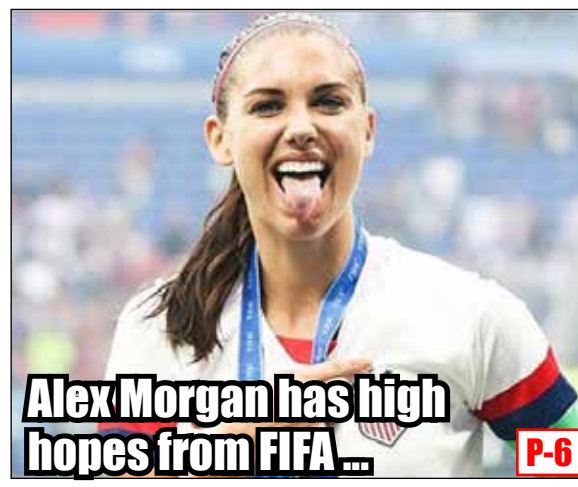




Pak gives shut-up call to Israel over rights issue **P-8**



Pak offers attractive investment incentives.. **P-5**



Alex Morgan has high hopes from FIFA... **P-6**



Showbiz News **P-7**



JAKARTA: Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad M. Khan paid a courtesy call on the Indonesian President Joko Widodo. The Foreign Secretary conveyed good wishes of the Pakistani leadership to President. – APP

FS hopes forum will take bilateral ties to new heights

Arsjad PM says Pakistan an important non-traditional trading partner of Indonesia

NEWS DESK

JAKARTA: Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan witnessed the signing ceremony for the establishment of the Pakistan-Indonesia Business Council, held on 13th July at the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KADIN) in Jakarta. Speaking on the occasion, the Foreign Secretary termed the establishment of Pakistan-Indonesia Business Council as an important step towards deepening of economic engagement and unlocking the vast potential within Pakistan-Indonesia partnership. He expressed hope that the Council will serve as a catalyst for further economic cooperation by improving business-to-business interaction, promoting joint ventures, generating employment opportunities, and reducing

poverty to build prosperous and resilient societies. In his keynote address, Chairman KADIN Mr. Arsjad Rasjid P.M. noted that Pakistan was an important non-traditional trading partner of Indonesia. He emphasized the immense potential for mutually beneficial economic ties between Pakistan and Indonesia and underscored the importance of long-term collaboration to unlock the untapped potential in both markets. He expressed KADIN's readiness to host interactive sessions and networking opportunities and to explore potential collaboration and forming lasting partnerships. The Foreign Secretary termed the establishment of Pakistan-Indonesia Business Council as an important step towards deepening of economic engagement and unlocking the vast potential within Pakistan-Indonesia partnership.

Army fumes over TTP safe havens

Terrorist attacks are intolerable, would elicit effective response from security forces: ISPR



News Desk

QUETTA: The country's armed forces have expressed serious concerns on the safe havens and liberty of action available to banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Afghanistan. This was said during Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir's visit to Quetta Garrison on Friday, where he was briefed on a recent terrorist attack in Zhob, military's media wing, the ISPR, said in a statement. "It is expected that interim Afghan Government would not allow the use of its soil to perpetrate terror against any country, in the real sense and in line with commitments made in Doha

Agreement," it said. According to the ISPR statement, the involvement of Afghan nationals in acts of terrorism in Pakistan is another important concern that needs to be addressed. "Such attacks are intolerable and would elicit effective response from the Security Forces of Pakistan," it added. The army chief during visit paid rich tribute to the Shuhada, visited the injured soldiers at CMH, Quetta, and lauded their services to the nation and appreciated their resolve. The military's media wing said that operations against terrorists would continue unabated and the armed forces shall not rest till the menace of terrorism is rooted out from the country.

Earlier on arrival, the COAS was received by Commander Quetta Corps. A Day earlier, nine Pakistan Army soldiers embraced martyrdom while five terrorists were killed after security forces retaliated to a "dastardly attack" on the Zhob garrison in northern Balochistan on Wednesday, the military's media affairs wing said. In a statement issued in the morning, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the militants launched the attack in the early hours of Wednesday, following which four soldiers were martyred and five others were injured. The terrorists' initial attempt "to sneak into the facility was checked by soldiers on duty", the ISPR said,

Over 14,000 evacuated from flooded areas

Abbas Hashmi

LAHORE: Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday said over 14,000 people had been evacuated by Rescue 1122 from the province's flood-affected areas so far. Pakistan's central region has been facing a flood situation for days as the northern states of India, where the catchment areas of the Sutlej and Ravi rivers are located, have witnessed torrential downpours in the past week. Consequently, India has been releasing more water towards the downstream areas in Pakistan. A day ago, a rescue operation was conducted in the province's Kasur district as water from the Sutlej River flooded 15 villages, deprived four others of electricity and washed away standing crops. Sharing the evacuation data in a Twitter post today, Naqvi said he had visited villages beyond the Talwar Post relief camp near the Ganda Singh border with India in Kasur to oversee the rescue operations in the villages surrounded by flood water.

PM breaks ground on Chashma NPP Unit-5

MIANWALI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday broke ground on the 1,200 MW Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit 5 (C-5) in Mianwali, which is likely to be completed in seven to eight years at a cost of around \$3.48 billion. On June 30, 2023, the prime minister witnessed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the C-5 project between China National Nuclear Corporation Overseas Ltd (CNOS) and the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC). Addressing the ground-breaking ceremony at Chashma, the prime minister said the project should be completed before the given schedule keeping in mind the country's requirements for clean and cheap energy sources. Terming it a huge milestone and a symbol of cooperation between the two great friends — China and Pakistan — Shehbaz said the project would help the country promote clean, efficient and comparatively cheaper energy. He said after a pause of many years, the China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC) was going again in full swing. He gave the credit of concluding the agreement of C-5 to the coalition government and the SPD for their hard efforts. "Our detractors had been fabricating rumours all around that Pakistan was going to default on its sovereign commitments but we crossed all turbulent waters in just 15 months," he added. However, he said the risk of potential default had been completely averted through the team effort of the government. The prime minister said a couple of days ago, there was an approval of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme, and within 48 hours, around \$4.5 billion were transferred by Pakistan's brotherly countries Saudi Arabia and UAE, besides another \$1.2 billion from the IMF. About four months ago, he said the Chinese government and commercial banks rolled over amounts back to Pakistan to the tune of \$5 billion. He paid his tributes to Chinese President Xi Jinping,

IMF approves \$3 billion loan for Pakistan

WASHINGTON: The executive board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Wednesday approved the \$3 billion Standby Arrangement for Pakistan, which was finalised at the end of June. The lender also approved the release of the first tranche of US\$ 1.2 Billion to Pakistan. The global lender said that the programme would focus on the "implementation of the FY24 budget to facilitate Pakistan's needed fiscal adjustment and ensure debt sustainability". The approval allows for an immediate disbursement of \$1.2 billion. "The remaining amount will be phased over the programme's duration, subject to two quarterly reviews," it added. Islamabad signed a short-term IMF deal on June 30 under a standby arrangement, under which the nation is set to receive \$3 billion over nine months, subject to approval by the IMF's board. Pakistan's external financing

environment has improved since then as Fitch Ratings Inc. upgraded the cash-strapped country by one notch to CCC long-term foreign currency issuer rating this week. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Wednesday said the United Arab Emirates had deposited \$1 billion with the State Bank of Pakistan. Saudi Arabia has also deposited \$2 billion into the account of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Finance Minister Ishaq Dar confirmed Tuesday, a major development to ease the country's fiscal turmoil. These funds are crucial for securing the IMF deal as the global lender had conditioned the release of loan with the deposition of funds by countries including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and China. **UAE deposits \$1bn in State Bank: Dar** ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ish-

aq Dar on Wednesday said the United Arab Emirates had deposited \$1 billion with the State Bank of Pakistan. These funds are crucial for securing the IMF deal as the global lender had conditioned the release of loan with the deposition of funds by countries including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and China. Saudi Arabia has already credited \$2 billion into the SBP's account. Addressing the presser, Dar said this deposit would improve the SBP's forex reserves, adding that he was thankful to the UAE's government on behalf of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir. "Pakistan will restore its image in the world," he vowed. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said he was optimistic that the International Monetary Fund will approve a \$3 billion bailout at its board meeting on Wednesday. –Agencies

RASTA launched two much-awaited reports on "Power, Profit & Plans"

PIDE has also proposed introducing paid Parking in Islamabad to mitigate traffic congestion in the city; 69.3% of the parkers are willing to pay for Parking

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) and RASTA jointly hold a book/report launch event at the Planning Commission of Pakistan, Islamabad.

The highly anticipated gathering brought together esteemed experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to address the urgent challenges surrounding the housing sector in the country. Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Vice Chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), addressed the audience and highlighted the key challenges and opportunities in the sector. "Power, Profit & Plans" delves into the political economy of housing in Pakistan, uncovering the unequal development patterns and socio-economic disparities prevalent in the urban landscape. The Book underscores the pressing need for institutional and policy reforms, highlighting the role of improved governance in addressing the housing crisis. The Book offers a comprehensive analysis and roadmap for addressing Pakistan's housing challenges. Mr. Nasir Javed, Editor of the book, apprised the participants by presenting key features of the Book titled: "Power, Profit & Plans: The Political Economy of Housing in Pakistan" is a multi-author book that highlights that urbanization in Pakistan, addition to the Slow and Steady flow of economic migrants from a rural area, had added at least six spikes starting with the migration of 1947, wars, floods, terrorism, etc. These unusual spikes placed pressure on urban housing, coupled with rapid



population growth and institutional inefficiencies and complexities, described as 'institutional spaghetti,' has led to the housing crisis. While speaking at the occasion, Mr. Pervaiz Latif Qureshi, Urban Development Expert, said that the Book offers a number of policy, institutional, financing, and taxation reforms that are likely to improve housing affordability, especially for the middle and lower classes. PIDE has also proposed introducing paid Parking in Islamabad to mitigate traffic congestion in the city. The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) also launched a study on introducing paid Parking in Islamabad at the occasion.

