign funding to curb foreign-supported activities aimed at destabilizing the stable and productive Chinese systems.

Diplomatically, China frequently denounces the NED and accuses it of attempting to destabilize the country. Additionally, China applies diplomatic pressure on other countries to limit or cut funding to organizations like the NED, leveraging its economic and political influence to reduce international support for democracy promotion activities within its borders.

The NED employs both overt and alleged covert tools to achieve its objectives of promoting democracy and supporting civil society organizations. Overtly, NED provides direct grants, capacity-building programs, and support for independent media and human rights advocacy. Covertly, NED or its affiliates use disguised funding channels, intelligence gathering through informant networks, media manipulation, disinformation campaigns, secret training programs, and cyber operations. These covert activities aim to influence political dynamics, spread misinformation, and support specific groups or individuals without direct attribution, thereby ensuring strategic objectives are met discreetly. There is dire for the governments around the world to take cognizance of NED clandestine and covert activities and take necessary precaution to safeguard their national interest and insulate their societies from the toxic strains of NED covert operations.

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

The aftermath of Bangladesh's student-led uprising

Rai Muhammad Zaka Ullah Khan



In my opinion, these protests are likely to push Bangladesh into serious economic and political trouble. The disruptions have already hit important economic sectors. Continued unrest could further scare off investors, making the economic situation even worse. On the political side, there is a real danger that the country could fall under military rule, which is something...

AFTER 15 continuous years in power and a total of 20 years in government, Sheikh Hasina Wajid resigned from the government and fled to India. In the past two months, she was brutally charged against students who protested against the quota system in government jobs. She imposed a curfew and arrested hundreds of students. On her orders, many students were killed and injured by security forces. According to official sources, it is claimed that more than 300 students were killed in the protests, but many unofficial sources claim the number is around 1,000. In history, those who bulldoze their own nation are among the worst. Sheikh Hasina Wajid is one of them, as she brutally charged against students protesting against state fascism. Only on one day, August 4, at least 60 students were killed by gunfire. These protests began against the quota system when Sheikh Hasina reinstated the quota system in government jobs by judicial order. Their government provides 30% of jobs to families who participated in the 1971 independence movement against Pakistan. This quota system was banned in the past, but their government restarted it after winning a controversial election. This situation made the students angry. They said the entire nation participated in the 1971 movement, and those who took part in the movement are not able to get government jobs. Providing jobs to their families is the government's way of supporting their own supporters. It is the government's strategy to seek power by providing civil jobs to their supporters.

These protests began two months ago, but they rapidly gained more power in the last two to three weeks. The student-led protests quickly gained momentum, with universities across the country becoming hotbeds of activism. Social media played a crucial role in organizing and spreading awareness, making it difficult for the government to control the narrative. The violent crackdown by the authorities only fueled the anger and resolve of the protesters, drawing support from various segments of society, including civil rights groups, political opposition, and international observers. The death toll, as mentioned, became a symbol of the government's brutality, galvanizing further resistance. Although Sheikh Hasina's government accepted some of their demands and reduced the quota system by only 3%, they allowed 97% of government jobs to be filled

on open merit, which is more than what the protesters demanded. However, the students are still calling for justice for their peers who were brutally killed by the state. The situation is becoming more dangerous for Sheikh Hasina as the protests become stronger, similar to the unrest that led to the assassination of her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who turned their state into a single-party state after the separation from Pakistan. He banned other parties that opposed their authoritarian style of politics. Continuous unrest in political and economic conditions caused a military coup in Bangladesh. On August 15, 1975, Mujibur Rahman, who was the founder of Bangladesh, was killed in a military coup along with his family. Only Sheikh Hasina and her sister survived because, at that time, they were in Europe for their studies. This event was a major turning point in the country's history and serves as a reminder of the risks that political leaders face during times of severe unrest. If Sheikh Hasina does not step down soon, she could face similar dangers to those her father faced decades ago. On August 5, when the protests became out of control, the army chief General Waker-uz-Zaman suggested to Sheikh Hasina Wajid that she resign from her position and leave the country within 45 minutes because they couldn't control the protesters any longer. After Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India, the military has taken control, with plans to form an interim government, though the transition is fraught with uncertainty. General Waker-uz-Zaman the army chief of the Bangladesh military announced in a press conference that all people should trust the army, and he fully accepted responsibility for the people's lives and their properties. Furthermore, he stated that a joint investigation should be held to ensure that all those who brutally charged at the students are held accountable.

After the army chief's press conference, students said, "We reject military rule." A government led by the military is not a solution for their problems. Those who make a revolution decide the government. They demand a full-scale democratic government, not one-party rule. They demand for Dr. Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, has been appointed to lead Bangladesh's interim government. This decision came after widespread protests led to the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Dr. Yunus was chosen largely due to his reputation as a respected civil society leader and his work in poverty alleviation through microcredit. His appointment was strongly supported by the student leaders who played a crucial role in the protests, as they preferred a civilian-led interim government over a military one. Although Yunus was initially reluctant to take responsibility for the interim government, he eventually agreed to lead it after huge appeals from the student leaders. He acknowledged the sacrifices made by the students and the people, stating, "If the students can sacrifice so much, then I also have some responsibility." The students strongly supported his appointment, preferring a civilian-led government over a military one. As a long-time critic of Hasina's government, Yunus is now expected to guide the country toward democratic elections.

In my opinion, these protests are likely to push Bangladesh into serious economic and political trouble. The disruptions have already hit important economic sectors. Continued unrest could further scare off investors, making the economic situation even worse. On the political side, there is a real danger that the country could fall under military rule, which is something that often happens in third-world countries after major uprisings. For example, after the Arab Spring, many countries like Libya and Syria experienced turmoil, as did Iran, which ultimately resulted in the total destruction of their economic, social, and political conditions and led to another authoritarian government system. This system enacts discriminatory laws against women's rights and civil liberties, as has happened in Iran after the Islamic Revolution against Shah's government in 1979. Additionally, Bangladesh's past shows that the military has stepped in during times of political crisis, making this risk even more real. However, what has happened in recent weeks also demonstrates the incredible power of student activism and political awareness. The students of Bangladesh have proven that when people understand their rights and are willing to fight for them, nothing can be done against those rights. They also prove that if a nation stands up for its rights against any fascist government, it can achieve them. Never underestimate the power of the people.

