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Punjab Assembly approves resolution calling for the CEC

Sikander Sultan Raja's resignation

LAHORE: The Punjab Assembly on Sunday approved a resolution calling for the resignation of Chief Election

Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja. The session of the provincial assembly began with newly-elected Speaker Sibtain Khan admin-

istering the oath to his deputy, Wasiq Qayyum. Qayyum was elected unopposed a day earlier after the Opposition announced a boycott of the polls. In today's address, speaker Khan told the assembly that his deputy was elected after no one else submitted their nomination papers. After the oath was administered, PTI lawmaker Syed Abbas Shah presented the motion against the Election Commission of Pakistan's chief, which was later approved by the assembly. The motion calls on CEC Raja to resign from his post. After the motion was passed, the Assembly was adjourned till August 15. PTI to take action against chief election commissioner: The Imran Khan-led PTI took control of the Punjab Assembly along with their ally PML-Q following the Supreme Court's intervention in the chief minister's election. After motion was passed the session was adjourned till August 15.

CM Punjab announces relief package for flood affectees

LAHORE: Chief Minister of Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi on Sunday announced financial relief for flood-affected families of the province. According to details, Chief Minister Punjab chaired a meeting regarding recent floods and rains and reviewed relief operation in flood affected areas. The chief minister announced that an amount of Rs800,000 will be provided to families of people who died due to floods. A committee would estimate losses and distribute relief packages among the deserving. The CM has also ordered the rebuilding of damaged roads on an emergency basis and establish medical camps in the province. Flood-af-

ected people would also be vaccinated against viral diseases. Elahi has ordered to

ter of Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi on Sunday announced financial relief for



distribute dry rations among people, while the administration has been ordered to evacuate water using dewatering pumps. The CM has also ordered the rebuilding of damaged roads. Chief Minis-

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PM Shehbaz vows to leave no stone unturned to rehabilitate flood victims.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that the incumbent government is working together with the provinces for the relief of flood affectees, and he will leave no stone unturned to rehabilitate flood victims. Taking to Twitter, PM penned that "I visited the flood-affected areas of Balochistan,

supervised the relief work and visited to express solidarity with the affected people." Shehbaz Sharif further wrote that "The relief work will be accelerated in the affected areas. Of course, these are difficult times. People suffered a lot due to floods and heavy rains while I assure affectees that we will leave no stone unturned to



rehabilitate flood victims." On the other hand, PM's directives were immediately implemented, a second medical camp was established in Shambani village of Jhal Magshi district and medicines were also provided while extra boats were also provided by the district administration for relief operations. PM Shehbaz vows to

leave no stone unturned to rehabilitate flood victims. Shehbaz Sharif further wrote that "The relief work will be accelerated in the affected areas. Of course, these are difficult times. People suffered a lot due to floods and heavy rains while I assure affectees that we will leave no stone unturned to rehabilitate flood victims."

NA speaker urges unity for peace, tranquility in Muharram-ul-Haram

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf on Saturday urged the nation to forge unity among their ranks for peace and tranquility in Muharram-ul-Haram. He, in a message, proposed to shun all types of differences and supplement government efforts to create an environment of co-existence in the holy month of Muharram across the country. The speaker said Islam was a religion of peace, love and tolerance and abhor all forms of sectarianism, extremism and prejudices. He

called upon the Ulama and religious scholars to play their due role and influence to create religious harmony and to spread the true message of Islam. "Let us make a resolve today to give up our differences and get united to develop comprehensive strategy for combating terrorism, sectarianism, militancy and extremism from the country" he said. Meanwhile, the NA Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durani, in a separate message, said we should follow the true spirit of Muharram-ul-Haram which is sacrifice and religious tolerance.

Indian troops martyr one more Kashmiri youth in Baramulla

SRINAGAR: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Indian troops in their fresh act of state terrorism martyred one more Kashmiri youth in Baramulla district. According to Kashmir Media Service, the troops martyred the youth during a cordon and search operation in Binner area of the district. The occupation forces also suspended mobile and internet service in the area. The occupation forces also suspended mobile and internet service in the area. Indian troops martyr one more Kashmiri youth in Baramulla.

PTI pushed country into quagmire of the problems: Fazlur Rehman

PESHAWAR: Jamiat Ulema-Islam (JUI-F) supreme and Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) head Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Sunday alleged that Pakistan Theerke-e-Insaf (PTI) has pushed the country into the quagmire of problems, from which it is not easy to get out. Talking to the media in Peshawar, the JUI-F supreme said that the current government will complete its tenure and the general elections will be held as per schedule. Fazl said that if Imran Khan was not sent home, the country would have broken up. Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that that people who have sunk the country's economy should not be trusted again and that voting for PTI is tantamount to destroying the country. Taking a swipe at PTI, Fazl

said that the PTI government has made such agreements during its tenure, due to which the country has been

opinion. Sharing his views on tribal people, the JUI-F leader said that tribal youth are concerned about their future as



mortgaged. The PDM chief further said that before the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan, there was an opinion that fresh elections should be held. Fazl added that PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif has now given a statement about the same

they are facing serious problems. Fazl said that there is a need to activate the administration of tribal areas by forming a committee for these areas. He also said that a survey of these areas should be conducted by forming a committee.

Govt. should create a compact economy: Asif

Sargodha (Soon Times), Shaikh Asif, founder president of Sargodha Chamber of Small Traders and Industries, in his meeting with journalist team of Soon Times, suggested that for the revival of the SME sector, the government should also create a compact economy on the model of compact democracy. He further added that in order to stop the flight of dollars, the import of luxury consumer practices, shampoo, soap, chocolates and other

such commodities should be banned. Founder President,



(SCSTS) instead of suppressing the opposition, suggested

that if the governments keep the problems of the SME sector in mind, the wheel of the economy would not be jammed. All windows should be closed to prevent smuggling items. Moreover, the appointment of the governor of the State Bank and the rate of the dollar for fifteen days should be fixed. Strictness should be imposed on foreign countries for tourism and the use of credit cards abroad should be banned.