Speaking at the book launch titled "Traffic Management & Congestion

Mitigation: Parking Policy for ICT", in his presentation by Dr. Idrees Khawaja, Former Chief of Research, PIDE, said that the study undertaken on the demand of the Capital Development Authority argues that free Parking is, in a sense a subsidy to car owners and encourages car use beyond the optimal limit. The idea of the study emerged in a meeting between VC PIDE Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque and the then Chairman CDA, Mr. Amer Ali Ahmed, in January 2022. Dr. Haque proposed introducing paid Parking in Islamabad to reduce traffic congestion. Mr. Ahmed jumped on the idea and formally asked PIDE to propose the conceptual design and determine the idea's viability. To devise a parking plan for Islamabad on a pilot basis, the PIDE team surveyed

66 parking locations in 17 busy markets of Islamabad. The survey was undertaken to determine the demand and supply of Parking. The survey findings suggest that in several locations and during several hours of the day, the demand for Parking exceeds the supply, leading motorists to spend considerable time cruising for Parking, spending extra fuel, and Parking in the streets. A survey was also undertaken at selected locations to assess the willingness to pay for Parking. The findings suggest that 69.3% of the parkers are willing to pay for Parking. The conceptual design of parking lots and other designated parking places, recommended by the PIDE study, would have the following elements: Car parking stalls, Motorbike parking

stalls, buffers; sidewalks & frontages; crosswalks, ramps & bollards; vegetation medians & green parking stalls, Accessibility to Parking for differentially abled persons, Bus stops, delivery parking & taxi stand. Parking of cars at different angles (perpendicular, parallel, 30°, 45°, and 60°) has been recommended depending on the layout of the parking lot and other situational factors. The study recommends the installation of parking meters and the developing of a parking app to collect parking fees. The study contains suggestions on viable meters and gives a prototype of the proposed parking app for collecting parking fees. The entire mechanism must be monitored by CCTV cameras and supplemented by manual monitoring by traffic wardens. - APP

Religious tourism can generate millions

RAJA PERVAIZ

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) Punjab have agreed to put joint efforts to promote religious tourism to earn foreign exchange. These views were expressed by Acting President RCCI Faisal Shahzad in a meeting with Secretary Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) Punjab Rana Muhammad Arif at the chamber house. Faisal said that Pakistan has a largely unexplored avenue of tourism in the religious sector primarily Sikh and Buddhist tourism which can potentially generate millions of dollars for Pakistan, and create over 100,000 jobs. Pakistan contains numerous sacred sites of different religions like Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism that can easily be transformed into tourist destinations, he added. Secretary ETPB Punjab Rana Muhammad Arif informed that the ETPB was working to develop international competitive religious tourism sector to fully realize its diverse potential and making religious tourism a leading economic sector for the country through public-private partnership.

Huawei Powers first national Hyper-Scale Financial Cloud

Islamabad:- Huawei Technologies Ltd and Khazana Enterprise have taken a monumental step to build the first of its kind, hyper-scaler financial cloud in the country. They announced this at the launch event attended by the key leaders from the financial industry, government and business sectors of Pakistan. The First National In-Country Cloud is a leap... not just for the ICT Industry in Pakistan but for the economy as a whole. Pakistan is denied of millions of dollars for access to Cloud Services. No longer will that be the case. This initiative paves the way for entities to opt for a solution in Pakistan that benefits local businesses and the exchequer.

Mr. Nadeem Hussain the Executive Chairman of Planet N Group said in his welcome note; "I congratulate Huawei Management and Khazana team for this successful cloud launch which is first of its type. If you want digital Pakistan, then you have tons of data and this data needs to be stored somewhere either physical storage or on a cloud and the world has demonstrated the benefits of cloud over physical data storage i.e. flexibility, agility, cost cyber security etc. Huawei Cloud is the answer to all above being one of the top cloud service providers. Lastly SBP is giving an enabling environment for the in-country cloud that can be used both for the material or non-material data" Mr. Bob Din, Chairman Khazana said, "I congratulate the tech industry of Pakistan specially Khazana Team.

'Around 600 illegal housing societies operating in twin cities'

Web Desk

ISLAMABAD: Around 600 illegal housing societies have been operating in twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad without any formal approval, Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Captain (R) Noorul Amin Mengal told the National Assembly Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination. The 35th meeting of the committee was held here at the CDA Secretariat to receive briefing on comprehensive report on implementation status of the previous recommendations of the Committee, complete details of Housing Societies in Islamabad (legal and illegal) causing severe damage to the environment and sewerage system in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), briefing on all restaurants located on Margalla Hills causing severe damage to the environment with poor sewerage system, and especially the complete case study of Monal Restaurant with previous follow up. Chairperson MNA, Nuzhat Pathan presided the committee and expressed her resentment over late arrival of the Chairman CDA in the Committee meeting whereas the Authority officials had informed the chair that the latter was in the Court for personal hearing. The Chair-

man CDA informed that there were some 318 illegal housing societies in Rawalpindi and 150 housing societies in Islamabad whereas most of these societies were in Fatehjang, Rawalpindi Tehsil. The cumulative figure of these illegal or unauthorized societies was falling between 568-600 societies alongwith some 100 illegal societies being established in the adjoining Attock district. The Chairperson took the floor to seek information from the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination on Soybean Seeds import summary pending in the Ministry causing increase in the prices of poultry products.

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change, Musaddik Ahmed Khan briefed the forum in detail on the context of the issue and informed that there were alternates to the poultry feed already available in the market and there was no such shortage but rather it was exploitative tactic by the Poultry industry. MNA, Romina Khrushid Alam on her agenda item expressed her resentment on the response submitted by IWMB and CDA pertaining to installation of streetlights in the National Park. "There are serious concerns of CDA on installing street lights in Margalla Hills National Park is strange. There are solutions to it as sensor-based

lights could be used to illuminate the hiking tracks. The language needs to be changed," she said. There are 102 gutter lids stolen in the federal capital and a day earlier two individuals including a father and son died after the boy fell into the gutter and got suffocated due to gas. She proposed that the Committee should strongly recommend the federal cabinet for appointing a highly qualified member in CDA to take environmental matters on priority basis and also from EPA. Member, Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB), Waqar Zekria informed the forum that most of the species in Margalla Hills National Park were nocturnal and were impacted by lights at night. The guidelines for visitors of trails were very clear that they should after sunrise and leave the national park before sunset, he added. He mentioned that the more the traffic the more would be the damage to nature in the national park whereas on average there were over 5,000 visitors visiting trails at the weekends. "We will propose a timing of 9-10 pm to provide full lights in the national park and then halt entry into the national park to sustain wildlife," he added. Chairman CDA Noor ul Amin Mengal said there were few view points and paths that needed street lights and it should be installed there but the rest was a protected and jungle area with a controlled entry.

President asks bank to apologize to fraud victim

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has rejected a representation filed by Bank Alfalah Ltd (BAFL) against the decision of Banking Mohtasib directing it to send an apology to a customer for enabling online transaction/payment system on his credit card without his consent and neglecting his timely complaint about a disputed transaction. He said that when Internet Banking Facility was provided by a bank to its customers, it was incumbent upon the bank to educate its customers about its pros and cons. He also directed BAFL to refund the lost amount of Rs 66,850 along with the profit to the customer. The President gave these remarks while deciding upon a case wherein Muhammad Yar (the complainant) had filed a complaint before the Banking Mohtasib stating that he had a Bank Alfalah Credit Card and a scam of Rs.66,850/- occurred on his Credit Card when his card was used at Noon-e-Commerce solution. He informed the bank that he had not done this transaction and requested to stop this online transaction/payment. The bank had initially reversed this transaction amount but surprisingly after six months, the bank had deducted this amount from his Credit Card. Feeling aggrieved, he escalated his complaint before the Banking Mohtasib which directed BAFL to refund the lost amount. The Bank, then, President against the decision of the Mohtasib. The hearing of the case and rejected the representation of the that the complainant was net/Digital Banking and became aware of the transaction on receipt of a call from the bank's real-time Monitoring Unit wherein he told the Bank's representative that he did not perform the disputed transaction.

Pakistan-China collaboration will have impact on agri sector

ISLAMABAD: A delegation, led by Mr. Wu Yuelang, Department of Science and Technology, Hubei Province, China visited the National Agricultural Research Center (NARC) in Islamabad as part of their visit to Pakistan. Prof. Dr. Iqar Ahmed Khan, Vice Chancellor University of Agriculture Faisalabad, and Dr. Muhammad Jaffar Jaskani, Director ORIC, along with other high official from University of Agriculture Faisalabad

were also present at the occasion. The delegation included Ms. Shi Hong, Director of the Social Development Technology Division, Mr. Ye Lin, an Officer from Hubei Province, Mr. Xiao Xuan, the Deputy Dean of Hubei General Hospital, and other esteemed officials from Hubei Province, China. Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Chairman of Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), extended a warm welcome to the esteemed guests and presented

an overview of PARC's endeavors dedicated to fostering innovation in the agriculture sector. Dr. Ali highlighted that PARC actively engaged in agricultural research and development across ten distinct agro-ecological regions of the country, forging collaborations with domestic as well as international institutions. Furthermore, Dr. Ali highlighted the longstanding partnership between PARC and Chinese research institutes in the field of agriculture.



13 PDM parties will be at daggers drawn soon

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad said on Wednesday that unholy alliance of 13 parties will be at daggers drawn soon. Their ill-assorted group would dismember shortly and differences among parties will be out in public. In a message on the social networking site Twitter, Mr Rashid said that the countdown would begin from 20th and result will be out by 12th August. Public would come to know by August 10 that elections would be held in 60 or 90 days, he said. The AML head said what happened with

Punjab elections could not happen with National Assembly polls. He said everyone was giving his own date, but Supreme Court would give stunning decisions in this regard and the election will essentially be held. He said the Election Commission was busy in making preparations for elections. The former interior minister said Nawaz Sharif's disqualification could only be revoked through a constitutional amendment. Sharif started his self-accountability from the National Assembly and addressed the lower house. He said the Supreme Court asked him

(Sharif) to establish a JIT, he complied with the orders. The former federal minister said that the JIT and the Supreme Court extended full opportunity to Sharif for defending himself. The five-member bench pronounced the verdict and Qatari letter could not rescue him. He was disqualified for life, Mr Rashid said. The AML chief said Sharif went to Saudi Arabia after tendering a written apology. Using a 50-rupee stamp paper, he departed for London on pretext of his illness. The head of Awami Muslim League said, - Agencies



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb inaugurating the foundation stone for the construction of cinema building of projects at Radio Pakistan Station building. —APP

High production cost real threat to Small-Scale Businesses

KARACHI: The ever-increasing cost of production in the country is the real threat to both large-scale manufacturing (LSM) and small-scale businesses (SMEs), as frequent upward revisions in policy rate and continuous fluctuations in rupee against dollar are posing further challenges in spite of optimism about foreign reserves, reaching over \$14 billion by the end of August 2023. This was stated by FPCCI former president and Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar, observing that the aggressive economic measures, high borrowing rates, inflation, oppressive taxation and unstable currency have been negatively affecting running businesses, many of which have closed their operations, while the remaining are struggling for survival. With a view to deal with fiscal challenges Mian Anjum asked the government to work on the three-way strategy by implementing short-term goals that will help to

keep generating resources for smooth fiscal operations, medium-term goals where the government should focus on financial inclusion, documenting the economy by designing a system where all businesses can be registered and properly document their income including collection of sales tax, initiating the process of privatization as well as improving governance by introducing reforms in each sector. As a long-term goal, the country must focus on improving its human capital, and revamping IT sectors by extending facilitations and providing all the requisite supports. In the same way, we also need to work on designing a comprehensive and proactive strategy to tackle challenges related to strengthening border security and implementing effective and comprehensive Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing measures holding accountable and taking to task all those who are involved in illegitimate

activities, undermining both our economy and national interests. The BMP Chief said that the government does not have any pragmatic plan to address this liability, apart from asking for more loans to repay existing debt. Likewise, the target for current financial year's exports is too low to meet the country's revenue. The conventional approach of focusing solely on improving exports while pursuing a passive and imprudent foreign policy towards neighboring countries, poses a significant challenge in meeting export targets. Despite strained relations, the United States remains the largest importer of Pakistani products. Still, there are no efforts to tap into the vast markets of neighboring countries or negotiate trade agreements with them. Even though Pakistan and China enjoy close relations yet the volume of exports to China is significantly lower compared to USA. Furthermore, the

existing Pakistan China Free Trade Agreement (PCFTA) tends to benefit Chinese-origin corporations more than Pakistani businesses, giving them greater market access at the expense of Pakistani products. Mian Anjum Nisar said that the government is neglecting two important factors, namely, Information Technology and export of human capital that together can contribute towards generating foreign exchange and mobilizing revenue. It is essential to concentrate on nurturing a skilled workforce and assisting them in securing international employment opportunities. This approach would have a positive impact on our foreign policy and help in building foreign exchange reserves. Given the era of the fourth industrial revolution, Pakistan should prioritize facilitating IT businesses, enabling their access to international markets. By doing so, we can assert our fair share in the international market for