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Briefs

President confers national awards...

FRONT PAGE 01

Ibrahim, Sitara-e-Imtiaz on Dr Ghulam Muhammad Ali and Sardar Muhammad Af-tab Ahmed Khan Wattoo; and Tamgha-e-Imtiaz on Dr Sara Qureshi, Dr Rafiuddin and Professor Dr Usman Qamar. In the education field, Sadia Rashid was bestowed Hilal-e-Imtiaz; Sitara-e-Imtiaz was announced for Prof. Dr Zia-ul-Haq, Dr Samreen Hussain, Dr Sulaiman Shahabuddin, and Syed Azhar Hussain Abidi, and Presidential Pride of Performance award for Barkat Shah, Abdul Rasheed Kakar and Aneeqa Bano. The president announced Hilal-e-Imtiaz for Dr Sharyar and Dr Zaryab Setna, and Tamgha-e-Imtiaz for Dr Akifullah Khan, Dr Syed Abid Mehdi Kazmi and Ikramullah Khan for their contributions to the field of medicine. Similarly, Collin David was bestowed with Sitara-e-Imtiaz in the field of arts; Arshad Aziz Malik, Bakhtiar Ahmed and Barrister Zafarullah were conferred Tamgha-e-Imtiaz; while Fariha Pervaiz, Hamid Rana, Sheeba Arshad and Naveed Ahmed Bhatti to receive Pride of Performance Award. For their contribution to the field of literature, the president conferred Hilal-e-Imtiaz on Javed Jabbar; Sitara-e-Imtiaz on Salma Awan, Zafar Waqar Taj and Muneeza Shamsie; Tamgha-e-Imtiaz for Syed Jawad Hussain Jafari and Pride of Performance Award for Ambarin Hasib. Besides, Maqsood Ahmed, Ammad Shakeel Butt, Rehman Ishtiaq and Mir Nadir Khan Magasi were bestowed with Tamgha-e-Imtiaz and Amir Ishaq with Presidential Pride of Performance Award for their excellence in the sports field. President Zardari conferred Sitara-e-Imtiaz on Mian Aziz Ahmed (AZNIC), Hunaid Lakhani, Sana Hashwani, Safnaz Munir; and Hilal-e-Imtiaz on Khawaja Anver Majid, and Hussain Dawood. The taxpayers and exporters who were conferred Sitara-e-Imtiaz included Syed Imran Ali Shah, Nazimuddin Feroz, Intiaz Hussain, Adnan Niaz, Zahid Ahmed Ghaireeb and Syed Asad Hussain Zaidi. The president also announced the conferment of Sitara-e-Shujaat on Panjgur Deputy Commissioner Zakir Hussain Baloch who was recently martyred in a terror attack in Mastung; Hilal-e-Imtiaz on Capt. (Retd) Muhammad Khuram Agha, Dr Syed Tauqir Hussain Shah and Umar Farooq (Overseas Pakistani).

Theory of disgruntled individuals..

FROM PAGE 01

IG Police Balochistan were prominent among others. As per tradition across the country, the Deputy Prime Minister performed the flag-hoisting ceremony in Quetta at the designated time. In his address, Ishaq Dar extended heartfelt congratulations on Independence Day to the people of Balochistan and Pakistan on behalf of himself, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and President Asif Ali Zardari. He urged everyone to come together in unity to elevate Pakistan to the level envisioned by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Muhammad Iqbal. "The people of this country possess great spirit; unfortunately, he deplored when Pakistan was on the path to progress, it was brought down," he noted. In 2017, Pakistan had become the world's 24th largest economy, gaining global recognition. Pakistan's stock exchange had become the number one in South Asia and the fifth globally. However, he stated that he does not wish to dwell on the past and congratulate the government of Balochistan for organizing excellent Independence Day celebrations, which, he said, inspire enthusiasm among the youth. The Deputy Prime Minister recalled, "Pakistan is a country blessed by Allah with countless resources. People talk about Pakistan having a debt of \$130 billion, but I say that Allah has endowed Pakistan with over \$10 trillion worth of minerals.

Punjab wins I-Day men's, women's Basketball titles

In the men's final, Punjab claimed the title after a hard-fought victory over Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Punjab emerged victorious in both the men's and women's categories of the Independence Day Inter-Provincial Basketball Championship, organized by the Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) at Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad. The closing ceremony of the five-day championship was graced by Federal Secretary Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Nadeem Irshad Kayani and Director General of the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Yasir Pirzada as chief guests. The event was held under the supervision of the Federal Basketball Association (FIBA). Also in attendance were President of the Pakistan Basketball Federation Brig. (R) Muhammad Iftikhar Mansoor, Secretary General Khalid Bashir, Senior Vice President Intiaz Rafi Butt, President of the Federal Basketball Association Ejaz Rafi Butt, Secretary



General Ouj e Zahoor, Azam Dar, and other distinguished personalities. In the men's final, Punjab claimed the title after a hard-fought victory over Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), securing

a win with a score of 69-68 points. Abdullah scored 22 and Muhammad Taimour scored 15 points for winning side while Umer Khan scored 15 points for KP. Meanwhile, Islamabad

A secured third place by defeating Islamabad B in a closely contested match, 67-62. On the women's side, Punjab dominated the finals, overwhelming Islamabad A with a commanding 64-17

victory. Ayman Ali and Sana were standout performers, contributing 16 and 12 points respectively to Punjab's triumph. In the third-place match, Sindh outplayed Islamabad B, winning 50-29.