5.6-magnitude earthquake jolts coastal parts of the Balochistan

QUETTA: An earthquake measuring 5.6 on the Richter scale jolted coastal parts of Balochistan on Sunday. According to the National Seismic Monitoring Centre (NSMC), Islamabad, the epicentre of the moderate earthquake was Pasni near Gwadar and the magnitude of the quake was recorded at 5.6 on the Richter scale. Tremors were felt in the

Gwadar, Pasni, Ormara, and Kech areas of the province. While no casualties or damage to property were immediately reported, it is worth noting that several areas of Balochistan are already grappling with monsoon floods that have caused considerable destruction in the province. 5.6-magnitude earthquake jolts coastal parts of Balochistan. An earth-

quake measuring 5.6 on the Richter scale jolted coastal parts of Balochistan on Sunday. According to the National Seismic Monitoring Centre (NSMC), Islamabad, the epicentre of the moderate earthquake was Pasni near Gwadar and the magnitude of the quake was recorded at 5.6 on the Richter scale. 5.6-magnitude earthquake jolts coastal parts of Balochistan.

Pakistan sends another delegation to Kabul for peace talks with TTP

Another tribal jirga from Pakistan has gone to Kabul to hold talks with banned outfit Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants based in Afghanistan. Pakistan sent the 12-member jirga just a day after the return of the delegation of Pakistani ulama, headed by Mufti Taqi Usmani, who visited Afghanistan from July 25 to 29. The religious scholars held two meetings with the Pakistani Taliban, besides calling on the top leaders of the ruling Afghan Taliban and acting prime minister Mullah Mohammad Hasan

Akhund of the war-torn country. The first meeting was very brief in which the two sides introduced themselves and then concluded soon after Mufti Taqi Usmani offered dua (prayer) for the success of the peace process. It was Maulana Mohammad Tayyab, Ameer of Ishaat-ud-Tauheed wa Sunnah, who requested Mullah Mohammad Hasan Akhund during the meeting to help them arrange another session with the Pakistani Taliban. The News reported. Mullah Hasan and interior minister Sirajuddin Haqqani then organised

the second meeting in which the two sides openly discussed issues pertaining to the peace process. Now when the ulama have returned, the tribal elders are there to resume peace talks with the Taliban. Pakistan this time sent a small jirga of 12 people as a 53-member tribal jirga had gone to Kabul last time in June this year and only 20 of them took part in talks with the militant leaders. Ulama delegation met acting Afghan PM, Taliban leadership and TTP. Two sides openly discussed issues pertaining to peace process.

Pakistanis advised to mask up at Muharram gatherings amid COVID-19 outbreak

With Pakistan logging hundreds of COVID-19 cases everyday, the National Institute of Health, Islamabad (NIH) has advised strict adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs), including mask wearing and social distancing during Muharram gatherings. Gathering and majalis to remember the Shuhada-e-Karbala

(martyrs of Karbala) have started as the country observes the first day of the month of Muharram to mark the beginning of the new Islamic year today (Sunday). Pakistan reported only a single death from COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, the NIH data showed Sunday morning. As many as 661 new infections were detected in a single day

as the country's nerve centre in the fight against coronavirus performed diagnostic tests on 20,080 samples across the country. The new cases pushed the coronavirus positivity rate in Pakistan to 3.29% and the number of total COVID-19 cases to 1,553,386. Country reports one COVID death overnight, NIH data shows.

China's July factory activity weakens on soft demand

BEIJING: China's manufacturing activity logged a surprise drop in July, official data showed Sunday, on the back of weak demand and as strict zero-Covid restrictions continue to cast a pall on growth. The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), a key gauge of manufacturing activity in the world's second-biggest economy, came in at 49.0 in July, down from 50.2 June and below the 50-point mark separating growth from contraction, National Bureau of Statistics data showed. While sweeping Covid curbs have eased in major cities such as Shanghai and Beijing, sporadic lockdowns around the country have kept businesses and consumers worried. "In July, the manufacturing PMI dropped, due to factors such as the traditional off-season for production, insufficient release of market demand, and decline in prosperity of high-energy-consuming industries," said NBS senior statistician Zhao Qinghe in a statement. Zhao added that sharp price fluctuations of raw materials had led some companies to adopt a wait-and-see approach, "weakening purchasing intentions". The proportion of firms saying there was insufficient market demand had also increased for four consecutive months, he said, noting this was the "main difficulty" among manufacturers. But officials show few signs of relaxing strict pandemic curbs, with policymakers appearing to emphasise zero-Covid over growth in a Politburo meeting this week, where they vowed to strive for "the best outcome" rather than "to meet economic and social targets." "In acknowledging the difficulties, the government has finally become flexible towards this year's growth target," ANZ Research analysts said in a note. Chinese leaders had originally set a full-year GDP growth target of around 5.5 percent, but with economic expansion of just 0.4 percent in the second quarter, analysts believe it is unlikely to hit that goal.

Govt likely to hike petrol price by Rs10

ISLAMABAD: As the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) has approved an increase in the sales and distribution margins of oil marketing companies (OMCs) and petroleum dealers, the price of petroleum products is expected to increase by up to Rs10. According to sources, the government plans to increase diesel price by Rs17 and also hike the dealers' margin on petrol and diesel to Rs7 per liter. It is pertinent to mention here that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had imposed a condition to increase the levy in August. On Thursday, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet approved the proposal to fix dealers margin at Rs7.00/liter for Motor Spirit (MS) and High Speed Diesel (HSD). It is pertinent to mention here that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had imposed a condition to increase the levy in August.