IT-related exports. It is good that State Bank of Pakistan has outlined the central bank's vision for the future, with a strong focus on price stability. According to him, SBP has set a medium-term inflation target of 5% to 7% and is determined to achieve this goal within the next two years. In addition, efforts are being made to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and stability in the financial sector. To this end, 'Strategic Plan SBP Vision 2028' has been developed, aiming to improve centre bank's credibility, independence, and inclusiveness. The SBP further emphasised the need to expand access to financial services for a larger segment of population and revealed that under Vision 2028, efforts would be made to bring more people into formal financial system. Furthermore, SBP is planning to connect Pakistan's remittance system with Arab Monetary Funds (AMF) Bana, a cross-border payment system. — APP

Jl to ensure basic necessities of citizens if comes into power: Siraj

DERA ISMAIL KHAN :Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) chief Siraj ul Haq on Sunday claimed that if his party comes into power it would ensure the provision of basic necessities of citizens in the country. He stated this while addressing a 'workers convention' of his party as a chief guest which was organized here at a local marriage hall. He said if his party would be given a mandate by the people it would ensure the provision of education to the children, allowance to the elder citizens and health facilities for all citizens. He strongly condemned the incident of desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden and demanded the government expel the Swedish ambassador from the country. On this occasion, General Secretary (GS) of Jamaat-e-Islami Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Abdul Wasi said that Jamaat-e-Islami was an organization of brotherhood and love and always stands firm in front of oppressors. — APP

CTI lauds EDF for best training programs

LAHORE: Chairman of Carpet Training Institute (CTI) Ijazur Rehman has said that the ongoing training programs in the institutes established by the Export Development Fund (EDF) need to be further improved according to contemporary requirements. He said that keeping in view the promotion of exports, these programs should be research and development based to make them industry friendly," adding he said that by equipping the skilled with modernity and technology, the best export products can be supplied in the global markets. He expressed these views while talking to the beneficiaries of the training programs of CTI here on Sunday. Ijazur Rehman said that the objective of EDF is to remove the barriers faced by the exporters of export services, manufacturers of export products and general exporters in Pakistan so as to increase. —DNA

SAARC-CCI President Iftikhar Malik chairs round table conference

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former president Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday said economic integration in South Asia holds immense potential to drive economic growth, reduce poverty, enhance regional cooperation, and contribute to peace and stability. Chairing a round table conference on "Economic Integration in South Asia" here on Sunday, he said economic integration attracts foreign direct investment, as it offers a more unified and attractive market for investors. Increased FDI inflows bring capital, technology, and expertise, boosting productivity, employment, and economic growth in the region, he added. He

said Integration fosters cross-border infrastructure development, including transportation networks, power grids, and telecommunications systems. Improved infrastructure connectivity reduces transportation costs, enhances regional connectivity, and promotes trade and investment, he added. He said integration is of significant importance for the region's development and overall well-being. He said it promotes trade facilitation by reducing trade barriers of tariffs, customs procedures, and non-tariff barriers. This enables the smooth flow of goods and services across borders, leading to increased trade volumes and economic growth, he added. Iftikhar Ali Malik

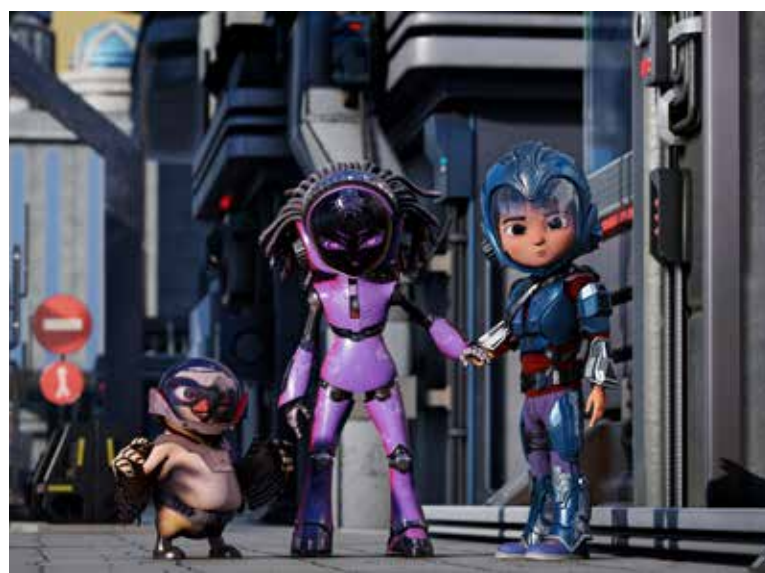
said Integrating economies create a larger market with increased purchasing power. This expanded market provides businesses with access to a broader consumer base, which encourages investment and stimulates economic activity. It allows businesses to exploit economies of scale and specialization, enhancing productivity and competitiveness. He said integration facilitates the exchange of knowledge, technology, and best practices among countries as well as this transfer of knowledge promotes innovation, improves productivity, and helps countries upgrade their industries and enhance their competitiveness. He said integration

can help foster political stability and peace in the region. When countries engage in mutually beneficial economic cooperation, they have a stake in maintaining peaceful relations and resolving disputes through dialogue and negotiation rather than conflict. Concluding, he said by leveraging the collective strength of the region, South Asian countries can achieve greater prosperity and improve the quality of life for their citizens. He said integration promotes cultural exchange, tourism, and people-to-people connectivity. It enables greater interaction among the people of different countries in the region, fostering understanding, tolerance, and cooperation. — APP

Allahyar and 100 Flowers of God holds a special show to a packed audience

ISLAMABAD: Allahyar and the 100 Flowers of God, Pakistan's first-ever stereoscopic, 3D film directed by Uzair Zaheer Khan and produced by 3rd World Studios, released on Eid ul-Azha, held a thunderous special show here today, for the benefit of media, socialites and celebrities. After a bustling Red Carpet in which the cast of the film and many more notable celebrities were spotted giving interviews and getting photographed, the audience were ushered into the cinema to view the film in 3D. The highly entertaining Pakistani action-packed animation film that boasts of an A-list cast received a standing ovation and a thunderous response from everyone present at the event. The audience was in awe of the amazing animation and

cinematography, and thoroughly enjoyed the first 3D Pakistani production. The film contains OSTs from Ali Zafar, SanamMarvi, Ali Noor, Grehan the band amongst others. Transporting viewers into a magical world filled with wonder, adventure, and valuable life lessons, the film follows the captivating journey of young Allahyar, a brave boy who must overcome his fears and join forces with an unlikely group of magical creatures to save the beautiful enchanted valley from destruction. An exciting, fast-paced, adventure Allahyar ends up saving their planet from an imminent doom, caused by decades of deforestation and pollution and gives it to a clean renewable energy option. The other



prominent themes explored in this story are social inequality and injustice, as well as strength in unity and the value of friendship. It is a film that celebrates life through relatable and relevant characters that are both visually appealing and culturally appropriate role-models for youngsters to idolize. Starring Iqra Aziz as Aira, Azfar Jafri as Hero, Anum Zaidi as Allahyar, Ali Zafar as Minister, Meera as Bush Princes, Humayun Saeed as Sage, Bushra Ansari as Aunty Liz, Nadia Jamilas as Cameo and Azlan as Azlan, the film lives up to its promise of quality acting along with action, drama and comedy, and what's more, social messages that were greatly appreciated by the audience. After the screening of the film, the cast and

crew were available for questions and answers. Speaking on the occasion, Uzair Zaheer Khan, the director/producer of the film, said "We are thrilled to unveil 'Allahyar and the 100 Flowers of God' as Pakistan's first-ever, 3D animated film. Produced with meticulous attention to detail and a passion for storytelling, this project is the culmination of years of hard work, creativity, and the tireless efforts of our talented team. As you saw, the studio's relentless pursuit of excellence, coupled with cutting-edge technology, has brought this imaginative tale to life in a visually stunning 3D animation format. We are proud to be a part of Pakistan's growing animation industry and contributing to its development." — APP



Crucial stabilizer of global supply chains

CHINA'S announcement last week that it will impose export controls on germanium and gallium — two raw materials that are used in a wide variety of products including computer chips and solar panels — should be beyond reproach, given that controls on exports are a customary international practice. Yet the step China has taken has drawn strong opposition from the United States which, out of ulterior motives, is deliberately misportraying the move as being disruptive to the global supply chains. A US Commerce Department spokesperson saying that the US will engage with its allies “to address this (problem) and to build resilience in critical supply chains” is an ironical case of a thief crying “stop thief”, because no other country has inflicted such huge damage on the global supply chains as the US, not least through the wanton restrictions it has imposed on supplying China with advanced memory chips and chip-making equipment. In its latest move, the US government is reportedly preparing to restrict Chinese companies’ access to US cloud-computing services, by requiring cloud-service providers such as Amazon and Microsoft to seek the US government’s permission before providing services to Chinese customers. Although Chinese companies are the main suppliers of the two metals, there are other suppliers in Japan, the Republic of Korea, Europe and the US that also provide the materials. The Chinese authorities are just requiring that the Chinese suppliers get approval before exporting certain products that might be employed in ways that threaten the country’s security. It is the US’ weaponizing of such a practice targeting China that is rattling global supply chains. China, despite all the claims to the contrary, has always worked to safeguard the global supply chains, which have become more vulnerable nowadays due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, high inflation worldwide, and soaring global commodity prices. For years, the country has been a stabilizing force for the global supply chains, through its robust trade with other countries, as well as its manufacturing prowess that has enabled it to provide the bulk of components, raw and processed materials, to manufacturers globally. Those who worry about China’s “fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory” rules on germanium and gallium, that will come into effect on Aug 1, ignore the fact that they will have a limited impact on global supply given their targeted scope. Under the new rules, exporters in China only need to get approval from the authorities for exports of eight gallium and six germanium products. Some Chinese producers and their foreign customers have reportedly already started to apply for the permits. In today’s interdependent world, countries must work together to make the global supply chains secure and stable. Confrontational sanctions and protectionist policies, such as those loved and abused by the US, serve no good.