Morne Morkel confirmed as India's bowling coach



CAPE TOWN: Former South African pacer Morne Morkel has been named as the bowling coach for the Indian men's team. Morkel's appointment completes India's support staff, which

is led by Gautam Gambhir and includes assistant coaches Abhishek Nayyar and Ryan ten Doeschate, as well as fielding coach T Dilip. Morkel had been the leading candidate for the role

after being shortlisted alongside R Vinay Kumar, the former Indian seamer. His appointment was confirmed on Wednesday by BCCI president Jay Shah. "Yes, Morne Morkel has been appointed as the bowling coach of the senior Indian men's team," BCCI secretary Jay Shah confirmed to PTI. Until December of last year, Morkel was Pakistan's bowling coach. His name was put forward by Gambhir, with whom he worked for two seasons (2022-23) at Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL, as well as at Durban Super Giants in the SA20. Gambhir left two years after serving as LSG's mentor, and Morkel continued with the franchise as their bowling coach. He worked alongside the newly appointed head coach Justin Langer and helped develop young Indian talents like Mayank Yadav. During his career, Morkel played 86 Test matches, taking 309 wickets, and 117 ODIs, where he claimed 188 wickets. He formed a formidable partnership with fellow fast bowler Dale Steyn, often leading South Africa to victory with their aggressive bowling. - Agencies

MI Cape Town sign Ben Stokes for SA20 2025

LONDON: England's Test captain Ben Stokes has been named in MI Cape Town's squad for the SA20, 2025. Alongside Azmatullah Omarzai, the Afghanistan all-rounder, he will be making his debut for MI Cape Town in the tournament. The duo will join the likes of Rashid Khan and Trent Boult, who have also been pre-signed by the franchise, along with Nuwan Thushara and Chris Benjamin, as announced by the franchise. Stokes is currently sidelined with a hamstring tear putting him out of the Northern Superchargers' campaign at The Hundred. The ECB has said in a statement that Stokes is aiming to return for the Test tour of Pakistan, which will start in Multan on October 7. Thushara and Benjamin, who featured for MI Cape Town in the previous season, have been retained and will join a strong core of domestic talent led by the likes of Kagiso Rabada. The SA20 franchises have been targeting top Test players from England for the third edition in 2025 after many of them were busy with the tour of India during the 2024 season. Joe Root has been signed by Paarl Royals, Pretoria Capitals have Ollie Pope, Jonny Bairstow and Chris Woakes have gone to Joburg Super Kings and Durban's Super Giants respectively, while Zak Crawley has been acquired by Sunrisers Eastern Cape, who have won both editions of the competition. England are down to play both T20I and ODI series in India at the start of next year, but both their winter Test tours - to Pakistan in October and New Zealand in December - will be over before Christmas. - Agencies

Rohit closes in on Babar Azam's No.1 ODI rankings

LAHORE: Indian captain Rohit Sharma has climbed to second place in the ICC ODI rankings and is closing in on Pakistan's white-ball captain, Babar Azam. While Babar maintains a strong lead at the top of the list for ODI batters, he faces fresh competition from Rohit and Sri Lankan right-hander Pathum Nissanka. Rohit surpassed his teammate Shubman Gill after scoring a series-best 157 runs against Sri Lanka, while Nissanka also moved up to eighth place following his 101 runs in the same series. Sri Lanka ended a 27-year drought by defeating India for the first time since 1997 during that ODI series. Kusal Mendis (up five places to joint 39th) and Avishka Fernando (up 20 places to 68th) also made gains on the latest list for 50-over batsmen. Hard-hitting Netherlands opener Max O'Dowd (up 10 places to 54th) and USA's Monank Patel (up 11 places to joint 56th) also advanced on this list, while USA's Nosthush Kenjige (up 10 places to 49th) and Sri Lankan spinner Dumith Wellalage (up 17 places to 59th) were among the notable movers in the ODI rankings for bowlers. There was also some movement in the latest Test player rankings, following the draw between the West Indies and South Africa in Trinidad. South Africa captain Temba Bavuma has achieved a new career-high rating, moving up two places to 16th on the Test batters' list after scores of 86 and 15* against the West Indies. Meanwhile, opener Tony de Zorzi has climbed 29 places to 85th following an impressive 78 in the first innings of the ICC World Test Championship match. From a West Indies perspective, Jason Holder (up three spots to 67th) and Alick Athanaze (up 12 places to 76th) were notable movers among the Test batters. South African spinner Keshav Maharaj was the standout performer on the latest list for Test bowlers. Maharaj took four wickets in each innings, earning Player of the Match honours and climbing seven places to joint 21st as a result. - DNA

Hasan to receive PCB support for elbow injury treatment

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has assured fast bowler Hasan Ali of full support in his recovery from a recent elbow injury. According to media reports, the PCB reached out to Hasan Ali, confirming that his treatment will be fully covered by the board. The fast bowler has been informed that he will undergo surgery for his injured elbow in England, likely in August. Hasan Ali is expected to depart for England on either August 25 or 26 at the PCB's expense. The injury occurred during his participation in the county cricket season, sidelining the fast bowler from the sport for an estimated three to four months following the surgery. The PCB anticipates Hasan Ali's return to cricket by December, although he will need to complete a rehabilitation program before resuming full training.

Pak vs Ban: No spectators to be allowed in Karachi Test

Fans who have already purchased tickets will receive full refund which will be credited back to their accounts

DNA

KARACHI: No spectators will be allowed in Karachi's National Stadium during the second Test match between Pakistan and Bangladesh owing to the ongoing renovations, said the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Wednesday. "We understand the vital role that our enthusiastic supporters play in cricket, providing encouragement and inspiration to our players. However, after thoroughly considering all options, we have concluded that the safest course of action is to hold the match without spectators," read the statement issued by the PCB. The second Test match between the two countries is set to take place from August 30 to September 3 in Karachi. The decision, as per the board, has been taken due to the venue's ongoing upgradation work ahead of the Champions Trophy 2025. As a result of this decision, ticket sales for the match have been immediately suspended. Fans who have already purchased tickets will receive a full refund, which will be automatically processed and credited back to their accounts. The PCB also expressed its commitment to ensuring that the stadium is fully prepared to host the Champions Trophy in 2025, the first International Cricket Council (ICC) event held in Pakistan since 1996. The ongoing upgrades are part of a broader effort to improve the stadium's facilities and make it more fan-friendly. It must be noted the first Test between Pakistan and Bangladesh in Rawalpindi will take place from August 21 to 25. The Bangladesh men's cricket team arrived in Lahore from Dhaka on Tuesday. As per the schedule updated by the PCB, the visiting team will have its training sessions at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium from on August 14 (today) to 16.



