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Blinken defends Pak arms sales against Indian criticism

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UAE envoy visits institute for arts, culture

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Verstappen on verge of 2nd crown

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Briefs

PM lauds his team's efforts

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday appreciated his cabinet members and senior government officers over the success of his visits to attend the SCO in Samarkand as well as the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The prime minister, in his opening remarks while chairing the cabinet meeting, apprised the cabinet members about his participation in the SCO Summit and bilateral engagements on the sidelines with the leaders of the member states including Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Central Asian leaders.

Imran must be made example of

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday termed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan a 'traitor', saying that if he [Imran] is not taught a lesson, then everybody will be held responsible for the destruction of the country. In her series of tweets on the social networking website Twitter, Maryam took a jibe at Imran Khan and wrote that the painful thing is not that Pakistan's destiny was played with by the person who has trained abroad and supported financially.

Audio leak reconfirms PTI's stance

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senior Central Vice President Fawad Chaudhry said that the audio leak, featuring conversation between the then prime minister Imran Khan and Azam Khan, re-verified the PTI's talks and existence of the CIPHER, demanding that they wanted thorough investigation into the matter so as to bring the truth to the fore.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif calls on President Dr Arif Alvi at Awaian-e-Sadr. - DNA

Cypher should be leaked too now, says Imran Khan

Khan urges nation to stand up to smash shackles of slavery

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Imran Khan said Wednesday that it was a "good thing" that the government allegedly leaked an audio about the US cypher, saying he thinks the cypher itself should be leaked to the public. Imran Khan accused Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and co of leaking the latest audio. "Well done on leaking it. I would say the cypher should get leaked too [...] and so everyone knows what a big foreign conspiracy was made," he said. "I haven't even played [on it] yet. Now [we will] play when they expose it," he concluded. In a major development,

Imran Khan's alleged audio with P.S leaked

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: As the audios of high-profile personalities continue to get leaked, a sound bite of former prime minister Imran Khan allegedly telling his then-principal secretary

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Takes oath as Finance Minister

Dar vows revival of damaged economy

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar said Wednesday that his government would try its best to revive the economy, which has been critically damaged during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government's tenure. Talking to the media, after taking oath as Finance Minister, he said regaining the deserving value of the country's currency, bringing down inflation, and reducing interest rates were among the priorities. Earlier, President Dr. Arif Alvi administered the oath to Senator Ishaq Dar as Federal Minister. Dar said, Pakistan was facing a severe economic crisis currently due to a quarter to four years of mismanagement by the PTI government, which had pushed the economy to a critical place, which even enemies could not have done. The minister lamented that the PTI government had not been critical of the damage to the economy but had wasted five precious years of the country and pushed the country behind 30 years. However, Dar was optimistic that the country would be put back on a growth path as the PML (N) had a history of correcting the economy during crises in the past.

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Resurgence of terrorism not to be tolerated: COAS

Gen Bajwa commended the formations for reaching out to people in distress

RAWALPINDI: Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Wednesday said the resurgence of terrorism would not be tolerated. The COAS expressed this resolve while chairing the 251st Corps Commanders' Conference at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. According to the military's media wing, the meeting discussed the external and internal security situation with a special focus on the flood situation and the ongoing relief efforts undertaken by the army formations across the country. "The formations must leave no stone unturned to take action against terrorists in coordination with all LEAs (law enforcing agencies)," the COAS directed

Chinese citizen killed, two injured in gun attack

DNA

KARACHI: A Chinese national was shot dead and two others were injured on Wednesday afternoon after an unidentified assailant opened fire inside a dental clinic in Karachi's Saddar area, a police official said. Speaking at the scene of the crime, SSP South Asad Raza told reporters that one person was killed and two people were injured who were shifted to a hospital for treatment. He confirmed that the three were Chinese people.

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Audio Leaks High level committee to probe matter

NSC decides committee will be headed by Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The National Security Committee (NSC) on Wednesday approved the constitution of a high-level committee to probe the recently surfaced audio leaks featuring candid conversations between key figures in the coalition government and instructed the Ministry of Law to prepare a "legal framework" regarding cyber security. The meeting of the NSC, which is the highest forum for coordination on security issues, was chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. It was attended by ministers for defence, energy, information and broadcasting, interior, finance, human rights, planning, development and special initiatives, chairman joint chiefs of staff committee, services chiefs, national security adviser and senior officers. According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the high-level committee will be headed by Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah. During the meeting, the heads of the intelligence institutions gave a detailed briefing to the participants on the security of the PM's house and other important places.