NATO’s communique

ALTHOUGH the North Atlantic Treaty Organization claims in the opening of the Vilnius Summit Communique it issued on Tuesday that its member states are “bound by shared values of individual liberty, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law”, what the rest of the lengthy document of nearly 12,000 words shows is somewhat different. Thirty members of the bloc are certainly bound by something they have in common. That is the surrendering of their autonomy in subservience to the other member. The 90 points of the communique expose how the bloc has been transformed from a so-called shared defense organization to a geopolitical tool of the United States. Notably, at least five to six out of the communique’s 90 points are partly or wholly related to China, whose “stated ambitions and coercive policies” supposedly challenge the interests, security and values of the NATO members. The communique alleges that China poses “systemic challenges” to “Euro-Atlantic security” and the country is employing “a broad range of political, economic and military tools to increase its global footprint and project power, while remaining opaque about its strategy, intentions and military build-up”. However, the world has heard such remarks time and again. Successive US administrations have distorted China’s position and policy and deliberately sought to smear China with such talk. The communique’s virtue signaling is intended to contrast the self-professed moral correctness of the NATO members with the rise of a “despicable evil empire”. It is a scheme they have presented to the world before. Yet no matter how hard they try, the US and its NATO allies cannot blot out the true revealers of China’s character. The country has made unique contributions to global development, peace and stability, whether it be the public goods of its four initiatives, its poverty alleviation efforts or its role as a driver of the world economy. Washington cannot cover up the true nature of NATO either. As a product of the Cold War, NATO has a long history of wrongdoing. Against the backdrop of the deteriorating international security situation, the NATO members, instead of reflecting on how they can fulfill the organization’s stated purpose of building trust and preventing conflict, continue to interfere in extraterritorial affairs and promote confrontation. Moreover, NATO’s repeated declaration in the communique that it is a “nuclear alliance” is not at all helpful to realizing the goal of a world without such weapons. NATO, as a whole, unlike some of its members, has never been “open to constructive engagement with” China as it claims in the joint statement. And as long as it continues to cling to its Cold War mentality and the US security umbrella, it will never be able to have “constructive engagement” with counties both without, and within, the alliance.

Creating awareness about population growth

IN the world of today, information is available on a click of a finger. I did the same to know Pakistan’s population as of now and www.worldometers.info showed a figure of 234,480,525 LIVE whereas the world’s population is 8 billion LIVE. However, having said that do keep in mind that no matter how fast you are scrolling, the world population is growing with every word that skitters beneath your eyeballs and when you will read this piece, do not hold the writer responsible for wrong information. Scrolling down on the home page, the information material available is a treasure-trove as one finds, charts, data’s, statistics, analysis and all sorts of numbers but please be forewarned, its not at all a pleasant reading rather an eye opener. The onus is not only on the government, the rulers, the politicians, the NGO’s but also the quintessential... the citizens of Pakistan. Now the question arises how will the stakeholders be handling the issues such as environment science, economics, healthcare and urban planning directly related to over population, when the world continues to add relentlessly to the number of consumers and Pakistan in the winning line being the 5th most populous country in the world. The right answer to this question is politics and politicians. If Over Population issue is even in the same cliched list were fighting Corruption, making

Pakistan a business-friendly hub, deterrence against the country’s staunch enemies is drummed again and again in the election campaigns, rallies and political manifesto’s, house of Senate and Parliament, then it cannot be over looked or put in a freezer. The stakeholders in the corridors of power, in election campaigns, in the parliament and in the air-condition board meetings over luncheons toy with the words like, empowerment of women, promotion of gender, female emancipation, decision making so on and so forth. Unfortunately, these words cannot walk the talk until and unless another four-letter word “male” is added along because “do in Rome as the Romans do”. Along with educating the women, men need to be educated as well. Similarly, when we talk about women empowerment, men need to be told that this does not imply as men’s disempowerment. The point is, take the partner along, apply the gender equality formula in decision making as well by not divorcing the male gender who is part and parcel in this decision, as well as on its outcomes. The World Population Day, 11th of July has been observed since 1990 but how much has been achieved is what needs to be looked into. Are the wheels turning backwards on environmental control, is Healthcare in a better shape now, has urban planning yielded any results or are the economic figures showing an upward trend!

The growing human population is looking for any nook and corner to settle down and built a shelter, be it in urban or rural area thus directly affecting the environment. “Population rise and environment degradation is considered to be the biggest threat to humankind” according to UN survey of a select few Nobel laureates placing even nuclear war below in the list to Over Population. Zeroing it on developing countries, this threat is here to stay along with its multiple effects expanding on daily bases. The challenge is not one but numerous, starting with unemployment, healthcare, income distribution and security, leave alone, education, clean water, food and living conditions. How will the development countries achieve social and economic development when rapid growth makes it even more difficult for the developing countries to provide basic healthcare to its people leave alone a roof to sleep or even on meal a day. The natural disasters in the shape of floods and earthquakes are a prime example in Pakistan where so much was pledged during the visits of foreign leaders, international donors, NGO’s and during international conferences held in the name of “Climate Change”. How much has been delivered to Pakistan and how much has Pakistan delivered onwards to its affected citizens. Therefore, SDG goals and targets like reproductive health, gender equality, empowerment of women to have her say do not take priority on top of the list when

even basic health Is in scarcity, when gender equality is looked from one eye and when empowerment of women only means her right to say yes or no. Pakistan is slowly inching towards General Elections which provides a golden opportunity for the political parties to revisit their manifestos and upgrade the issue of Population Control in their agendas. Those planning to run independently too should not divorce themselves from this responsibility as well. However, having said that, the onus is not just on the politicians, NGOs, influencers and media industry should also needs to take responsibility and play its decisive role in hammering the issue over and over again through their respective mediums starting from today. Actions speak louder than words, so just sitting in a Prime-time talk show and making a statement or pledge is not where the discussion should end, but a serious commitment, a factual timeline and resolute solution will guarantee a viewer’s decision on the candidacy during the election fever. Support audience as an International donor, private sectors will also be very important to galvanize through direct engagements with government stakeholders, Influencer audience should engage principal audience to increase motivation and commitment towards elections through social media, podcast, tools whereas Core audience should engage through direct advocacy supported by strategic tools.

Pakistan’s Role to promote unity and co-op in muslim world

PAKISTAN is a country with Islam as its ideological basis. It came into existence based on the principle of a state. Consequently, it is known as the fortress of Islam. Pakistan is the only atomic power in the Islamic world, which gives it a prominent position among nations worldwide. Not only does Pakistan play an important role in resolving controversies among Islamic nations, but it also has a significant influence in solving global issues. Pakistan maintains religious, political, economic, and social relationships with Muslim countries. In this regard, the reawakening of the Islamic conference and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is particularly noteworthy. Pakistan is actively working towards the mutual interests of the Islamic world. Considering the current situation in Afghanistan and to promote trade and economic relations with Central Asian states, Pakistan is implementing practical policies. International efforts for the reconstruction of infrastructure in western Afghanistan draw inspiration from Pakistan’s example. If Pakistan succeeds in creating unity among Islamic nations, the Muslim world will gain a significant position on the global stage. Pakistan’s relations with important nations in the Islamic world are outlined below, highlighting their political, social, economic, and military cooperation and development.

First component is the basis of Pakistan’s relations with the Muslim world and why Pakistan attaches great importance to these relationships. Pakistan advocates for Pan-Islamism in the global system, emphasizing unity and cooperation among Muslim states to effectively project and protect their interests. Pakistan also supports Muslim causes at the international level, both in global forums and on bilateral platforms. The Muslims of the subcontinent have deep-rooted connections with Islamic countries based on religion. They have consistently demonstrated brotherhood and support on numerous occasions. Even during the Pakistan movement, Muslims in India followed a policy of close bilateral relations with Muslim countries. Pan-Islamism and Islamic values were strong drivers behind the demand for a separate Muslim nation. After partition, Pakistan continued to prioritize close bilateral relations with Muslim nations. Furthermore, Pakistan’s relations with the Muslim world on a country-to-country basis, or what we call bilateral levels, are also significant. The Constitution of Pakistan highlights the importance of maintaining and pursuing close and cordial relations with the Muslim world as one of its guiding principles. Therefore, it is constitutionally imperative for the government of Pakistan to maintain friendly relations with the Muslim

world. It is not a recent development, even before independence, the Muslims of this region and the leadership of the independence movement supported the Muslim cause globally. After independence, this commitment became a permanent and integral part of Pakistan’s foreign policy. Now let’s move on to the second aspect of today’s lecture, which deals with multilateral relations. These are the relations of Pakistan with other countries involving several nations simultaneously. In the multilateral arena, we can discuss Pakistan’s support for the decolonization of the Muslim world. After gaining independence, Pakistan championed the cause of liberation for Muslim states under foreign control or domination. Pakistan provided moral support for the independence of Indonesia, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Sudan, and Eritrea. Notably, Pakistan played a significant role in supporting Algeria’s long freedom movement, and upon Algeria’s independence, Pakistan welcomed this positive change as another Muslim nation had achieved independence and sovereignty. Pakistan’s ideological basis as an Islamic country has shaped its relationships with the Muslim world. It holds a prominent position among nations due to being the only atomic power in the Islamic world. Pakistan plays a crucial role in resolving controversies among Islamic nations and

addressing global issues. The country has religious, political, economic, and social ties with Muslim countries, demonstrated through its participation in organizations like the Islamic Conference and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Pakistan strives for mutual interests and unity among Islamic nations, and its cooperation with Central Asian states and efforts in reconstructing Afghanistan contribute to regional stability. By promoting unity among Islamic nations, Pakistan aims to elevate the Muslim world’s position on the global stage. Pakistan’s relations with Muslim countries are built on the foundations of Pan-Islamism, support for Muslim causes, and the deep-rooted association of the Muslims of the subcontinent with the Islamic world. Pakistan’s constitution emphasizes maintaining cordial relations with the Muslim world, both on a bilateral and multilateral level. It has consistently supported the liberation movements of Muslim countries and has provided moral support to nations seeking independence. Overall, Pakistan’s strong bonds with the Muslim world reflect its commitment to Islamic solidarity and its active role in shaping regional and international affairs. At the end, I thank to Respected Sir Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer for his valuable source of guidance to write this piece of opinion. He generously shared his time and knowledge, providing me with valuable feedback.