PTI announces public...

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Barrister Gohar said that the PTI will continue to struggle for the release of its founder Imran Khan on all fronts. "We will strive for Imran Khan's release in courts as well as public gatherings," the PTI Chairman added. Barrister Gohar said that the country's protection, progress, and prosperity require collective efforts. "We will make any sacrifice for peace and security of Pakistan," Barrister Gohar said. The PTI chairman also paid tribute to the martyrs by laying flowers at the Police Lines Dera memorial and distributed sweets among prisoners at the District Jail. Earlier, the district administration has allowed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to hold power show in Islamabad on August 22. The state counsel informed Islamabad High Court regarding the permission for a public gathering in the federal capital.

Secy Blinken felicitates...

FROM PAGE 01

"Throughout my life, I've experienced the generosity and warmth of the Pakistani people. And here in the United States, the Pakistani American community has made enormous contributions to our country, in every field of endeavor. They serve as important bridge builders between our two countries. So I'm honoured to join you for the special occasion. And I wish all Pakistanis a very Happy Independence Day." US Congressman from Texas Pete Sessions says 14th August is a day of celebration, honour and pride that comes from Pakistani Americans as they live in the United States, helping make America and Pakistan and that relationship even stronger.

PTA head summoned over social...

FROM PAGE 01

continue to function despite the widespread disruption Sources said that Pakistan Telecommunication Company Ltd (PTCL) officials have identified a fault in the underground submarine cable as a potential cause of the disruption. This fault has impacted internet service across the country, according to sources within PTCL. Earlier, the Pakistan government had decided to install a firewall across the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to control social media days after Punjab govt enacted the Defamation Law 2024.

Indian army captain killed in...

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and Pakistan since their independence from British rule in 1947, with each side claiming it in full. Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh called a meeting with army, security, and intelligence chiefs on Wednesday after the latest clashes in Jammu, which had been relatively peaceful for the past two decades. Thousands of additional troops, drones and sniffer dogs have been deployed in the mountainous terrain, where new army posts are being set up.

CM KP announces..

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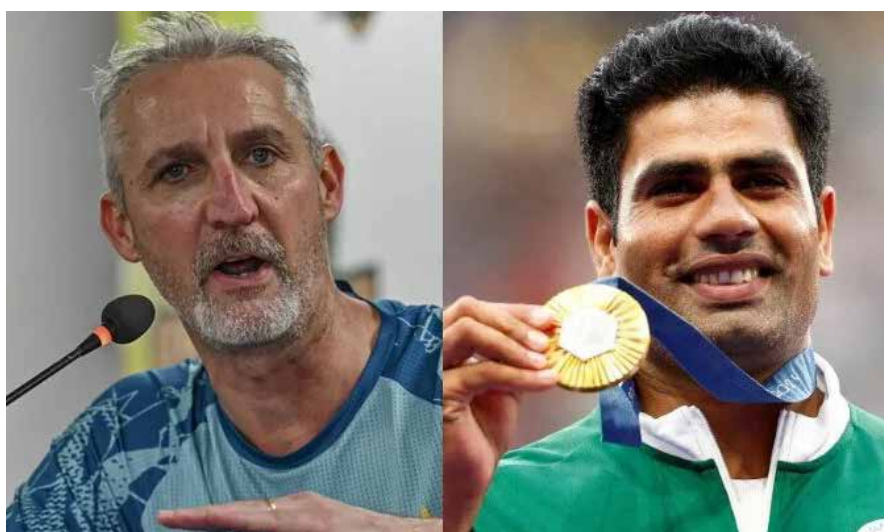
own pocket as he is the pride of Pakistan. "We'll invite Arshad Nadeem to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to impart the training of javelin throw to our youth," the CM said. He said that PTI founder Imran Khan is standing firmly just due to his training of sports. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had announced a reward of Rs150 million for the Olympian gold medalist. Last week, Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem shattered the Olympics record with a humongous 92.97m throw in javelin final to win the Gold medal at the Paris Olympics 2024 on Thursday. He became the first individual Olympics gold medalist from Pakistan. Arshad Nadeem broke the previous Olympics record of 90.57 - set in 2008 Beijing Olympics by Norway's Andreas Thorkildsen.

Gillespie invites Nadeem to Pak cricket dressing room

Gillespie expressed his admiration for Nadeem's accomplishment in Paris Olympics

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Pakistan's star athlete Arshad Nadeem, who secured a gold medal and set a new record at the Paris Olympics, has been invited by Test head coach Jason Gillespie to visit the Pakistan cricket team's dressing room. In a discussion on the PCB podcast, Gillespie expressed his admiration for Nadeem's accomplishment and extended an open invitation. "We would love to invite Arshad Nadeem to the dressing room as well. I saw all the Shaheens cheering him on during the Olympics. Having him visit and share his gold medal with the team would be a fantastic boost, especially with the Olympic spirit still in the air. It was a wonderful moment, and we extend an open invitation for him to visit the dressing room," Gillespie said.



Pakistan Test skipper Shan Masood, reflecting on Nadeem's success, added, "Arshad Nadeem has made us all emotional. Seeing him on the podium waving the flag and ringing the Olympic bell was incredible. He deserves all the recognition he's getting and is a national hero. His achievements highlight the talent in Pakistan, and we're all proud of him." Masood further commented on the impact of Nadeem's success on the cricket team, saying, "Does it put pressure on the team? I don't see it as pressure but as a privilege. Representing Pakistan is a huge honour, and every day we play is a privilege. We should feel extremely proud and grateful to represent our country. Arshad Nadeem's success motivates us to seize our opportunity to do something good for Pakistan." Remember, Arshad received a hero's welcome upon his return to the country on Saturday.