Weekly currency update: Rupee expected to stabilise at the 240 against dollar

KARACHI: Owing to an improvement in dollar inflows from remittances and export proceeds, said a foreign exchange trader. In the last four months, the local unit has depreciated by about 60 rupees. The rupee has emerged to become the worst performing currency along with the Turkish Lira and Sri Lankan rupee. Having a grip on the currency is important otherwise the balance of payments crises may spill over uncontrollably into other aspects of the economy, including closure of manufacturing units, runaway inflation and law and order situation, said Treshmark in a research note. "This week, our view is that the worst of the currency movement is behind us. The State Bank of Pakistan has taken certain measures to choke imports and this will start paying off in the current quarter."

By: Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer

Two weeks ago, Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman demonstrated the Biden administration's magical thinking about Iran at the House of International Students. State Department spokesman Ned Price insisted last week that there was a deadline for talks, but failed to say whether it would be in one day or five years. Meanwhile, Iran's nuclear program continues unceasing. Progressives and the State Department may dislike President Donald Trump for withdrawing from the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), but that's wrong for three reasons: First, Iran is bound by the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The JCPOA did not free Iran of its legal obligations. Second, Iran's enrichment did not increase when Trump withdrew from the JCPOA, but when the Biden administration ended Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's "maximum pressure" campaign. Here, the Foundation for Defense of Democracies' timeline is definitive. Third, the JCPOA has not done what Presidents Obama and Biden said they would do. For Biden's team, basing its strategy toward Iran on fantasies rather than reality could quickly lead to the worst: not just Iran acquiring nuclear weapons a moment when Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's adviser Kamal

"US Policy toward Iran"

Khazari says that now it is a very dangerous situation. The question is not when, not if but an endless conflict that will destabilize the region. Biden's team may be obsessive about Iran's nuclear program. Biden probably won't live to see the results. Special Envoy Robert Malley (an American lawyer, political scientist and specialist in conflict resolution, who was the lead negotiator on the 2015 Iran) has never considered the Islamic Republic a threat. Through the lens of his moral equivalency, he believes that Iran has the right to possess nuclear weapons. Wendy Sherman (US Deputy Secretary of State), "there is a very viable agreement and Iran just has to say, 'yes,'" said Sherman, explaining that internal politics are likely to play over who is truly the nation's current supreme leader. She also believes privately that a failure in the Iran negotiations will be no worse than his failure with North Korea diplomacy. However, further said North Korea has not (yet) used its nuclear weapons. However, there is no threat for Israel, Saudi Arabia and other regional states from nuclear Iran but it is seriously unpleasant. If the regime collapses in just a day or two and unless popular forces take over Tehran, the theoretically assured IRGC units that are guarding, commanding and controlling Iran's nuclear arsenal may take power and launch an offensive to achieve their ideological goals before the end. This situation is making regional states fanatical about Iran's nuclear program than the White House. Some scholars think Iran's nuclear debacle will be another opportunity to avoid responsibility if they don't take it seriously. It may be an existential threat to the Jewish state of Israel as well. Then it may be possible for Israel to attack Iran's nuclear program. But there is a question why Israel was not against Iraq in 1981 and against Syria in 2007. I think that Iran is not Iraq or Syria. While Iraq only had Osirak and Syria only Al-Kabar, Iran's nuclear program is spread across the country and includes more than a dozen targets. Moreover, Iran is larger and more remote than Syria or Iraq. Iran is about four times the size of Iraq and about nine times the size of Syria. It may also be difficult to defuse Iran's airfields, anti-aircraft missile batteries, and Iranian command and control centers to strike multiple targets because many of Iran's nuclear sites are underground. On the other hand Iran can likely retaliate against Israel with Hezbollah's missile arsenal and with Houthi missiles and drones against Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. In short, this means that the decision to launch a military attack on Iran's nuclear facilities requires not dozens of flights, but thousands of flights over several days. The disadvantage of such a military strike, of course, is that it validates Iran's rhetoric about its need for nuclear weapons. The history saw that The Islamic Revolution was collapsing when Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein invaded and allowed Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to consolidate power. After all, the biggest drawback of a military strike doesn't topple the regime and nuclear program but delay. Between 2010 and 2012, four Iranian nuclear scientists Masoud Alimohammadi, Majid Shahriari, Darius Rezaeinejad and Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan were assassinated, while another Fereydoon Abbasi was wounded in an attempted murder. In November 2020, another scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was assassinated. Israel has neither confirmed nor denied its involvement, but Israeli defense minister Moshe Ya'alon said: "We will act in any way and are not willing to tolerate a nuclear-armed Iran. Unfortunately, this is the scenario to which Biden's Iran policy is now leading. Washington believes that they should do as much as possible against Iran and South Lebanon (In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon and during the conflict, according to Lebanese sources, between 15,000 and 20,000 people were killed, mostly were civilians.) and imagine that others should just pick up the pieces. Unfortunately, this is the scenario to which Biden's Iran policy is now leading.

Miftah announces tax relief for shop-owners consuming less than 150 units

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Miftah Ismail on Sunday announced tax relief for shop-



owners who consume less than 150 units per month. Addressing a press conference, Miftah Ismail said that government is seeking annual tax of Rs36,000 from small shop-

owners and stressed that everyone will have to pay taxes. Finance minister also said that

the Pakistani rupee, which is rapidly depreciating against the US dollar in recent weeks, should see some improvement in the two to three weeks. He stated that this month and the

previous month, the government had to make payments worth billions which had caused the local currency to come under pressure. The minister said that he would try to ensure that the dollars coming into the country on a daily basis would be more than those leaving. Miftah highlighted that the country witnessed import reduction of \$2.7 billion between June and July. He said that for now the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) had given approval to lift the ban on imports "We are removing the ban on most items, except for vehicles, mobile phones and home appliances." "We plan to give Pakistan a healthy economy.