Role of Govt during the Covid-19 Crisis in Pakistan

THE COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on economies worldwide, and Pakistan is no exception. With the spread of the virus and subsequent lockdown measures, the country experienced a significant disruption in employment and livelihoods. In response, the Pakistani government has taken several measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on employment and support affected individuals and businesses. This article explores the role of the government in employment during the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan. To address the economic fallout of the pandemic, the Pakistani government implemented various stimulus packages aimed at supporting businesses, protecting jobs, and generating employment opportunities. These packages included tax relief measures, loan deferment schemes, and financial assistance to vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). By injecting liquidity into the economy, the government aimed to prevent widespread layoffs and job losses. To encourage businesses to retain their employees during the pandemic, the government introduced wage subsidy

programs. These programs provided financial support to companies, enabling them to continue paying salaries to their workforce even during periods of reduced economic activity. By doing so, the government aimed to prevent a surge in unemployment and ensure that individuals and their families could meet their basic needs. Recognizing the need for job creation, the government launched several initiatives to stimulate employment during the pandemic. One notable program was the “Kamyab Jawan Program,” which aimed to provide loans and support to young entrepreneurs, enabling them to start their own businesses and generate employment opportunities. Additionally, the government encouraged infrastructure development projects and public-private partnerships, creating job opportunities in construction and related sectors. To address the skill gap exacerbated by the pandemic, the government focused on enhancing the employability of individuals through skill development and training programs. These initiatives aimed to equip the workforce with relevant skills for emerging sectors and promote entrepreneurship. By investing in human capital, the government aimed to enhance the long-term

employability and resilience of the workforce, even in the face of future crises. The government recognized the need to provide social protection to vulnerable individuals and families affected by the pandemic. In collaboration with international organizations and local stakeholders, the government expanded the coverage of existing social safety net programs and introduced new ones. These initiatives included cash transfer programs, food assistance, and healthcare support, ensuring that those most affected by the crisis had access to essential resources and services. The government actively sought partnerships with the private sector to address the employment challenges posed by the pandemic. By engaging with businesses, industry associations, and trade unions, the government aimed to facilitate dialogue, identify needs, and develop collaborative solutions. Public-private cooperation played a crucial role in supporting businesses, retaining jobs, and promoting sustainable economic recovery. As the pandemic continues to evolve, the Pakistani government must remain vigilant and adapt its strategies to address emerging employment challenges. While the initial response focused on immediate relief

measures, the government should now prioritize initiatives that promote sustainable job creation, enhance productivity, and foster entrepreneurship. Investing in digital infrastructure, promoting innovation and technology adoption, and supporting sectors with high growth potential can contribute to long-term employment generation and economic resilience. The pandemic has taught us the importance of a robust healthcare infrastructure. Pakistan should concentrate on enhancing its healthcare system, such as hospitals, clinics, and laboratories, to better handle future health emergencies. This entails increasing the number of healthcare facilities, improving their quality, and ensuring the availability of essential medical supplies, including personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators. Moreover, investing in research and development can facilitate the development of domestic expertise and reduce reliance on external sources during emergencies. Efficient testing and surveillance systems play a crucial role in containing the spread of the virus. Pakistan should expand its testing capacity by establishing more testing centers nationwide and ensuring accessible testing for all citizens.



Islamabad: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif being briefed about Moonsoon Tree Plantation Drive 2023.— APP

West offers Ukraine security commitments outside NATO

VILNIUS: Western powers will offer Ukraine a package of long-term security commitments on Wednesday, after NATO dashed President Volodymyr Zelensky's hopes of a clear timeline for joining the alliance. The Ukrainian leader was to hold talks with NATO's 31 leaders at their summit in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, a day after blasting them for not moving faster to bring Ukraine into the fold. In an effort to reassure the Ukrainian leader, the G7 group of nations are expected to issue a declaration on how

they will help Kyiv defeat Russia and deter any new aggression in the years to come while it sits in NATO's waiting room. As he arrived for the meeting, Zelensky said he wanted to get on the "same page" with NATO over what were the conditions for joining the alliance.

"We will speak today and fight for these security guarantees for Ukraine on the way to NATO," he said before striding up the red carpet. The G7 announcement will provide a framework under which

individual nations will later agree bilateral deals with Kyiv detailing the weapons they will give. The West wants to send a message to Russian President Vladimir Putin that he cannot keep the war grinding in the hope that international backing for Ukraine will eventually falter. "This multilateral declaration will send a significant signal to Russia that time is not on its side," White House advisor for European affairs Amanda Sloat said. US President Joe Biden has previously suggested

a model for Ukraine similar to one under which Washington has committed to giving Israel \$3.8 billion in military aid per year over a decade. Russia launched drone strikes on Kyiv for the second night in a row, the head of the city's military administration said early Wednesday. All of the Iran-made Shahed explosive drones launched at Kyiv were "detected and destroyed," Sergiy Popko said on Telegram, adding "there was no information about victims or destruction as of now."—Agencies

Ukraine says shot down 11 Russian drones

KYIV: Ukraine said Wednesday it had shot down 11 Russian drones overnight in a second consecutive night of attacks on the capital Kyiv, as NATO leaders prepared to meet with President Volodymyr Zelensky in Vilnius. "A total of 15 kamikaze drones were involved in the strike. Eleven of them were destroyed in the areas of responsibility of the Centre and East air commands," Ukraine's air force said on social media. The statement did not say if other drones were shot down in other parts of Ukraine. Igor Taburets, governor of Cherkasy region in central Ukraine, said two people were hospitalised with burns after a drone hit a non-residential building, sparking a fire. "Cherkasy was on alert for more than three and a half hours," he said. Kyiv military authorities said there was also a drone attack on the capital but did not say how many drones were involved.—APP

Business Forum held to promote investment

BEIJING: The Pakistan China Business Forum, aimed at exploring trade and investment opportunities in Pakistan, was held here at the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing to promote investment opportunities in Pakistan, China Economic Net reported. Speaking at the occasion, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, the Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, emphasized the need to work together in order to share the benefits of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) not only between the two countries but also with the rest of the world. "CPEC has transformed Pakistan's energy landscape and has also played a crucial role in constructing hundreds and thousands of kilometers of roads, revolutionizing connectivity in the country. We must never forget that China extended its assistance to Pakistan during a critical time when we faced an energy shortage," he added. The minister further highlighted that over \$25 billion worth of pro-



jects have been executed in Pakistan to help build its energy infrastructure, logistics infrastructure, information technology, and other ports in the past 10 years. During the business forum,

the Commercial Counselor at the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing mentioned that following the visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to China in November 2022, protocols have been

finalized for the export of cherries, boiled meat, milk and dairy products, chilies, and donkey skin, which opens up a market worth \$30 billion. He also stated that in the Gwadar Zone area, complete tax holidays of 23 years are available for establishing businesses, as well as complete tax holidays of 20 years for contractors and sub-contractors. Additionally, there is an exemption from customs duty for 40 years on the import of equipment and materials for the construction and operation of the free zone. Chinese companies were invited to attend the International Food & Agriculture Expo, scheduled for August 10th to 12th in Karachi. It was mentioned that over 100 registrations from major enterprises have already been received. The forum highlighted the advantages of relocating Chinese industries, particularly labor-intensive ones, to Pakistan in the short to medium term, taking advantage of the demographic dividend and market access for small.

JCC resolves to make next decade glorious

BEIJING: The 12th Special Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting, held here, resolved to build upon the foundation laid in the last 10 years and make the next decade glorious. Professor Ahsan Iqbal, the Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, co-chaired the 12th (Special) JCC of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) alongside Mr. Cong Liang, the Vice Chairman of the National Development & Reform Commission (NDRC) of China, at the NDRC office. JCC also emphasized the significance of key projects in energy, IT, transportation, and infrastructure development. These projects are now operational and providing numerous opportunities for socio-economic development in Pakistan. Earlier, in his remarks at the meeting at JCC Ahsan Iqbal has said there is a massive potential for expanding Pakistan-China relations in the areas of agriculture, industry, technology and mining. Ahsan Iqbal noted that CPEC is a remarkable endeavour that symbolizes the deep-rooted ties between China and Pakistan. He recalled that this monumental project, initiated under the visionary leadership of President Xi and the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif, had been instrumental in transforming the economic landscape of the region. It has fostered connectivity, enhanced trade, and opened up new avenues for shared prosperity. The Minister emphasized that CPEC is the topmost national priority of the Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and these avenues provided an opportunity to consolidate successes and further enhance potential future cooperation. Ahsan Iqbal reiterated Pakistan's commitment to provide consistent policies and conducive environment for Chinese companies and citizens working in Pakistan, according to Gwadar Pro.

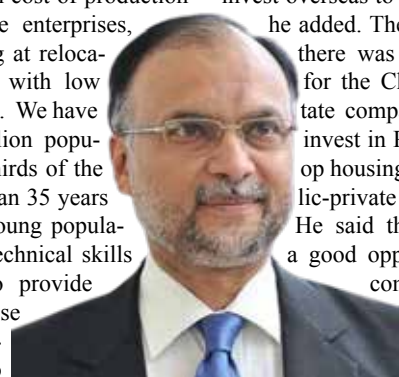
Pakistan offers attractive investment incentives, says Ahsan Iqbal

BEIJING: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said that Pakistan offers very attractive investment incentives and welcomes all investors especially Chinese businessmen to invest in Information Technology, agriculture, dairy farming, housing, mining and manufacturing sectors. The present government has taken several steps to put the country's economy back on track and look forward to a period of growth, he said while addressing the participants

of the Pakistan China Business Forum titled Exploring Trade and Investment Opportunities in Pakistan. The forum was organized by the Embassy of Pakistan and supported by the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) and Habib Bank Limited (HBL). He said that a special investment facilitation council has been set up to facilitate foreign investors and added, it is a one-window organization which has members from the federal government and provincial governments. Prof Ahsan Iqbal said that the government offers a

great advantage in cost of production for those Chinese enterprises, which are looking at relocation to countries with low cost of production. We have over two 30 million population with two-thirds of the population less than 35 years old. So, a very young population, which has technical skills and education to provide support to those Chinese businesses which want to

invest overseas to make more profits, he added. The minister said that there was a big opportunity for the Chinese big real estate companies to come and invest in Pakistan and develop housing projects on a public-private partnership basis. He said that there was also a good opportunity for many companies to develop manufacturing facilities in Pakistan to export to third



countries. Many companies are also relocating to third countries to have better access to European markets and to United States markets. Through joint ventures in Pakistan, the Chinese company could export their products to third countries. He said that Pakistan was among the top 10 producers in agriculture production but our yield and productivity were very low. So, we need technology and help to improve the productivity of our agricultural production by having high-quality seeds and better genetics etc. Prof

Ahsan Iqbal said that to develop a higher variety of animals which can give more milk. So, we can double the milk production. And we can increase the production of wheat, cotton sugarcane and every crop if we can improve the seed. He said that through mechanization, Pakistan can also increase agricultural production. The government is actively trying to promote renewable energy and solar energy and will welcome investments in Pakistan to increase solar energy production. —APP

England name squad for fourth Ashes Test

LONDON: England named an unchanged squad for the fourth Ashes Test against Australia, which will take place at Old Trafford from July 19-23, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced on Tuesday. After losing the first two Tests, England made a comeback in the series with a three-wicket win at Headingley last week.