Briefs

Pak embassy in Beijing marks 77th Independence Day

DNA

ISLAMABAD : The Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing today hosted a flag hoisting ceremony to celebrate the 77th Independence Day Anniversary. The event commenced with the recitation of Holy Quran, followed by flag hoisting by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, who was joined by Embassy officials and a large number of Pakistan community members. The ceremony also featured the reading of messages of felicitation from the President, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister of Pakistan. The messages paid rich tribute to the nation's freedom struggle under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, which culminated in the creation of Pakistan on 14 August 1947. The messages underscored the importance of upholding the ideals of the leaders of the freedom movement, such as selfless commitment and devotion, for the development and progress of the country. In his remarks, Ambassador Khalil Hashmi congratulated the Pakistan community on the auspicious occasion and underlined the vital role of overseas Pakistanis in the economic development and prosperity of Pakistan.

Google introduces new AI features

WASHINGTON : Google introduced new artificial intelligence (AI) features for Android devices and its new lineup of smartphones and wearable devices. Gemini Live, a mobile conversational tool that lets users have free-flowing conversations with the AI model, will turn mobile devices into a powerful AI assistant, the company said in its blog. "With Gemini deeply integrated into Android, we're rebuilding the operating system with AI at the core, and redefining what phones can do," said Android Ecosystem President Sameer Samat. "We've completely rebuilt the assistant experience with Gemini so you can speak to it naturally, the way you would with another person. It can understand your intent, follow your train of thought and complete complex tasks," he added. Gemini Live became available Tuesday to advanced subscribers in English on Android phones, while it will expand to Apple's iOS operating system and more languages in the coming weeks. Apple, meanwhile, is expected to launch its own AI, Apple Intelligence, on iPhones, iPads and Macs later this year.—Agencies

Africa CDC declares Monkeypox outbreak

LONDON : The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) announced Tuesday a public health emergency due to the Mpox outbreak across the continent. "With a heavy heart, but with an unyielding commitment to our people, to our African citizens, we declare Mpox as a public health emergency of continental security in Africa," Africa CDC Director-General Jean Kaseya told a briefing. According to the Africa CDC, between January and July, at least 15,074 Mpox cases were recorded across 12 African Union member states, with 2,853 confirmed cases and 12,221 suspected cases. Additionally, there were a total of 461 deaths reported. This marks a significant increase in Mpox cases, with a 160% rise in cases and a 19% increase in deaths compared to the same period in 2023. Mpox, also known as monkeypox, is a rare infectious disease that can spread between people. While it is generally mild and most individuals recover within a few weeks, complications can occur. Early symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, swollen lymph nodes, chills, and fatigue.—APP

Japan's PM announces stepping down next month

Premier says he made this heavy decision thinking of public, with strong will to push political reform forward

NEWS DESK

OKYO: Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has announced stepping down next month on the back of political scandals and widespread public discontent over inflation-spurred rising costs of living, saying politics can't function without public trust. "I made this heavy decision thinking of the public, with the strong will to push political reform forward," he told a press conference on Wednesday to reveal his decision not to seek re-election as the leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The LDP will hold a contest in September to replace him as president of the party, and, by extension, as prime minister. Kishida's ratings dipped after he took office in 2021 following revelations about the LDP's ties to the controversial Unification Church. His popularity took another hit when a slush fund of unrecorded political donations made at LDP

fundraising events came to light. He also faced public discontent as wages failed to keep pace with rising living costs as Japan finally shook off years of deflationary pressure. "An LDP incumbent prime minister cannot run in the presidential race unless he's assured of a victory," said Koichi Nakano, a professor of political science at Sophia University. "It's like the grand champion yokozuna of sumo. You don't just win, but you need to win with grace." His successor as LDP leader will face the task of restoring the public's confidence in the party and tackle the rising cost of living, escalating geopolitical tensions with China, and the potential return of Donald Trump as U.S. president next year. Monetary policy and military buildup through his stint as Japan's eighth-longest serving post-war leader, Kishida broke from previous economic policy by eschewing corporate profit-driven trickle-down economics to set his sights on boosting household income, including wage hikes



and promoting share ownership. He led Japan out of the COVID pandemic with massive stimulus spending and also appointed academic Kazuo Ueda as head of the Bank of Japan (BOJ) to guide the country out of his predecessor's radical monetary stimulus. In July, the BOJ unexpectedly raised interest rates as inflation took hold, contributing to stock market instability and sending the yen JPY= sharply higher. Kishi-

da's departure could mean tighter fiscal and monetary conditions, depending on the candidate, said Shoki Omori, chief Japan desk strategist at Mizuho Securities in Tokyo. "In short, risk-assets, particularly equities, will likely be hit the most," he said. Kishida's premiership was also marked by a changing security environment that spurred Japan to revisit its traditionally pacifist policy. He unveiled Japan's biggest military buildup since World War Two with a commitment to double defence spending aimed at deterring neighbouring China from pursuing its territorial ambitions in East Asia through military force. At Washington's prodding, Kishida also mended Japan's strained ties with South Korea, enabling the two and their mutual ally, the United States, to pursue deeper security co-operation against the threat from North Korea's missile and nuclear weapons programs. "Personally, I wish he continued a little bit more as prime minister," said Naoya Okamoto, a 22-year-

old office worker in Tokyo, the capital. "Maybe he was stressed (with the low ratings), and with all the circumstances around him, I guess he has no choice but to step down." Next leader Former defence minister Shigeru Ishiba has already thrown his hat in the ring as a prospective replacement for Kishida, saying he would like to "fulfil his duty" if he gained enough support, public broadcaster NHK said. Other names floated as potential contenders include Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa, Digital Minister Taro Kono, and former Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi. Experts say the LDP will have to pick a fresh face that breaks from the scandals if it is to survive a general election due by the third quarter of 2025. "If the LDP picks its next leader in a way that disregards public criticism against political funding scandals, the party could suffer a crushing defeat," said political analyst Atsuo Ito. "The party must choose someone young

Maria warns of mass exodus if Maduro stays in power

Maria Corina Machado Machado also said that Maduro should negotiate his departure from office with her political group