We are determined to minimise the current account deficit and turn it into surplus within a year or so." The minister said that the government had succeeded in curbing imports and would make efforts to increase exports over the next two to three months. Miftah Ismail held former PTI government responsible for the country's economic problems and said that the coalition government was not capable of bringing the country to the brink in a mere three months. "The ones who brought the country to this point was the PTI and Imran Khan." Rupee to see improvement in next two weeks," Miftah Ismail says.

Saudi GDP climbs nearly 12% in 2nd quarter on oil gains

RİYADH: Saudi Arabia's year-on-year economic growth hit nearly 12 percent for the second quarter, led by a surging oil sector, the government's statistics agency said Sunday. The Middle East's largest economy has benefited from a spike in oil prices triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and has largely resisted appeals from Western countries to raise output in order to bring prices down. Growth in the second quarter was 11.8 percent compared to the same period last year, according to initial "flash"

estimates published by the General Authority for Statistics. "This dynamic growth was mainly due to the increasing in oil activities by 23.1 percent," the agency said. Non-oil economic activities grew by 5.4 percent and government services grew by 2.2 percent compared to the second quarter of 2021, it said. The Ukraine war and the resulting rise in crude prices has been a boon to oil-producing states like Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest crude exporter whose gross domestic product is expected

to grow by 7.6 percent in 2022, according to the International Monetary Fund. As the war got underway, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates stressed their commitment to the OPEC+ oil alliance, which Riyadh and Moscow lead, underscoring Riyadh's and Abu Dhabi's increasing independence from long-standing ally Washington. US President Joe Biden, who once vowed to make Saudi Arabia a "pariah" over human rights abuses, visited the kingdom earlier in July, drawing criticism from human

rights activists for greeting Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman with a fist bump. Oil was on the agenda during Biden's meeting with Saudi leaders and during a subsequent summit of regional leaders, but the visit ended without any agreements to raise production. The OPEC+ group is to meet on Wednesday. The main US contract, West Texas Intermediate crude, surged by more than five percent on Friday to rise back above \$100 per barrel. Growth in the second quarter was 11.8 percent.

1947-2022: A timeline of how the rupee has fared against the dollar

The Pakistani rupee is experiencing its worst slump in several years. Since the start of 2022, the currency has depreciated by more than 25% against the US dollar, weakening past a historic low of 239.94 to a dollar mark earlier this week. However, the Pakistani currency is not alone in falling poorly against the greenback, with even the historically strong euro and the British pound taking a hammering and sliding against the greenback. Of late, the fear that has gripped the financial markets and different stakeholders of the economy is that if prudent and timely economic measures are not taken, Pakistan may spiral out of control, much like Sri Lanka. This accelerated the free fall of the rupee against the US dollar in the interbank market recently. A report from Arif Habib Limited highlighted that the initial major depreciation of the rupee against the dollar was triggered back in April

2022, post a vote of no-confidence leading to a regime change in the country. The associated political risks and shifting paradigms took a toll on the foreign investors' and creditors' confidence, hence largely contributing to putting the rupee under pressure. In the last few weeks, the Pakistani rupee witnessed a free fall against the US dollar, depreciating over 16% since the start of the fiscal year 2022-23. Was the rupee-dollar parity always thus tumultuous? Takes a look at how the Pakistani currency fared since its formation in 1947. Analyst's take on recent rupee fall: Analyst Rabeeha Shahzad said that the Pakistani rupee is one of the weakest currencies this year; dropping by 25%. Countries whose currencies are following this trajectory are Sri Lanka, Ghana, Turkey and Ukraine. "The forex reserves have dangerously dropped down and now stand at \$8.5 billion during

the week ended on July 22. Finance Minister Miftah Ismail recently claimed that fall in rupee is not due to economic fundamentals which is also supported by his recent tweet as he states that with the measures taken by SBP, runaway imports from last year have

there is a \$4 billion gap in our debt payments which would be covered comfortably by the commitments from our friendly countries (like Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE)," she said, sharing the developments so far. The analyst said that in the past, Miftah's claims of



come under control. "While mentioning the decline in imports he stated that 'import number will be less than our exports plus remittances.' He even mentioned that

Pakistan reaching a staff level agreement with IMF "were not helpful in providing a cushion to the markets" as the agreement happened with much delay.

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Work on Muharram security plan is in progress

Sargodha (Soon Times), Division-wide security plan for the 10th of Muharram is being worked on. A security plan has been formed by placing 6678 processions and majalis of the four districts in A, B and C. More than 16,000 police officers, employees and volunteers will perform duty across the division. Category A has 386, B has 446 and C has 5 thousand 845 processions and majalis. There will be 1 thousand 46 processions and majalis in Khushab district, out of which 10, B10 and C will be 866 processions and majalis. There will be 749 processions and assemblies from Mianwali district. There will be different number of processions and majalis in different districts for which policemen etc. have been deputed.

Could this new programming language replace C++?

Google believes that a new programming language known as Carbon can succeed C++, reported Tech Radar. New programming languages that are easier to use keep replacing old ones. For example, Apple's Swift language replaced its predecessor, Objective-C. Some have called Rust a C++ successor but Google's Principal Software Engineer Chandler Carruth said that it does not have "bi-directional interoperability" introducing a language barrier. This makes translation between different programming languages difficult. Carbon is expected to be interoperable with C++ code and users should find it easy to make the full switch. According to Carruth, Carbon has simpler grammar and optimised API imports. The project also has ethical motives like inclusivity making it even more beneficial for users. Carbon's source code can be downloaded as the programming language is currently just an experiment. Users can experiment on their own browsers with the Compiler Explorer web app. New programming language known as Carbon could succeed C++. Carbon is expected to be interoperable with C++ code. Carbon has simpler grammar and optimised API imports.