England need a victory in the fourth Test in Manchester to keep the series alive ahead of the fifth Test at the Oval in London. Earlier, England captain Ben Stokes opened up about the thrilling run-chase in the third Test. "I'm not going to lie, I was a bit nervous at the end," Stokes said. "We knew we needed to win this one to keep alive our hopes of winning the Ashes. "I walked about two kilometres around the Headingley dressing room in the last half-hour, I didn't actually watch the last 20 runs being scored. It's a completely different place when you can't do anything, you can't influence the game any more. "You're left watching and hoping things are going to go your way. Because of where the series was at before this game started the whole performance with bat, ball, field — it was just an unbelievable effort from everybody." Meanwhile, Australia captain Pat Cummins said that he has thoroughly enjoyed the series so far. "We were in control when Moeen (Ali) got Marnus Labuschagne and Steve Smith and we just needed to keep going," Cummins said. "Unfortunately it happens. I thought getting up to 250 gave us something pretty competitive to bowl at but it wasn't quite enough.

"It is still 2-1. We take each Test in its own right. They have been a great watch so far. It's great cricket. I actually really enjoy being out there."

England squad: Ben Stokes (captain), Moeen Ali, James Anderson, Jonathan Bairstow, Stuart Broad, Harry Brook, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Dan Lawrence, Ollie Robinson, Joe Root, Josh Tongue, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood. — Agencies



LONDON: Markéta Vondroušová in action during her match against Pegula in Wimbledon 2023.

ICC Player of the Month winners revealed

Web Desk

SHARJAH: Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga and Australia's Ashleigh Gardner won the ICC Player of the Month awards for June on Tuesday. Hasaranga claimed 26 wickets during the month at an average of just 10.00. He also became the first spinner to take three consecutive five-wicket hauls in ODI cricket during the ongoing ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe. "I am extremely happy with this award, and it comes at an important moment for Sri Lanka Cricket,

after we made it to the Cricket World Cup in India. I am privileged and honoured to have been chosen as the ICC Men's Player of the Month," said Hasaranga. Australia Travis Head and Zimbabwe's Sean Williams were also in the running for the award in the men's category. Meanwhile, four wickets for 99 in the first innings and match-winning figures of eight for 66 in the second in the Test match against England ensured that Gardner won the award in the women's category. "Thank you to everyone who voted me the ICC Women's Player of the Month.

"To win an Ashes Test match at Trent Bridge was a special moment for our team and I'm happy I was able to contribute towards the win.

"Winning a Test match overseas is one of the biggest challenges in cricket, it's certainly a game that we will remember for a long time to come.

"The women's Ashes series has seen record-breaking crowds in England, it's an exciting time for our sport and I'm thrilled to be part of it."

Gardner won her third Player of the Month award after beating Tammy Beaumont of England and Hayley Matthews of the West Indies.

Shandur polo festival concludes successfully in Chitral

ISLAMABAD: A three-day enthralling colourful celebrations of traditional Shandur polo festival concluded successfully in Chitral valley where thousands of tourists from all across Pakistan including International tourists had participated in the event and enjoyed polo matches. The provincial government in collaboration with Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) has made all-out efforts to promote sports and tourism while the polo game. — APP

T10 League takes centre stage in SL

Colombo: TTen Sports Management and TTen Global Sports, in collaboration with Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) have launched T10 League in the Island country. SLC confirmed that a 10-over format franchise league will be held for the first time in their country later this year. Not only men's but women's teams will also feature in this unique format of the game. According to the details, men's event will feature six teams whereas women's event will have four teams. The event is scheduled to take place from December 12 to 23 at different venues in Sri Lanka. "I am extremely confident that this tournament will become a success story and help Sri Lanka Cricket keep abreast with the evolving trends of the game," said Shammi Silva, SLC's president. "We are thrilled to bring the exciting brand of T10 cricket to Sri Lanka, and we thank SLC for their support. This league is much more significant as it is licensed by a full popular member like SLC," said Shaji ul Mulk, Chairman of TTen Global Sports. T10 League was first initiated in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The inaugural edition took place in 2017 in Sharjah. Later on, the league moved to Abu Dhabi for the next seasons. This year, T10 league management expanded the canvas of this shortest format and took it to Zimbabwe. Zim Afro T10 League will start on July 20 in Harare.

World No.1 Alcaraz survives test, Rybakina cruises

LONDON: Carlos Alcaraz reached the last 16 at Wimbledon on Saturday after a tough battle against Nicolas Jarry as defending women's champion Elena Rybakina snuffed out the hopes of Britain's final hope Katie Boulter. Rain returned to the All England Club, meaning play on Centre Court started under the roof and later forced an early end to the action on the outside courts. Top seed Alcaraz is seen as the biggest threat to Novak Djokovic, who is gunning for a record-equalling eighth men's title and 24th Grand Slam crown overall.

But the Spaniard, who won the grass-court Queen's tournament last month, was made to work hard for the win by his Chilean opponent, seeded 25th, before prevailing 6-3, 6-7 (6/8), 6-3, 7-5. Alcaraz bounced back from losing his first set of the tournament to lead 2-1 but



narrowly avoided going a double break down in the fourth set before rediscovering his mojo. "I'm really happy with the level that I played to get through this really tough match," said the relieved 20-year-old. The US Open champion was playing his second match in two days after rain delays earlier in the week. Djokovic, by contrast, moved

serenely into the last 16 on Friday, beating Stan Wawrinka in straight sets. Alcaraz will face big-serving Matteo Berrettini in the fourth round after the 2021 runner-up beat Alexander Zverev 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/5). Unseeded Berrettini feels he has a point to prove after missing last year's tournament due to a bout of Covid. — Agencies

Alex Morgan has high hopes from FIFA Women's World Cup

Web Desk

CALIFORNIA: The upcoming Women's World Cup will be the "best one yet", according to the United States striker Alex Morgan. Morgan believes that the increase in the number of teams to 32 from 24 will have a positive impact on competitiveness and viewing figures.

The ninth edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup will include 64 matches with the first match and opening ceremony set to take place on July 20 at New Zealand's Eden Park in Auckland. This will be the first FIFA Women's football World Cup to have two host nations, Australia and New Zealand. The United States are looking to win third straight title, and fifth overall, and will start their campaign against Vietnam at Eden Park on July 22 before locking horns with Netherlands and Portugal. Morgan also stated that touching down in the host country for the World Cup led to a mixture of "nerves, anticipation and excitement" and that while there are many similarities with the past editions this one is "going to be the best one yet."



'Top cricketers want to move to USA,' says Sami

LAHORE: Pakistan's former Test cricketer Sami Aslam claimed that plenty of top cricketers in the country want to move to the United States of America (USA) to have a better cricket future. In 2020, Sami left Pakistan and pursued professional cricket in the USA. The left-handed batter, who represented Pakistan in 13 Tests and four ODIs, had said that he left the country due to lack of opportunities.

In a recent interview, Sami shared that top Pakistani cricketers contact him in search of better opportunities in the USA. "There is no better place to live than Pakistan only if you have money. I moved to the USA because there was nothing for longer-format players there. Only players, who play in the PSL, feel secure in Pakistan, otherwise, there are plenty of top cricketers who want to move to the USA," he shared. Sami was roped in by Major League Cricket (MLC)

and got a three-year contract. He was also granted 'Green Card' within six months. "Even if you play the whole domestic season in Pakistan, you



don't make as much money as you make here for playing in just a small event. Recently, 20-30 cricketers from Pakistan came here to play a tourna-

ment, they earned much more than what players get after playing a complete domestic season of three to four months in Pakistan," he mentioned.

"Currently, there are not many openings for players because the management here is not offering contracts. We came in the first lot of players from Pakistan who got contracts," he concluded. It must be noted here that Sami will represent Texas Super Kings (TSK) in the upcoming inaugural edition of MLC, starting on July 14. TSK is backed by the owners of the Indian Premier League (IPL)'s five-time champion franchise Chennai Super Kings (CSK).

Apart from Sami, Ehsan Adil and Hammad Azam (MI New York), Imad Wasim and Azam Khan (Seattle Orcas), Shadab Khan and Haris Rauf (San Francisco Unicorns), Saif Badar (Los Angeles Knight Riders) will also be seen in action during MLC season one. — Agencies

Rybakina reaches last 8 as tearful Maia quits

LONDON: Holder Elena Rybakina was given an easy ride into the Wimbledon quarter-finals after Brazilian opponent Beatriz Haddad Maia retired midway through the first set with a back injury. Rybakina had just broken for a 3-1 lead in the first set when the Brazilian 13th seed winced in pain and clutched her back after netting a backhand.

Haddad Maia called on the physio and kept grimacing as her back was being manipulated courtside. After leaving Centre Court to receive further treatment, she limped back in an attempt to resume the match following a 10 minute interval. However, the way she stiffly avoided bending over to pick up her racket from her chair to resume the contest signalled that all was not well and that the match might soon be over.

The 27-year-old Brazilian tearfully went through the motions for one more game, grabbing her back after every point as she struggled to move around or make contact with the ball. Less than a minute later, a distraught Haddad Maia clutched her eyes in an attempt to stop the tears rolling down her face. After a quick exchange with her team in the players' box, the 27-year-old shook her head to confirm she could no longer continue and gingerly walked up to Rybakina to share an embrace.

"It's never easy to finish a match like this and I hope it's nothing really serious," said 24-year-old Moscow-born Kazakh Rybakina, who will next face either two-time champion Petra Kvitová or last year's runner-up Ons Jabeur.

"It was really unlucky for Beatriz and I hope she gets better," added the third seed. The abrupt ending denied Roland Garros semi-finalist Haddad Maia of a chance to notch up a hat-trick of wins over Rybakina and also ended her hopes of becoming the first Brazilian woman in 55 years to reach the last eight of the grasscourt major. Win or lose, Victoria Azarenka knew here would be no handshake offered by Ukrainian rival Elina Svitolina at the end of Sunday's Wimbledon contest that had been billed as the 'battle of the mums'. — APP

Larsa Pippen strongly reacts to Michael Jordan disapproving her for Marcus



AMERICAN TV personality Larsa Pippen, who is dating Michael Jordan's son Marcus, has strongly condemned the basketball player's comment about disapproving her for his son.

Larsa and Marcus, in the latest episode of their podcast Separation Anxiety, shared their reaction over Michael's disapproval that he gave during a recent public appearance. Larsa furiously told Marcus: "You

thought it was funny. I didn't think it was funny. There is nothing funny about it. I kinda felt like it went everywhere and I was kind of embarrassed." She went on to say: "It literally went everywhere. I think people

started to think that online they were saying that I was lying... that I lied and said that our parents are fine because I was doing interviews and saying both of our families are fine." "When I would say that, I felt like I didn't embellish that... and I would say both of our parents want us to be happy... I do understand that it's not awkward for us to be together because it's us." The 49-year-old socialite was previously married to Scottie Pippen, who is teammate of the legendary Basketball player, Michael. The duo parted ways in 2021. The couple has four children together. She also admitted that there might be some people, including Scottie who find our relationship awkward. "But it probably is awkward for my ex and your dad because they have their own relationship or whatever it was." According to Just Jared, Larsa Pippen concluded by saying: "I wasn't a part of that, you weren't a part of that. So I feel like for them it probably is weird, it probably is weird for your dad. I can't be mad. I understand... Oh my god, I was traumatized. I was like what are we going to do, people think I lied."