Continued on Page 06

Forensic audit to be conducted: Rana Sanaullah

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Wednesday said that the government will conduct a forensic audit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and PTI Chairman Imran Khan's leaked audios. Earlier, a sound bite of the former prime minister allegedly telling his then-principal secretary Azam Khan to "play" with the US cypher has come to the fore. In the audio allegedly featuring Khan, a man can be heard talking about the cypher which Khan - time and again - has claimed mentions the "threat" to remove his government. Following the leaked audio, Sanaullah - during a press conference in Islamabad - said that if Khan's audio is real, then he should be exposed before the nation.

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Korean ambassador hands over relief items to Pak officials

Ambassador stated that this first shipment of relief items donated by the Government of Korea arrived in Pakistan on 17th September and it consists of approximately three hundred thousand water purification tablets, thirty thousand emergency blankets.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Korea, Suh Sangpyo, Wednesday, at Jinnah International Airport, Karachi, held a ceremony to hand over the first batch of urgently needed relief items for flood victims with the Provincial Minister for Relief Rehabilitation, Mr. Rasool Bax Chandio, Director General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Saqib Rauf, Consul General of the Korean Consulate in Karachi, Mr. Kim Haksung, and Senior officials of the National Disaster Management Au-

thority were also present at the ceremony. The Ambassador stated that this first shipment of relief items donated by the Government of Korea arrived in Pakistan on 17th September and it consists of approximately three hundred thousand water purification tablets, thirty thousand emergency blankets, and various other essential relief items. He went on to say that a second shipment of relief items consisting of family sized tents, collapsible water bags, and thermal blankets is also on route via a cargo ship that will be docked at

Karachi Sea Port no later than 16th October. The Ambassador apprised the media that in addition to the in-kind donations by the Government of Korea, which amounts to USD 300,000 and Korean private sector companies and associations working in Pakistan, have collectively donated over USD 500,000 so far for the flood victims. The Ambassador whilst greatly appreciating the crucial role being played by the NDMA and the Government of Pakistan to alleviate the suffering of the flood victims, also extended his sincere ap-

preciation to the Korean Association of Pakistan, Jogye Order, K-Water, Mira Power, LH, KOAK, KA-Power, PK International Food, KEPCO Plant Services & Engineering, Samsung Electronics Pakistan, Lotte Chilsung Beverages, Lotte Engineering & Construction, and Lotte Chemical, who in addition to their cash donations, have also continued to distribute essential food items, shelters, and medicines directly to the affected local populations and to the non-governmental organizations involved in the relief efforts.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi administering the oath of office to Senator Ishaq Dar as Federal Minister. PM Shehbaz Sharif also attended the oath-taking ceremony – DNA

President administers oath to Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi administered the oath of office to Senator Ishaq Dar as Federal Minister at an impressive oath-taking ceremony held, at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also attended the oath-taking ceremony. The ceremony was witnessed by Federal Ministers, Ministers of State, parliamentarians and eminent persons from different walks of life. – APP

Ashrafi appeals nation to help flood victims

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Representative for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Wednesday appealed the nation and Muslim Ummah to help the flood victims generously, especially during the holy month of Rabi-ul-Awwal. Addressing a press conference, Ashrafi who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulama Council said keeping in view the sanctity of the holy month of Rabi-ul-Awwal, philanthropists should come forward and help the flood affected people facing critical situation due to monsoon rains and flash floods across the country. He said following the teachings of Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), we should extend all out support to the affected people as the flood situation had hit approximately 33 million people who are in dire need of humanitarian aid. – APP

FO presents ECO Award to GCWUF VC

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood on Wednesday presented Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Award for Excellence to Prof. Dr. Robina Farooq, Vice Chancellor of Govt College for Women University, Faisalabad, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ECO Awards are conferred on eminent individuals of ECO Member States for their outstanding research work, contributions and achievements in the fields of economics; history and culture; science and technology; education; agriculture and environment, with regional character and contribution to the organization's goals and objectives. Prof. Dr. Robina Farooq won the Award for her achievements and contributions in the field of agriculture and environment. – APP



Alvi for promoting Pak-Syria people-to-people contacts

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday called for further consolidating the existing brotherly relations between Pakistan and Syria, promoting people-to-contacts, and establishing linkages between the private and public institutions of the two countries. The president, in a meeting with Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Syria Air Marshal (Retd) Shahid Akhtar, who called on him here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, said Pakistan accorded high priority to its relations with all the Muslim countries, including Syria. He said cultural, religious and historical ties bound the people of Pakistan and Syria together, and the potential of bilateral relations of the two countries should be fully realized for mutual benefit.