Gluttonous cosmic 'black widow' is heaviest-known neutron star

WASHINGTON: Astronomers have observed the most massive known example of an object called a neutron star, one classified as a "black widow" that got particularly hefty by gobbling up most of the mass of a stellar companion trapped in an unhappy cosmic marriage. The researchers said the neutron star, wildly spinning at 707 times per second, has a mass about 2.35 times greater than that of our sun, putting it perhaps at the maximum possible mass for such objects before they would collapse to form a black hole. A neutron star is the compact collapsed core of a massive star that exploded as a supernova at the end of its life cycle. The one described by the researchers is a highly magnetized type of neutron star called a pulsar that unleashes beams of electromagnetic radiation from its poles. As it spins, these beams appear from the perspective of an observer on Earth to pulse in a way akin to a lighthouse's rotating light. Only one other neutron star is known to spin more quickly than this one. "The heavier the neutron star, the denser the material in its core," said Roger Romani, director of Stanford University's Center for Space Science and Astrophysics and a co-author of the research published this week in the Astrophysical Journal Letters. A black hole's event horizon is the point of no return beyond which anything including light gets sucked in irrevocably.

AC has formally started plantation

Pindi Bhattian (IPS), Assistant Commissioner Pindi Bhattian Munawar Hussain has formally started the plantation



drive at AC Office Pindi Bhattian. After that, all the staff also planted saplings. In-charge of Forest Department, Khan Muhammad, Mustafa Bhatti and other staff were present at the spot. AC made a special prayer and said, planting a tree is a rewarding work. It has been specifically said by the officers of the forest department that we will provide plants wherever needed.

Police says relative of PBC Secretary Ashraf Rahi involved in his murder

LAHORE: The police on Sunday said that a relative of Secretary Punjab Bar Council (PBC) Ashraf Rahi was allegedly involved in his murder. The police said that Ashraf Rahi allegedly deposited the jewellery of his relative Bilal in a bank locker and later the victim allegedly drew the precious metal from the locker and handed fake jewellery to his relative. "The suspect got irritated after being handed fake jewellery and killed Ashraf Rahi along with his accomplices," they said. The lawyer was gunned down in

the Badami Bagh neighbourhood of Lahore. Two armed motorcyclists ambushed his

home from his office, located at Fane Road, and sprayed him with a volley of bullets. Rahi



car when he was going back died on the spot.

Brazil prosecutors ask WhatsApp to delay launch of new tool until January

BRAZILIA: Brazilian prosecutors on Friday called on mes-

said Communities could undermine the efficient steps taken by

after an expected second-round run-off vote at the end of October. But the MPF said in a statement this was not enough to mitigate the "serious risks that an increase in disinformation can generate ... in the last two months of the year." A WhatsApp spokesperson said the company will continue to carefully evaluate the best time to launch the new platform and would duly reply to the authorities' request. The MPF said WhatsApp is installed on 99% of the smartphones in Brazil. The new feature would expand the number of users from 256 at present to 512, allowing messages to be sent to 2,560 people at once. This would increase users' ability to viralize content, the MPF said. The prosecutors noted WhatsApp's end-to-end encryption prevents those responsible for the platform from monitoring and moderating the content of the messages exchanged on it.



saying platform WhatsApp to delay the launch in Brazil of its new feature called Communities until January to avoid the spread of fake news during and immediately after the country's election in October. The federal prosecutors said the expanded reach of the new tool comes "at a time when fake news about the functioning of institutions and the integrity of the Brazilian voting system could jeopardize the democratic stability of the country." The MPF, as the federal prosecutors office is known,

WhatsApp in recent years to contain the spread of fake news. WhatsApp is one of the messaging platforms that supporters of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro most use to communicate, organize rally and divulge their views. Bolsonaro is seeking re-election but is trailing leftist former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in Brazil's most polarized election in decades. The messaging service owned by Meta Platforms agreed in April to postpone the launch of the new platform until

SSP Naveed has taken charge as DPO

Mianwali (Soon Times), SSP Muhammad Naveed has taken charge as DPO Mianwali. He was received by all Head of Branches on his ar-

protection of life and property of citizens, immediate resolution of their legitimate problems and delivery of justice to the oppressed." Citi-



rival at the DPO office. He met all the Head of Branches and took information about their work. DPO Mianwali said, "My top priorities include

zons can feel free to come to me for solving their legitimate problems. Earlier, he was performing his duties as AIG Discipline in Lahore.

Judges have set example of rule of the law: Shah

Mianwali (Soon Times), Syed Rahim Shah Senior Advocate Isa Khel bar congratulated Chairman PTI Imran Khan on becoming Pervez Elahi's Chief Minister Punjab and Sardar Saibten Khan Speaker National Assembly Punjab. He said, Supreme Court Judges have set an example of supremacy of constitution and law by deciding on merit despite pressure. With this decision, people's trust in the judiciary has been restored.



The PDM government has created problems for the poor people due to inflation. Addition of RSK tax in electricity bills is a cruel decision.

High flood occurs at the Head Mrala

Sialkot (Soon Times), Due to heavy monsoon rains, houses and standing crops have been severely damaged in nearby villages of Head Mrala. At Head Mrala in Chenab River; current flow of water is recorded at 2 lakh 17 mazar 98 cusecs which is expected to increase further. India has dumped its excess water into the Chenab river; due to which there is currently a high level of flood here. The district ad-



ministration has issued high alert in nearby areas. Support teams of Anhar Department and Rescue 1122 from the district administration are present in the area ready to deal with any emergency situation.

On Ghauri's request, response is the sought from the IG Police

Sialkot (Soon Times), District Police Officer Kirk Shafiqullah Khan Gandapur recently advertised in newspapers for the post of sweeper in his office with an additional note that Christian candidates are preferred for the post of sweeper. Will Taking notice of this, Chairman of Christian Awakening Movement, Dr Adil Ghauri, wrote a letter to the National Commission for Pakistan and IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that these words are insulting to Chris-



tians, which hurt them. Taking notice of the said letter, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has sought a reply from IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on August 1.