WEB DESK

CARACAS : Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado warned Tuesday of a serious "wave of migration" if President Nicolas Maduro remains in power following his disputed reelection that would affect neighboring Colombia. Speaking to reporters in the capital Caracas, Machado warned Colombian President Gustavo Petro that if Maduro "chooses to stay by force, the only thing we will see is a wave of migration like never before: three, four, five million Venezuelans in a very short span of time." She

said they expect a "firm and clear" stance from Colombia and that the situation in Venezuela goes beyond ideological differences. Machado also said that Maduro should negotiate his departure from office with her political group. "The best option is to get him to accept a negotiated transition. It would be a good sign if he at least keeps the channels of communication open with Brazil, Mexico and Colombia. The coming weeks will be critical. We will wait and see what happens," she added. Venezuela's National Electoral Council announced on July 29 that Maduro had secured a third term in office with 51.2% of

the vote — a result rejected by the opposition, which maintains the election results are fraudulent. Machado urged citizens to take part in mass protests on Aug. 17 to challenge the results. Meanwhile, Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro has ordered a 10-day ban on social media platform X amid an uproar in the country over a disputed election. Accusing X owner Elon Musk of "inciting hate and fascism", Maduro on Thursday said he signed a resolution presented by telecommunications regulator Conatel which "has decided to take social network X, formerly known as Twitter, out of circulation for 10 days".

"Elon Musk is the owner of X and has violated all the rules of the social network itself," Maduro said following a march by pro-government groups. "X get out of Venezuela for 10 days!" he said in a speech that was broadcast on state television. Election authorities declared Maduro the winner of the July 28 election with 51.2 percent of votes, but have yet to release detailed results. It said opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, who had been leading in opinion polls, got 44.2 percent. The announcement led to widespread accusations of fraud which also spread across social media.

Myanmar military denies junta chief detained by generals

YANGON: Myanmar's military on Wednesday said rumors top generals had detained the embattled junta chief in a new coup were "propaganda" spread by "traitors" ahead of a visit by China's foreign minister. Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing has faced public criticism from military supporters in recent weeks as government troops lose territory to ethnic minority armed groups and other opponents battling to overturn its 2021 coup. On Tuesday several social media posts claimed that top generals had detained Min Aung Hlaing in the capital Naypyidaw in a bid to change the junta's top leadership. The claims were "propaganda... with the aim of disrupting the country's peace and stability," the junta said in a statement, accusing those sharing the news of being "traitors." "The head of state and authorities are fulfilling their national responsibility together," it said. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is due to arrive in Myanmar on Wednesday for talks with Min Aung Hlaing. The visit is "aimed at deepening bilateral mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields," an unnamed Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said on Tuesday. China is a major ally and arms supplier to the junta but analysts say it also maintains ties with ethnic armed groups that hold territory near its border. In recent weeks an alliance of ethnic armed groups has seized territory from the junta in northern Shan state, which borders China's Yunnan province. Territory captured includes the military's northeastern command in the Shan state town of Lashio, home to about 150,000 people. The capture of the regional command — the first by opponents of the junta since the military's 2021 coup — sparked rare public criticism of the top generals by its supporters. Min Aung Hlaing later said the alliance was receiving weapons, including drones and short-range missiles, from "foreign" sources that he did not identify.—DNA

N. Korea to open border for foreign tourists in Dec

SEOUL: North Korea will resume international tourism to its northeastern city of Samjiyon in December, and possibly the rest of the country, tour companies said on Wednesday. The move is a sign that the reclusive country is ready to reopen borders to bigger groups of foreign tourists after years of strict COVID-19 border controls. "We have received confirmation from our local partner that tourism to Samjiyon and likely the rest of the country will officially resume in December 2024," the Beijing-based Koryo Tours said on its website. International flights in and out of North Korea resumed last year and a small group of Russian tourists flew to North Korea for a private tour in February. Top foreign officials, including Russian President Vladimir Putin in June, have been visiting the country. But North Korea has not been fully open to international tourists since 2020. "Having waited for over four years to make this announcement, Koryo Tours is very excited for the opening of North Korean tourism once again," the firm said, adding its local partner would confirm itineraries and dates in coming weeks. North Korea has been building what it called a "socialist utopia" in Samjiyon, a city near the Chinese border, and "a model of highly-civilized mountain city" with new apartments, hotels, a ski resort and commercial, cultural and medical facilities.—Agencies

Greece's worst wildfire of the year eases

ATHENS: Greece's worst wildfire of the year eased on the outskirts of the capital Athens on Tuesday thanks to weaker winds, pausing the progress of a destructive blaze that killed one person and torched cars, buildings, fields and forests. Hundreds of firefighters backed by 10 waterbombing aircraft battled the blaze since Sunday as it barreled from a forest into Athens' northern suburbs, torching homes and stirring panic in neighbourhoods that had not seen such a fire so close to the centre in decades. "The situation has improved, but there are random blazes. At the time being we don't have any new fronts, only some rekindlings, but we remain on high alert," said a fire brigade official. The government has announced compensation and relief measures for victims of a fire that Greece's National Observatory said had damaged around 10,000 hectares of land. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis was expected to chair a ministerial meeting about the fire on Tuesday evening. As the smoke-filled skies cleared above Athens, firefighting aircraft arrived from France and Italy as part of a European civil protection mechanism, a government official said.—APP

UN chief calls for inclusive elections in BD

UNITED NATIONS : UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has welcomed efforts to restore calm and hold fresh parliamentary elections in Bangladesh, urging the interim Government to be inclusive as the country moves towards restoring democratic rule. In a statement issued by his Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Aziz Haq, the UN chief also called for full respect of the human rights across the country. "The Secretary-General welcomes efforts to restore calm and organize parliamentary elections in Bangladesh, with the support of an interim government," the statement said. Farhan Haq also called on the interim administration being led by Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunis "to continue to make every effort" to be inclusive, taking into account the voices of women and youth as well as those of minority and indigenous communities, as the country moves towards new elections.—APP