President Alvi emphasized the need for frequent exchange of business, trade and investment delegations between the two countries to evaluate each other's strengths and identify complementarities for further boosting the relations. He called for expediting the implementation of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the establishment of a Joint Working Group on Trade and Economic Affairs. The president advised the ambassador-designate to remain in close contact with the Syrian authorities for the successful implementation of the Zaireen Policy and also expedite the process of signing an MoU between the two countries regarding cooperation in the sphere of Zaireen (pilgrims) hospitality.

He said that Pakistan could offer on-line courses and educational packages of Allama Iqbal Open University and the Virtual University of Pakistan in various disciplines both in online and recorded forms for providing quality education to Syrian students. He said that as Syria was entering a reconstruction stage, Pakistan could help the Syrian people in their reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts through collaboration in various sectors, including trade, commerce & industry, and exporting goods and services to Syria to help them in their reconstruction efforts. The president also asked the ambassador-designate to convey his good wishes to the Syrian President during his meeting with him. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Senator (R) Ghulam Ali, Former President FPCCI and Secretary General of Businessman Panel (BMP) is Presenting Flower Bouquet to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on his election as President ICCI. Zubair Ahmed Malik Former President FPCCI, Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General United Business Group (UBG) and Riaz Khatak Former Vice President FPCCI are also present at ICCI Office in Islamabad.

Announcement

Old data:

Mohsin Ahmad Khan S/O Zahoor Ahmad
DOB: 11-01-1996
Address: Mohallah Bahlol Kheil, old bazar, PO and distt Charsadda

New Data:

Mohsin Ahmad S/o Zahoor Ahmad
Dob: 11-01-1996
Address: mohallah bahlol kheil, old bazar PO and distt Charsadda

Prophet (PBUH) teaches us peace

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHHRAN: Deputy Commissioner Babar Rehman Warrich has said that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has taught peace, respect for humanity, equality, forgiveness and justice. He said that the arrival of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in this world is the source of guidance for us. He said that the blessed month of Rabi-ul Awwal requires us to adapt our lives according to the Sunnah of the Prophet. He expressed these views while presiding over the meeting of the district peace committee regarding the arrival of Eid Milad-ul-Nabi in the committee room of his

office here today. Member National Assembly Mian Shafiq Arain, Member Provincial Assembly Pir Amir Iqbal Shah, District Police Officer Kashif Aslam, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Azouba Azeem, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Ahmed Faraz Awan, Assistant Commissioner Lodhran Dr. Tamal Abbas, Assistant Commissioner Kahrupka Ashraf Saleh were present in the meeting. Assistant Commissioner Duniyapur Sheikh Rizwanul Haque, Peace Committee members Maulana Muhammad Mian, Nawab Amanullah Khan, Captain (R) Izzat Javed, Dr. Sher Muhammad Awan, Tahir Hussain Malizai, Ta-

hir Amir Ghorri Mian Pir Khurshid Ahmed Owaisi, Nawab Muhammad Umar Hayat, Malik Abid Mangala, Chaudhry Salim Kamboh, Muhammad Asghar Ali Rizvi, Hussain Ahmad, Manzoor Ahmed, Malik Farazur Rahman, Dr. Muhammad Afzal, Malik Fayaz Qadir, Maulana Habibur Rahman, Chaudhry Rashid Ali, Chaudhry Khalid Habib, Mian Akram Sukhira, Muhammad Usman Mian. Other members of the district peace committee and scholars of different disciplines were also present. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Babar Rehman Warrich said that Allah Almighty sent Prophet Muhammad (peace

be upon him) as a mercy to all the worlds. He further said that the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has been described as the embodiment of the Qur'an, which contains complete guidance and direction for the Ummah. He said that Muslim-Insaniya Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) became an example for the world through his noble character and good deeds. Deputy Commissioner Babar Rehman Warrich said that emergency services, health services, municipal services, and other government institutions including the district administration will perform their services on priority basis during the days of Eid Milad-ul-Nabi.