Chinese booster rocket makes uncontrolled return to Earth

WASHINGTON: A Chinese booster rocket made an uncontrolled return to Earth on Saturday, leading US officials to chide Beijing for not sharing information about the potentially hazardous object's descent. US Space Command "can confirm the People's Republic of China (PRC) Long March 5B (CZ-5B) re-entered over the Indian Ocean at approx 10:45 am MDT on 7/30," the US military unit said on Twitter: "We refer you to the #PRC for further details on the reentry's technical aspects such as potential debris dispersal" impact location," it said. In a statement posted to its official WeChat profile, the China Manned Space Agency later gave coordinates for an impact area in the Sulu Sea, about 35 miles (57 kilometers) off the east coast of the Philippines' Palawan Island. "Most of its devices were abated and destroyed during reentry," the agency said to launch the second of three modules China needed to complete its new Tiangong space station. Malaysia's space agency said it detected rocket debris burning up on re-entry before falling in the Sulu Sea northeast of the island of Borneo. "The debris of the rocket caught fire while entering the

Earth's airspace and the movement of the burning debris also crossed Malaysian airspace and could be detected in several areas including crossing the airspace around the state of Sarawak," it said. A criticism - NASA administrator Bill Nelson criticized Beijing on Twitter, saying the failure to share details of the rocket's descent was irresponsible and risky. "All spacefaring nations should follow established best practices, and do their part to share this type of information in advance," Nelson wrote. "To allow reliable predictions of potential debris impact risk, especially for heavy-lift vehicles, like the Long March 5B, which carry a significant risk of loss of life and property." He added: "Doing so is critical to the responsible use of space and to ensure the safety of people here on Earth." The Tiangong space station is one of the crown jewels of Beijing's ambitious space program, which has landed robotic rovers on Mars and the Moon, and made China only the third nation to put humans in orbit. The new module, propelled by the Long March 5B, successfully docked with Tiangong's core module on Monday and the three astronauts who had been living in the main compartment since June successfully entered the new lab.

Crypto clients beg for their cash back after lender's crash

WASHINGTON: An Irishman at risk of losing his farm. An

desperation and, frequently regret. "I knew there were

currencies plummeted - bitcoin alone has shed over 60 percent since November - the firm faced mounting troubles until it froze withdrawals in mid-June. The company owed \$4.7 billion to its users, according to a court filing earlier this month, and the endgame is unclear. The letters - posted to a public online court docket - come from around the world and recount tragic results of users' money being frozen. "From that hard-working single mom in Texas struggling with past-due bills, to the teacher in India with all his hard-earned money deposited in Celsius - I believe I can speak for most of us when I say I feel betrayed, ashamed, depressed, angry," wrote one client who signed their letter EL.



American having suicidal thoughts. An 84-year-old widow's lost life savings: People caught in the meltdown of crypto lender Celsius are pleading for their money back. Hundreds of letters have poured in to the judge overseeing the firm's multi-billion-dollar bankruptcy and they are heavy with anger, shame,

risks," said a client whose letter was unsigned. "It seemed a worthwhile risk." Celsius and its CEO Alex Mashinsky had billed the platform as a safe place for people to deposit their crypto currencies in exchange for high interest, while the firm lent out and invested those deposits. But as the value of highly volatile crypto

Indonesia blocks Yahoo, Paypal, gaming websites over licence breaches

JAKARTA: Indonesia has blocked search engine website Yahoo, payments firm PayPal and several gaming websites due to failure to comply with licensing regulations, an official said on Saturday, sparking a backlash on social media. Registration is required under rules released in late November 2020 and will give authorities broad powers to compel platforms to disclose data of certain users, and take down content deemed unlawful or that "disturbs public order

within four hours if urgent and 24 hours if not. Several tech companies had rushed to register in days leading up to the deadline, which had been extended until Friday, including Alphabet Inc's Google, Meta Platforms Inc's Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp and Amazon.com Inc. Senior official Pangarpanan, a senior official at Indonesia's Communications Ministry, said in a text message websites that have been blocked include Yahoo, PayPal

and gaming sites like Steam, Dota2, Counter-Strike and EpicGames, among others. PayPal, Yahoo's parent private equity firm Apollo Global Management and US game developer Valve Corporation, which runs Steam, Dota and Counter-Strike, did not immediately respond to requests for comment. EpicGames could not be reached for comment. Indonesia blocks Yahoo, Paypal, gaming websites over licence breaches.

Hezbollah warns Israel against 'playing with time' over maritime border dispute

BEIRUT: Lebanon's armed Hezbollah group issued a video on Sunday showing vessels involved in the Israeli offshore oil and gas industry and warned against "playing with time", underlining its threat of military escalation amid maritime border demarcation talks. Lebanon and Israel are locked in US-mediated negotiations to delineate their shared maritime border that would help determine which oil and gas resources belong to which country and pave the way

for more exploration. Lebanese officials have said they are optimistic that this round of talks can result in a deal after years of on-and-off indirect negotiations, but Hezbollah has warned it is ready to prevent Israel from extracting hydrocarbons should Lebanon not be allowed to do so. Israel and Hezbollah fought a month-long war in 2006 and have traded fire on several occasions since but have avoided a large-scale confrontation.

Former Philippine president Fidel 'Steady Eddie' Ramos dies

MANILA: Former Philippine president Fidel Ramos, who oversaw a rare period of steady growth and peace that won him the reputation as one of the country's most effective leaders ever, has died aged 94, officials said Sunday. Known as "Steady Eddie" for his unflappable demeanour during the country's regular moments of upheaval, he was frequently pictured chewing unlit cigars as he guided the Philippines with a sure hand from 1992-1998. A career military man who never previously held elected office, his professional conduct was unlike the bombastic image of many Filipino politicians. He was also the first Protestant to win the

top office in the overwhelmingly Catholic nation, despite opposition from some in the Church. He later made an aggressive push for family planning to rein in rapid population growth. But like other top officials of his generation, Ramos played a role in the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, which saw thousands killed and thousands more arbitrarily imprisoned. "It is with great sorrow that we learn of the passing of former President Fidel V. Ramos," said Trixie Cruz-Angeles, press secretary for President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. the son and namesake of the late dictator, who took office last month.