Salman 'KKBKKJ' earns 'highest viewership' on opening day at Zee5

SALMAN Khan's mega-film Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan has earned record-breaking viewership on its opening day at digital platform Zee5. Khan's film became the most-watched film in just 24 hours. It surpassed the record of SS Rajamouli's magnum opus, RRR. On this achievement, one of the spokespersons for Salman Khan Films added: "It is amazing to see fans pour in their love and appreciation for Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan with its World Digital Premiere on ZEE5 Global." "The response on the first day for the superstar's family entertainer is a testament to his global fandom and we hope that it continues to grow with time." Meanwhile, director Farhad Samji also expressed his feelings about the overwhelming response that the film received from the audience, reports Pinkvilla. He said: "We are overwhelmed by the response Kisi



Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan has received from our audiences from around the world." "It truly depicts how an honest story holds power to bring together viewers irrespective of language and location. We are delighted with its record-breaking achievement of a blockbuster opening on ZEE5 Global

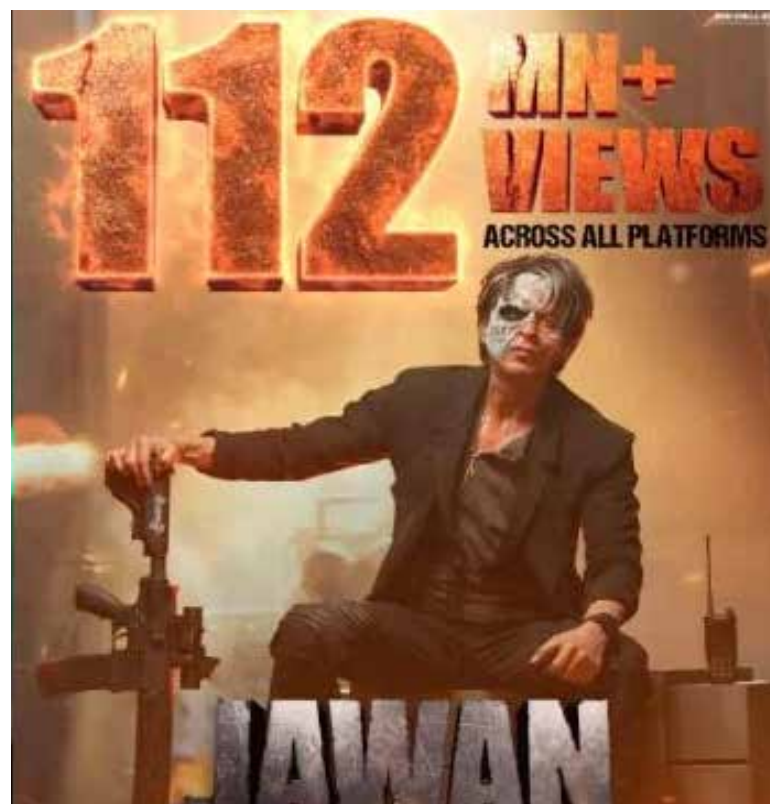
and hope that viewers will continue to shower their love on the film." Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan became the source of Salman Khan's comeback in a full-fledged film after Dabangg 3 in 2019. It also featured Pooja Hedge, Shehnaaz Gill, Raghav Juyal, Jassie Gill and others in significant roles.

Lucy Spraggan reveals she quit X Factor after being raped

THE singer had been a favourite to win the ITV talent show in 2012 - until she suddenly left the programme due to "illness". The 31-year-old has revealed her ordeal in a new memoir. Former X Factor contestant Lucy Spraggan has revealed she left the ITV talent show after being raped. The singer - who had been a favourite to win in 2012 - suddenly quit the show during its live rounds, with programme-makers telling the public her departure was due to "illness". But the 31-year-old has now waived her legal right to anonymity, which is granted to all rape victims, to speak about her ordeal. Spraggan was 20 years old at the time of the attack, which she said was carried out by a hotel porter following a night out with fellow contestants. In the aftermath, she was advised to take medication to prevent HIV infection - but it made her so ill she was forced to leave the X Factor, which was won that year by James Arthur. The singer said she had wanted to go public at the time, but was warned it might affect her future career. Spraggan later went on to have success in the music industry with two top-10 albums. Her release Join The Club reached seven in the charts in 2013, while Choices peaked at number five in 2021.



SRKs 'Jawan' and 'Dunki' already setting records before release



SHAH Rukh Khan's upcoming big films, Jawan and Dunki are already setting records before release as their non-theatrical rights have been sold for promising numbers. According to Pinkvilla, Jawan and Dunki's rights were collectively sold for INR 450-500 crore. Sources revealed: "It's Shah Rukh Khan vs. Shah Rukh Khan now as the top two non-theatrical deals of all time are under the name of King Khan." "While the digital, satellite, and music rights of Jawan are sold for approximately Rs 250 crore, the same for Dunki is around Rs 230 crore." "The rights for Jawan are sold in all languages, whereas Dunki is primarily for just Hindi." Sources further suggested: "There are some non-theatrical deals which are still getting locked and the eventual total non-theatrical revenue for two films will be close to Rs 500 crore, and both the individual deals will be among the highest ever for a feature film." "It's premium content for all the players and the numbers fetched by the two films is unlike anything witnessed in recent times. It's a testimony of SRK's superstardom and command over the audience not just in India, but also in the international belts." "The OTT players are willing to splurge more than usual due to the global appeal that SRK has, and the deal struck is a win-and-win situation for all the stakeholders", revealed close sources. Shah Rukh Khan's Jawan is directed by Atlee and is slated to be released on September 7. Meanwhile, directed by Rajkumar Hirani, Dunki is set to release by Christmas this year.

HBO's 'Succession', 'Last of Us' lead nominees for TV's Emmy awards

LOS ANGELES: HBO drama "Succession", the story of a cutthroat fight for control of a family's media empire, led the nominees for television's Emmy awards on Wednesday with 27 nods for the show's final season. Nominations for the highest honours in television were announced as Hollywood was in the throes of labour tensions that may delay the Emmy's ceremony beyond its normal September date. Film and TV writers walked off the job two months ago, and actors may strike as soon as Wednesday evening. When the Emmys do take place, two-time best drama winner "Succession" will vie for the trophy again alongside fellow HBO show "The Last of Us," a dystopian video-game adaptation that landed a second-best 24 Emmy nominations. "Thank you to the Television Academy for sending us off in such style," said "Succession" supporting actor nominee Alan Ruck. The show about the dysfunctional Roy family ended its four-season run in May. Others competing for best drama included HBO's "Game of Thrones" prequel "House of the Dragon," vacation-gone-wrong story "The White Lotus" and "Star Wars" series "Andor." Previous nominees "Better Call Saul," "Yellowjackets" and "The Crown" are also in the mix. "Ted Lasso," another double Emmy winner for best series, will compete for best comedy against "Abbott Elementary," "The Marvelous Mrs Maisel," "The Bear," "Barry,"

Sonam slays in Pakistani designer dress at 'Carry On Jatta 3' premiere

BOLLYWOOD diva turns heads as she radiates elegance in exquisite attire by 'Museluxe'. vSonam Bajwa, the talented Bollywood actress, stole the spotlight at the premiere of "Carry On Jatta 3" as she graced the red carpet in a mesmerizing creation by renowned Pakistani designer Museluxe. The stunning ensemble showcased Bajwa's impeccable fashion sense and left onlookers in awe of her beauty and grace. The actress exuded sheer elegance in the exquisite dress, which effortlessly combined traditional Pakistani aesthetics with contemporary style. The intricate embroidery, delicate embellishments, and intricate detailing of the ensemble accentuated Bajwa's radiant presence, making her a vision of glamour and sophistication. Sonam Bajwa's fashion choice not only turned heads but also sparked admiration and appreciation from fashion enthusiasts and fans alike. The fusion of cultures reflected in the dress resonated with the audience, showcasing the beauty of cross-cultural fashion collaborations. Museluxe, known for its exceptional craftsmanship and attention to detail, has further solidified its position as a leading Pakistani designer brand with this stunning creation worn by Sonam Bajwa.

Meera Talks About Her Controversies And Challenges

Meera Jee has been a part of the Pakistani entertainment industry for over two decades. She has worked in many films and dramas and she has been a mainstream name in the media for several reasons. From doing films with Shaan and Moammar Rana to working on television and being a part of multiple controversies, Meera Jee was famous and she is still famous. She worked in Baaji after the revival of cinema and looks like she is not going to look back any time soon.



Meera belongs to an era of industry when there used to be constant cat fights between actresses in the open and there were accusations from cutting each others scenes to straight up black magic being performed on the opponents. Meera still held her ground and she has always thought of herself as the best.



But things have now changed and there is a constant influx of new actresses in the industry and the competition has increased ten fold. Meera was talking in a recent interview about newcomers entering the industry and how she feels about it. She said that she now feels a lot of competition in the industry and she is working on herself to improve everyday because of this competition. Here is what Meera had to say and if Meera feels competitive, competition is definitely thriving: Meera also talked about why she has been in so many controversies in her career. she said that whatever she does ends up becoming a part of the news. She also said that her life events becoming news is probably also a punishment of being Meera.

Yasir Nawaz criticizes 'Dirilis Ertugrul' for imbalanced focus on romance over warfare

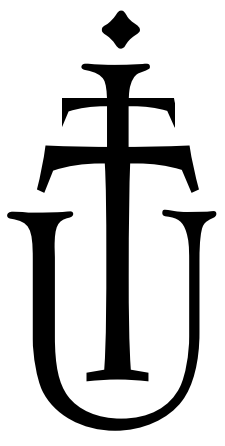


In exclusive interview with 'Fuchsia Magazine,' Yasir Nawaz voices concerns over historical drama's emphasis on love stories. Yasir Nawaz, the acclaimed actor and director, recently expressed his dissatisfaction with the popular Turkish historical drama series, "Dirilis Ertugrul," citing an imbalance between romantic scenes and depictions of warfare. In an exclusive interview with Fuchsia Magazine, Nawaz candidly shared his views on the show's storytelling choices. Nawaz raised concerns about the excessive emphasis on romantic plotlines, suggesting that it overshadowed the historical significance and essence of the era portrayed in the series. While acknowledging the importance of love stories as part of any narrative, he argued for a more balanced representation, with a greater focus on the struggles and triumphs of warfare, which played a pivotal role in shaping the story's backdrop. The interview sparked a discussion among fans and critics alike, with opinions divided on the matter. Some echoed Nawaz's sentiments, feeling that a better balance between romance and war would have enhanced the show's historical authenticity, while others appreciated the romantic elements for adding depth and emotional resonance.

Aima Baig's 'Funkari' sets the internet ablaze

Pakistani singer Aima Baig strikes a chord with 'Funkari,' captivating online audiences and creating a digital frenzy. Aima Baig, the talented Pakistani singer, has taken the internet by storm with her latest release, "Funkari." This musical masterpiece has struck a chord with listeners worldwide, captivating online audiences and igniting a viral sensation across social media platforms. "Funkari" showcases Baig's remarkable vocal prowess and versatility as she effortlessly transitions between various musical genres, infusing her signature style into the catchy beats and infectious melodies of the song.