Sudan ceasefire talks set to start despite army no-show

WASHINGTON : US-mediated Sudan ceasefire talks were to kick off in Switzerland on Wednesday, even though the Sudanese government is set to stay away. Tom Perriello, the US Special Envoy for Sudan convening the discussions, insisted they go ahead regardless, saying the suffering people of Sudan, ravaged by the devastating civil war, cannot wait any longer. Civil war has raged since April 2023 between the Sudanese army under the country's military leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo. But while the RSF delegation is in Switzerland for the talks — taking place behind closed doors in an undisclosed location — the Sudanese armed forces (SAF) are yet to accept the invite. The talks, which could last up to 10 days, are being co-hosted by Saudi Arabia and Switzerland, with the African Union, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and the United Nations present as observers. The brutal conflict has triggered one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. The fighting has forced one in five people to flee their homes, while tens of thousands have died. More than 25 million across the country — more than half its population — face acute hunger. "The time for peace is now," Perriello said Tuesday. "Thus far, SAF has not agreed to participate. Yet we will proceed with our international and technical partners to explore every option to support the people of Sudan," he said, urging the government to "seize the opportunity".—APP



ISLAMABAD : Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Envoy in UAE planted a tree on the occasion of Pakistan Independence Day at the Embassy in Abu Dhabi.—DNA

Malaysian PM pledges support for BD interim govt

Anwar Ibrahim holds phone call with transitional government head Muhammad Yunus

FOREIGN DESK

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has assured Bangladesh's transitional government of Kuala Lumpur's "help and support" during a phone call with the



Sheikh Hasina faces 'crimes against humanity' case

DHAKA: A case was filed against Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and eight other members of her now-dissolved Cabinet and police officers on charges of "crimes against humanity" and "genocide," according to an official on Wednesday. The case was filed at the local International Crimes Tribunal in the capital Dhaka, Ataur Rahman, a deputy director of the investigation agency of the court, told the media. The tribunal was formed by the then-Awami League government of Hasina in 2010 to prosecute those who had opposed Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971. Some of the top opposition party leaders have been tried by this tribunal. The investigation agency of the court accepted the case on Wednesday after the father of Alif Ahmed Siam, a ninth-grade student who was shot by police on Aug. 5 and succumbed to his bullet injuries, filed the suit through his lawyer Gazi MH Tanim. Earlier, the adviser to the transitional government on law affairs, Asif Nazir I, told reporters that those involved in the killings that took place from July 1 to Aug. 5 during the student protests "may be tried in the International Crimes Tribunal." He also said no individual would be exempt from prosecution, including Hasina. The law adviser said they would make efforts to involve the UN in the investigation process. Earlier, three cases, including murder and abduction, were filed against Hasina, who fled Bangladesh on Aug. 5 to neighboring India.—DNA

and an economist, was appointed to lead the 17-member interim government last week following the end of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 15-year rule. Hasina fled to India on August 5 after month-long protests against her government. "Prof. Yunus has long-standing good ties with Malaysia. Thus, I assured him that Malaysia stands ready to help and support the interim government in rebuilding and restoring peace and security in Bangladesh," Anwar said, following his phone conversation with Yunus on Tuesday night. Anwar is reportedly the first foreign leader to speak with Yunus since his appointment. The Malaysian prime minister also noted that Yunus has "invited me to undertake a short visit to Bangladesh as soon as possible to further strengthen the brotherly relationship between the two

Briefs

Iran's defense chief says will develop 'jump jets'

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh, who has been picked by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, to run the Ministry of Defense, has presented parliament with his proposals for further development of the country's defense sector. Nasirzadeh, who currently serves as the deputy chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces and used to command the country's Air Force from 2018 to 2021, provided the legislative body with his proposals on Wednesday. The plans outlined his vision for additional expansion of the Islamic Republic's aerial and naval warfare capabilities, missile technology, air defense prowess, and aerospace division among other things. As means of enhancing the Air Force, the senior military official advanced designing and production of "jump jets," which are capable of vertical takeoff and landing. He also proposed improvement of artificial intelligence technology across the country's drone squad to further equip it for swarm flight operations. Nasirzadeh suggested development of heavy multi-mission destroyers through acquisition of relevant technology, as well as enhancement and production of high-speed vessels that are capable of launching cruise missiles. To develop the missile sector, he suggested improvement of the country's capacity of producing various types of ballistic, cruise, and air defense missiles with diverse ranges and capabilities in proportion to the Armed Forces' current and future needs.

Thai court dismisses PM for violating constitution

MANILA: A Thai court has dismissed Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin for appointing to his cabinet a former lawyer who was once jailed. The Constitutional Court ruled that Mr Srettha had violated the "rules on ethics" with "the display of defiant behaviour". The 62-year-old Srettha, who has been in power for less than a year, is the third PM in 16 years to be removed by the same court. He will be replaced by an interim leader until Thailand's parliament convenes to elect a new prime minister. "I'm confident in my honesty ... I feel sorry, but I'm not saying I disagree with the ruling," he said at a press conference shortly after the ruling. The court's ruling is final and cannot be appealed. Mr Srettha's dismissal means he has now gone the way of so many other parties and administrations in Thailand - felled by the disproportionate power of the country's constitutional court. Politics in Thailand is not known for its ethics; bribery is commonplace and ministers with more serious convictions have been allowed to serve in the past. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Special children enjoying Independence Day along with their teachers visiting Federal Capital. - Online

Taliban curbs on rights spark mental health crisis

Taliban edicts have denied girls from getting an education beyond the sixth grade and banned women from working for non-governmental organization (NGOs)

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Three years of Taliban rule in Afghanistan has led to the striking erasure of women from public life, which is also reflected at the community and household levels, a senior official with the UN agency championing gender equality has said. Alison Davidian, UN Women Country Representative in Afghanistan, briefed correspondents in New York on their latest report addressing the plight of women and girls since the Taliban returned to power in August 2021. She described this period as three years worth of countless decrees, directives, and statements targeting women and girls stripping them of their fundamental rights and eviscerating their au-

Afghan Taliban display military prowess on anniversary of victory

FOREIGN DESK

KABUL: Afghanistan's Taliban on Wednesday celebrated the third anniversary of their return to power with a military parade held at a former US airbase. Helicopters and fighter aircraft flew over the Bagram base located 40 kilometres (24.9 miles) north of the capital Kabul, while the Taliban's armed forces towed US-made armoured personnel carriers, Soviet-era tanks and other artillery equipment, local broadcaster Tolonews reported. Thousands of people, including senior Taliban officials, acting Defense Minister Mullah Yaqoob and acting Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, and diplomats, including Chinese and Iranian, gathered to witness the parade. The former Bagram base was once used by the US-led forces for their operations against the Taliban fighters. Hundreds of the Taliban members also remained imprisoned there for years. Addressing the parade, Deputy Prime Minister Maulvi Abdul Kabir reiterated that neither any country will be allowed to interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs nor would the Afghan soil be used against any country.

tonomy. Taliban edicts have denied girls from getting an education beyond the sixth grade and banned women from working for non-governmental organization (NGOs). Three years ago, the world was watching a takeover that was lives streaming horror after horror, she said, speaking via videoconference from Kabul. And three years later, while the world attention may have turned elsewhere, the horrors have not stopped for Afghan women and girls, but nor has their conviction to stand against the oppression. The UN Women report details trends based on consultations with thousands of women across Afghanistan - from provincial capitals to rural areas since the Taliban return. "And the first most striking trend is the erasure of Afghan women from public life," said Davidian.