On navy day, Putin says United States is main threat to Russia

PETERSBURG: President Vladimir Putin on Sunday signed a new naval doctrine which cast the United States as Russia's main rival and set out Russia's global maritime ambitions for crucial areas such as the Arctic and in the Black Sea. Speaking on Russia's Navy Day in the former imperial capital of St Petersburg founded by Tsar Peter the Great, Putin praised Peter for making Russia a great sea power and increasing the global standing of the Russian state. After inspecting the navy, Putin made a short speech in which he promised that what he touted as Russia's unique Zircon hypersonic cruise missiles, cautioning that Russia had the mili-

tary clout to defeat any potential aggressors. Shortly before the speech, he signed a new 55-page naval doctrine, which sets out the broad strategic aims of Russia's navy, including its ambitions as a "great maritime power" which extend over the entire world. The main threat to Russia, the doctrine says, is "the strategic policy of the USA to dominate the world's oceans" and the movement of the NATO military alliance closer towards Russia's borders. Russia may use its military force appropriately to the situation in the world's oceans should other soft powers, such as diplomatic and economic tools, be exhausted, the doctrine says.

Hundreds camp at Iraqi parliament for second day



BAGHDAD: Hundreds of followers of powerful Iraqi Shiite preacher Moqtada Sadr camped at the country's parliament Sunday for a second day, protesting against corruption and political mismanagement. Despite tear gas, water cannon and baking temperatures that touched 47 degrees Celsius (116 degrees Fahrenheit), they stormed the complex on Saturday after pulling down heavy concrete barricades on roads leading to Baghdad's fortified Green Zone of diplomatic and government buildings. The health ministry said at least 100 protesters and 25 security personnel were

hurt in the confrontation. Nearly 10 months after October elections, Iraq is still without a new government despite intense negotiations between factions. Analysts have said Sadr, a mercurial cleric who once led a militia against US and Iraqi government forces, is using street protests to signal that his views must be taken into account in any government formation. Both the United Nations and European Union warned about escalating tensions. The immediate trigger for the occupation was the decision by a rival Shiite bloc, which is pro-Iran, to pick

former cabinet minister Moqtada al-Sudani for the prime minister's post. On Sunday morning, the demonstrators marked the Muslim month of Muharram, a traditional Shiite celebration, with religious chants and collective meals. "We were hoping for the best but we got the worst. The politicians currently in parliament have brought us nothing," said one of the protesters, Abdelwahab al-Jaafari, 45, a day labourer with nine children. Nearly 10 months after October elections, Iraq is still without a new government despite intense negotiations between factions.

U.S. House Speaker Pelosi begins Asia tour, no mention of Taiwan

BEIJING: U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi starts a tour of four Asian countries on Sunday, her office said, without mentioning Taiwan amid intense speculation she might visit the self-ruled island claimed by China. "Speaker Nancy Pelosi is leading a Congressional delegation to the Indo-Pacific region, including visits to Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan," her office said in a press release. The release says the visit would include those countries, but did not specify whether Pelosi, who is number 3 in the line of presidential succession, might make other stops. "The trip will focus on mutual security, economic partnership and democratic governance in the Indo-Pacific region," it said.

Russia says it has invited UN, Red Cross experts to probe jail deaths

Russia has invited experts from the United Nations and the Red Cross to probe the deaths of dozens of Ukrainian prisoners in a jail held by Moscow-backed separatists, the defence ministry said on Sunday. In a statement, the ministry said it was acting "in the interests of conducting an objective investigation" into what it called an attack on the jail earlier in the week. The separatists put the death toll at 53 and accused Kyiv of hitting the prison with rockets. Ukraine's armed forces denied responsibility, saying Russian artillery had targeted the prison to hide the mistreatment of those held there. The separatists put the death toll at 53 and accused Kyiv of hitting the prison with rockets. Ukraine's armed forces denied responsibility, saying Russian artillery had targeted the prison to hide the mistreatment of those held there.

Russian official says Ukraine carried out drone attack on Black Sea fleet HQ

A senior official in Russian-annexed Crimea accused Ukraine on Sunday of carrying out a drone attack ahead of planned celebrations to mark Navy Day, injuring five and forcing the cancellation of festivities. The accusation comes hours before Russian President Vladimir Putin is due to oversee Navy Day celebrations in his hometown of St Petersburg and approve Russia's naval doctrine as Moscow presses on with its military intervention in Ukraine. "An unidentified object flew into the courtyard of the fleet's headquarters," Mikhail Razvozhayev, governor of Sevastopol, home to Russia's Black Sea fleet, wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

"According to preliminary information, it is a drone." He said Ukraine had decided to "spoil Navy Day for us". The Ukrainian defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Razvozhayev said that five employees of the fleet headquarters had been injured in the incident and that the Fed-

eral Security Service (FSB) was investigating its circumstances. "All celebrations have been cancelled for security reasons," Razvozhayev said. "Please remain calm and stay home if possible." Navy Day is an annual Russian holiday during which its fleets stage naval parades and honour its sailors.