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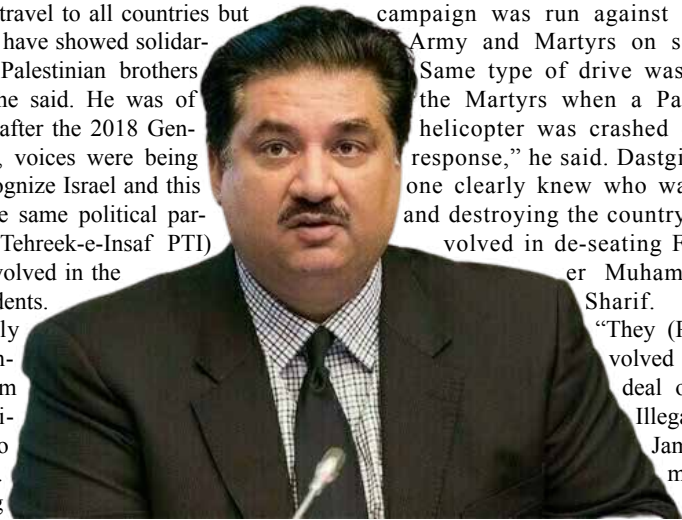
Pak gives shut-up call to Israel over rights issue

The minister during a news conference here said, Israel's statement on human rights situation in Pakistan was to overshadow the May 9 culprits, who had been trying to bring country to doom since they came into power after elections 2018

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan on Wednesday said the people of Pakistan would bring the May 9 violence culprits to justice and teach them a lesson in the General Elections through voting. The minister during a news conference here said, Israel's statement on human rights situation in Pakistan was to overshadow the May 9 culprits, who had been trying to bring the country to doom since they came into power after the elections 2018. Khan said the Foreign office had strongly and aptly condemned Israel's statement on human rights situation in Pakistan. "Pakistan has never recognized Israel and it can be seen on Pakistan's passport as through it a

Pakistani can travel to all countries but not Israel. We have showed solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters," he said. He was of the view that after the 2018 General Elections, voices were being echoed to recognize Israel and this came from the same political party (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf PTI) which was involved in the horrific incidents. "We can easily see who benefitted from May 9 incidents and who suffered loss. A sickening



campaign was run against the Pakistan Army and Martyrs on social media. Same type of drive was run against the Martyrs when a Pakistan Army helicopter was crashed during flood response," he said. Dastgir said everyone clearly knew who was separating and destroying the country and was involved in de-seating Former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. "They (PTI) were involved in the bargain deal on the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK). When India

took over Kashmir all what the then government did was a 1:30 minute silence on Friday," he said. He said as to safeguard foreign involvement in the country was necessary to identify and bar those involved in destabilizing the country. "It was the PTI's tenure in which Pakistanis were allowed to travel to Israel," he added. Dastgir said PTI was involved in attack on Radio Pakistan in Peshawar and also back in 2014 on the building of Pakistan Television. "PTI asked people to burn electricity bills in 2014 and told overseas Pakistanis to send money through hundi and then civil disobedience. They gave statements for perpetrating disturbance in the ranks of Pakistan Army as well," he said. He said the people of Pakistan would elect a government who would take them out of challenges and help Pakistan flourish and prosper.

Macron awards India's Modi top France honour

PARIS: France's president on Friday awarded the country's top honour to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the start of Bastille Day celebrations where he is the featured guest. Emmanuel Macron awarded Modi the grand cross of the Legion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour), the highest grade of France's order of merit that "salutes the role of the prime minister in the excellent relations of friendship and confidence that unite France and India", the presidency said in a statement. Modi said on Twitter that he had accepted the award "with great humility", hailing it as "an honour for the 1.4 billion residents of India". The honouring of Modi this year reflects deepening ties between France and India, which are marking 25 years of "strategic partnership". Modi called Macron his "friend" in a speech to Indians living in France on Thursday evening. "This closeness is not limited to just the leaders of two countries, it is in fact a reflection of the unwavering friendship between India and France," Modi said. — Agencies

FIA arrests 9 in crackdown against loan apps

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Cybercrime Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Friday said that it had arrested nine suspects for allegedly blackmailing people through predatory online loan apps. According to the spokesperson of the agency, the raids were conducted in the Saidpur Road area and cases were also registered against 19 other suspects. During the raid, Inspector Badar Munir sealed different offices of the company located in a commercial plaza. According to the statement, the suspects were given a target of making around 100 to 150 calls on a daily basis to those who had used the apps, their friends and families. The statement added that there were separate departments dealing with "torture calls" in the said offices.

PTI chairman submits reply to NAB

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The PTI Chairman has submitted a reply before the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in £190m settlement case, refusing to appear before the bureau. Sources told media that the PTI chief stated in his reply that he had to appear before the LHC. They said the PTI's reply raised objection over the NAB's demand of testimonials which the party said were irrelevant and showed mala fide intention of the bureau. The reply demanded the accountability watchdog to establish relation between the required documents and £190m settlement.

'Govt should complete its term instead of dissolution'

ISLAMABAD: PPP central leader Nayyar Bukhari on Friday said the incumbent coalition government should complete its term — set to expire on August 12 — instead of dissolving the NA. His advice comes after PM Shehbaz Sharif announced that the coalition government would hand over the country's reins to the caretaker setup on the expiry of its term next month. The five-year term of the NA commenced under the then-PTI government on August 12, 2018, and will be completed under a PM-Shehbaz-led ruling coalition following the ouster of former premier Imran Khan through a no-confidence vote in April last year. — APP

Wagner head rejected offer to join army – Putin

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: Wagner mercenary group head Yevgeniy Prigozhin has rejected an offer to his fighters to serve as a unit in Russia's army, President Vladimir Putin says. He told Kommersant newspaper that many group commanders had backed the plan to be led by a senior Wagner figure during recent talks in Moscow. He said Prigozhin's reply was "the guys do not agree with this decision". The talks were held just days after Wagner's aborted mutiny on 23-24 June that challenged Mr Putin's authority. Under the deal that ended the short-lived rebellion, the mercenaries were told they could join the regular Russian army or head to Belarus, a close ally of Russia. Wagner has fought some of the bloodiest battles since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. However, the US military now assesses that the group is no longer "participating in any significant capacity in support of combat operations in Ukraine". The comments were made on Thursday by Pentagon

spokesman Pat Ryder, who also said that "the majority" of Wagner fighters were believed to still be in areas of Russian-occupied Ukraine. In a separate development, Belarus' defence ministry said on Friday that Wagner fighters were now acting as military instructors for the country's territorial defence forces. The ministry said the fighters were training Belarusian forces "in a number of military disciplines" near the town of Osipovichy, about 85km (53 miles) south-east of the capital Minsk. In Thursday's interview with Kommersant business daily, President Putin said that 35 Wagner commanders, including Prigozhin, had been present at the Kremlin meeting on 29 June. Mr Putin said he had offered them several "employment options", including continued service under the command of a senior Wagner commander known by his nom de guerre Sedoi - Grey Hair. "Many [Wagner fighters] were nodding when I was saying this," Mr Putin said. "And Prigozhin, who was sitting in front and didn't see all this, said after listening: 'No, the guys do not agree with this decision,'" the president added.

Majority of minors abused in Punjab are boys: report

NEWS DESK

LAHORE: In a shocking revelation, the Punjab interior department has recently shared that as the instances of sexual abuse of children rise, more boys than girls become victims of such crimes. A report compiled on the numeration of such cases from January to June 15, 2023, reveals that in a span of less than six months, 1,390 cases of child abuse were reported in the province — a harrowing number in itself but made worse by further revelations. According to the report, around 69% (959 cases) of the reported cases involved minor boys, while the remaining 31% (431 cases) involved girls. Yet more disturbing were revelations of the perpetrators. Moreover, the report stated that of those facing trials, 55% were the victims' neighbors, 13% were relatives, and 32% were strangers. Regarding the city-wise prevalence of child abuse cases, the report stated that most rape cases in Punjab were registered in Gujranwala, where 220 cases were reported. Rawalpindi and Lahore reported the lowest rape cases at 69 and 89.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanks IMF chief

Shehbaz reassured that he will not tolerate an iota of violation of this agreement

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had a telephonic conversation with MD IMF, Ms. Kristalina Georgieva today. The Prime minister conveyed profound gratitude to the Managing Director for her support and assistance in materializing the recently concluded Stand-by Agreement for \$3 billion. The Prime Minister appreciated the MD for her leadership and professionalism. He also acknowledged that MD felt for the poor and termed her support as invaluable. The IMF MD said that Prime Minister of Pakistan built a very convincing case, though the IMF Board was skeptical about Pakistan's commitment to fulfilling the conditions of agreement due to the past trust deficit. However, in the light of her continued engagement with the Prime minister, she assured the Board that Pakistan will deliver on its commitments as she had personally met the Prime Minister and seen his seriousness to deliver. She acknowledged the leadership shown by Prime Minister. She underlined that there was strong partnership and mutual trust between both the parties now. Terming Pakistan as an important member of IMF, she reassured to continue to help Pakistan. The Prime Minister on the occasion appreciated MD Ms. Georgieva for her positive approach and her frank comments during the Prime Minister's interaction with her in Paris. Eventually, the hard work on both sides paid off and Standby Arrangement (SBA) was signed. The Prime Minister reassured that he will not tolerate an iota of violation of this agreement. "This government is here till August after which an interim government will take over and he is confident that they will continue to fulfill the obligations. After elections, if the people of Pakistan re-elect his government, he is committed to turn over the economy with the help of IMF and development partners, said the Prime Minister. Referring to Pakistan's best quality mangos, the Prime Minister said it will be an honour to send a gift of Pakistani mangos to the Managing Director as a token of respect and deep appreciation. — DNA

Govt mulls strict laws to counter disinformation

The PTA authorities are of the view that PECA, 2016 doesn't provide adequate assistance to take action against those who are spreading fake news

ISLAMABAD: To counter the dissemination of fake news and propaganda, the government has decided to amend the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act of 2016 (PECA), and relevant laws are being studied. Last year, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif constituted a committee under Law and Justice Minister Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar; the committee has now nearly completed its task with the assistance of the Ministry of Information Technology (MIT), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). Well-placed sources told media that fake news targeting the reputation and image of a particular person or group of people, organisation, or other entity will be checked by all available means. Social media rules will reportedly be amended to enhance the authority of the PTA and FIA to check fake news. And to protect official portals, an 'e-safety law' is being introduced. Further, a new section will likely be included in PECA to empower the authorities concerned to take stringent action so that culprits are punished on account of their offence. The PTA authorities are of the view that PECA, 2016 doesn't provide adequate assistance to take action against those who are spreading fake news. There is a view that, as a result, the FIA is helpless in almost all such complaints where fake news was pointed out, and action sought. In recent months, complaints have increased manifold that a group of people is engaged in damaging the reputations of particular organisations and persons.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf witnessing Turkiye Art Exhibition displayed on the occasion of Turkish Democracy and National Unity Day. — APP