COAS statement reflects his thoughts: Shujaat

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League (Q) president and former caretaker prime minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain says Army Chief Gen Asim Munir's statement reflects his thoughts. Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain said he did not hear a better speech till today. He said that he wanted to give a gift to the soldiers of the army on this occasion. Shujaat Hussain further desired that the names of the martyred should be displayed on the highways so that the local people also feel proud about it.

Aerial firing leaves 70 people injured in Karachi

Incidents take place in Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Nazimabad, Sharifabad, Lyari, Pak Colony, other areas

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: About 70 people were injured by aerial firing in different areas of Karachi on the celebrations of August 14 on Tuesday night, rescue sources... Revellers resorted to aerial firing at midnight to celebrate the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan. The sources said injured persons were brought from Mauripur Road, PIB Colony, Old Golimar, Korangi, Jamshed quarter, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Lyari and Malir. The incidents took place in Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Nazimabad, Sharifabad, Lyari, Pak Colony, Akhtar Colony and Old Golimar, said the sources. They added that incidents also occurred in Korangi Industrial Area, Landhi, Mahmoodabad, Shahrahe-Noorjahan and Hydari.

Antony Blinken postpones Middle East trip amid 'uncertainty'

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has postponed his trip to the Middle East, delaying his planned Tuesday departure, Axios reported ahead of planned Gaza ceasefire talks this week. The top US diplomat's travel was delayed over "uncertainty about the situation," Axios said, citing two unnamed sources. On Tuesday, Hamas fired two rockets aimed at Tel Aviv for the first time in months while Israel launched separate deadly airstrikes in Gaza. On Monday, US officials had said they expected Thursday's talks to continue as planned. Also on Tuesday, Blinken approved the possible sale of F-15 jets and equipment worth nearly \$19 billion. He also approved the possible sale of tank cartridges worth around \$774 million and army vehicles worth \$583 million, the Pentagon said. The tank rounds would be almost immediately available for delivery. The Boeing Co. F-15 fighter jets would take years to produce and deliver. The US has staunchly supported Israel as its top Middle East ally prosecutes a war in the Gaza Strip that has devastated the Palestinian enclave. - Agencies

Monsoon rains: NDMA warns of urban flooding in KP

Govt body directs all relevant departments to alert emergency response teams to ensure swift response

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: In light of the monsoon spell, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has warned of urban flooding in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from today till August 18 due to heavy rains which are expected to hit various parts of the province. Anticipating further rains, the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) of the NDMA said that moderate to heavy rains are expected in Hazara, Malakand Division, Peshawar, Bannu, DI Khan, Hangu, Haripur, Kohat, Kurram, Lucky Marwat, Mohmand, Orakzai and Waziristan areas. The development comes after the recent rains have resulted in as many as 178 fatalities, including 92 children, across the country since July with the collapse of homes being the biggest cause of death. The downpour, as per the NDMA, might cause urban flooding in various cities and flash flooding in hilly areas with an expected increase in the flow of water in the streams and nullahs.

Ukraine is advancing deeper into Russia, Zelenskiy says

Ukraine has carved out a slice of the Russian border region of Kursk and though Putin said the Russian army would push out the Ukrainian troops

KIEV: Ukraine said on Wednesday its forces had advanced further into Russia's Kursk region in the biggest foreign incursion into Russia since World War Two, posing a dilemma for President Vladimir Putin according to US President Joe Biden. Thousands of Ukrainian troops rammed through the Russian border in the early hours of August 6 into Russia's western Kursk region in what Putin called a major provocation aimed at gaining a stronger hand in possible future ceasefire talks. Ukraine has carved out a slice of the Russian border region of Kursk and though Putin said the Russian army would push out the Ukrainian troops, more than a week of intense battles have so far failed to oust them. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Kyiv's forces were continuing to gain ground in the Kursk region and that they had taken another one to two kilometres on Wednesday. "We continue to advance further in the

Kursk region," Zelenskiy wrote in a statement on Telegram. "from one to two kilometres in various areas since the start of the day. And more than 100 Russian prisoners of war in the same period." Russia's defence ministry said 117 Ukrainian drones had been shot down within its territory overnight, mostly in the Kursk, Voronezh, Belgorod and Nizhny Novgorod regions. It said missiles had also been downed, and showed Sukhoi Su-34 bombers striking Ukrainian positions in the Kursk region. Later, the ministry said Russian forces had repelled a series of Ukrainian attacks inside the Kursk region, including at Russkoye Porechnoye 18km from the border, and pro-Russian war bloggers said the front has been stabilised. The Ukrainian drone attack included strikes on four Russian military airfields in an attempt to undermine Russia's ability to attack Ukraine with gliding bombs, a Ukrainian security source told Reuters on condition of anonymity. Russia's National Guard said it was beefing up security at the Kursk nuclear power plant, located just 35km from the fighting. The Ukrainian assault into Russian territory has dramatically changed the narrative around the two-and-a-half-year-old war. Russia had been advancing in eastern Ukraine since the failure of Kyiv's 2023 counteroffensive to make any major gains against Russian forces. But Ukraine's unprecedented incursion also comes with major risks for Russia, Ukraine and the West, which is keen to avoid a direct confrontation between Russia and the US-led Nato military alliance that has helped arm Kyiv against Moscow. - Agencies



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