Sports & Entertainment

Commonwealth Games: Arch-rivals Pakistan, India to clash in T20 today



BIRMINGHAM: Women's cricket teams of arch-rivals India and Pakistan will lock horns with each other in a T20 fixture scheduled to be held today (Sunday) under the Commonwealth Games 2022 in Birmingham. The Pakistan women's cricket team is eagerly looking for a win to stay

in the tournament as they will face tough India in their second group A game of the Commonwealth Games T20 cricket at the Edgbaston Stadium. The match begins at 3pm PST. On Friday night, the Green Shirts suffered a 15-run defeat by Barbados. Both teams have failed to score any point so far

in the game as Australia inflicted defeat on India in its opening match. It was a big blow to the Bismah Maroof-led side when they were undone by Barbados in a game where the Pakistani batters were seen struggling against bounce and deviation. Nida Dar, however, played with grace, managing some super shots before returning 50 not out off 31 balls. The two teams have played each other in T20 cricket 11 times. India, currently ranked number 4, have won nine matches while seventh-ranked Pakistan have won two matches. The last time the two teams met in a T20 match was in the 2018 ICC Women's T20 World Cup in Providence, Guyana.

Will Smith posts emotional new apology for Oscars slap

LOS ANGELES: Actor Will Smith has posted an emotional new apology for slapping Chris Rock at the Oscars earlier this year, revealing in a lengthy video clip that he has reached out to the comedian who was not yet "ready to talk." Smith -- who went on to win the best actor award --

marched on stage and hit Rock for making a joke about his wife, in an incident that overshadowed the March ceremony, being broadcast live around the world. "Chris, I apologize to you. My behavior was unacceptable. And I'm here, whenever you're ready to talk," Smith reiterated said

in the nearly six-minute video, in which he also answered fans' questions about the shocking moment that has tarnished his public image. Smith had made a public apology shortly after the incident, and was banned from attending the Oscars for the next 10 years after the slap.

Djokovic 'preparing' to play US Open Tennis ace Sania Mirzalooks drop-dead gorgeous in this Sunday selfie

Indian tennis star Sania Mirza just shared her latest Sunday selfie on Instagram and people can't get enough of her gorgeous looks. Mirza's insta is a must-visit page if you are a fan and want a glimpse into the celebrity's personal life. In her latest selfie, Sania could be seen

dressed up in a black spaghetti strap tank top with a V-neck, looking drop-dead gorgeous. She opted for soft makeup look and nude-pink lips. Meanwhile, she wore her hair in waves. The star player captioned the picture: "Sunday mood."

Djokovic 'preparing' to play US Open

PARIS: Novak Djokovic said Saturday he is "preparing to compete" at the US Open even though his refusal to get vaccinated will see him barred from entering the country. Under current rules, all visitors to the United States must be fully vaccinated against coronavirus. The Serb star, a three-time champion in New York and fresh from securing a seventh Wimbledon title, has consistently refused to take the vaccine, a stance which also saw him deported

from Melbourne in January on the eve of the Australian Open. "I am preparing as if I will be allowed to compete, while I await to hear if there is any room for me to travel to US. Fingers crossed!" wrote Djokovic on Instagram in a post accompanying a video of him training. More than 43,000 people have signed a petition calling on the authorities to allow 21-time Slam winner Djokovic to play at the US Open which starts on August 29.

Two-time Masters champ Watson headed to LIV Golf, Stenson leads at Bedminster

NEW YORK: Two-time Masters winner Bubba Watson confirmed his move to Saudi-backed LIV Golf on Friday as marquee recruit Henrik Stenson snagged a share of the first-round lead on his debut. Former world No. 2 Watson, currently ranked 86th, has been sidelined since May and said he won't actually play on the fledgling circuit until next year as he continues to recover from surgery on his right knee. "So I should be 100% in the next couple of months," Watson said in an interview during the live stream of the first round of the LIV Golf Invitational at Trump National in Bedminster, New Jersey. "I'm good now, it's just now getting the leg to loosen up so I can hit the shots full-bore," he said. Although he claimed the most recent of his 12 US PGA Tour titles four years ago, Watson remains a fan favorite and is another former major winner to make the leap to the lucrative series that has roiled the golf world.

Review: In episode 6 'Kaali Tijarat', Team Muhafiz takes on menace of human trafficking

If you thought it was time to celebrate with Rawka behind bars, well think again. Team Muhafiz returned to our screens on Saturday with another action-packed episode titled Kaali Tijarat focusing on a human smuggling ring. Picking up from last week where we saw Rawka now in custody of Farman, the mentor of Team Muhafiz questioning the notorious criminal who was finally apprehended while trying to blow up the Jinnah Hockey Stadium during a hockey match. As Farman tries to get Rawka to spill the beans, Zane who was captured wakes up in a warehouse where he finds himself in a room

full of people, who are about to be smuggled abroad. Though he

hatch a plan to break the human trafficking ring. Meanwhile,



breaks out, Zane promises to come back and rescue the people there. As he rejoins the team, the youngsters come together to

members of the human trafficking ring end up in a frenzy when they discover Zane is nowhere to be found.

Aespa's first fanmeet turns into mini-concert for fans

K-pop girl group Aespa conducted their first-ever fanmeet with Korean fans since their debut in November 17, 2021. "My SYNK Aespa" was the name of the event which was held at the SK Olympic Handball Stadium at 6PM KST. The fanmeet was also broadcasted live online through global platform 'Be-

comfy LIVE', for all their fans domestically and overseas alike, apart from the fans attending physically. At the fanmeet, Aespa lifted the atmosphere with their hits such as Black Mamba, Next Level, Savage, as well as the title track Girls from their latest 2nd mini-album. As per ALLKPOP, the fanmeet

looked nothing short of a concert as aespa performed their non-title tracks such as ICU and YEPLI on stage. Aespa concluded their performance with gratitude. "This was our first face-to-face fanmeet in Korea, and it has been a very fun and enjoyable time. It was also the first time we performed the tracks ICU and YEPLI, and the performances were better, and we hope there are more songs we can show you in the future." Meanwhile, aespa is gearing up to hold their first Japan showcase 'aespa JAPAN PREMIUM SHOWCASE 2022-SYNK-' at Yokohama Pia Arena MM from August 6 to 7.