Punjab CM, US Ambassador agree to promote partnership

DNA

LAHORE: US Ambassador Donald Blome met with Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhary Parvez Elahi at Chief Minister's Office and discussed matters of mutual interest. It was agreed to promote partnership in population planning, alternate energy, agriculture and water management sectors. The CM briefed about public welfare initiatives and legislation for saving campuses from drugs and thanked him for extending support to Pakistan during the corona pandemic. "Pakistan gives special importance to its relations with the US. Reforms are being introduced in different sectors. In this regard, US technical assistance will be

welcomed," he said. The chief minister pointed out that the education reforms program of his last tenure was globally recognized and added that degree-level education, as well as textbooks, have been made free for the students. "The legislation will be enacted to rid the educational institutions of drugs and American assistance would be beneficial in this regard," he added. The CM stated that a special anti-narcotics force would be established and those giving information about the sale and purchase of drugs would be rewarded. "Similarly, special courts would be set up to hold a daily trial of drug pushers." He hoped that US assistance in R&D would yield

positive results to increase agri productivity while its cooperation in the new cotton seed would sufficiently increase cotton production. "It is hoped that partnership between the Punjab government and the US will be promoted as the provincial government is following a public-centric agenda," the CM concluded. The ambassador said that America gives great importance to its relations with Pakistan and that cooperation with the Punjab government would be further promoted. US Consul General William K Makaneole, Political and Economic Chief Kathleen Gibilisco, P&D former chairman Salman Ghani, chief secretary, Chairman PBIT Fazeel Asif and others were present.

Federal Cabinet approves import of 300,000 tn urea

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet has approved import of 300,000 metric tons of urea for the Rabi season. The Federal Cabinet, which met in Islamabad on Wednesday with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the chair, gave this approval on the recommendations of the Ministry of Industrial Production. The Trading Corporation of Pakistan has been tasked to import the commodity under Government to Government mode. The cabinet also approved constitution of a steering committee,

comprising all the relevant federal ministries, provincial governments, including Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir under Living Indus Initiative. It emphasised on including the initiative in the curriculum of schools and colleges to create awareness at the grass root level. Under the Living Indus Initiative, the proposed measures will ensure construction of infrastructure and Adaptation for future protection of natural resources and economic activities associated with the River Indus and its tributaries from climate change. On the occasion, Prime Minister

Shehbaz Sharif appreciated BISP for distributing fifty billion rupees amongst two million flood affected families. He also directed Sindh Government, and other concerned agencies to evolve a comprehensive strategy and to take practical steps dewatering of inundated districts of the province. In this regard, the cabinet was informed about provision of additional water pumps by France. Upon that, the Prime Minister and the cabinet thanked the people and the government of France as well the French ambassador in Pakistan.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

SEPTEMBER

Sept 01 / Libya
Revolution Day

Sept 01 / Tanzania
Defence day

Sept 01 / Uzbekistan
Independence Day

Sept 07 / Brazil
Independence Day

Sept 09 / DPR Korea
National Day

Sept 09 / Tajikistan
Independence Day

Sept 16 / Malaysia
Armed Forces Day

Sept 16 / Mexico
National Day

Sept 16/Papua New Guinea
Independence Day

Sept 18 / Chile
National Day

Sept 21 / Malta
Independence Day

Sept 23 / Saudi Arabia
National Day



Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
Marriott.....051-2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.....1122
& Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police.....9266044

Motorway Police.....9270601-20

Women Police Stations
Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

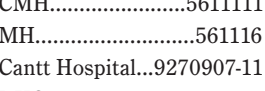
PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange 9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489

CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....5611116

Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International.4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Shakil Muneer and the incoming President Ahsan Bakhtawari hosted dinner for the diplomatic corps. Seen in the picture are Ambassadors, High Commissioners of Italy, Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, TRNC, Ethiopia, Morocco, Azerbaijan, Palestine, Lebanon, Kenya, South Africa, Jordan, Indonesia and others.—DNA

HEC announces undergraduate scholarships for GB students

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced a merit-based undergraduate scholarship program for students of Gilgit-Baltistan to study in top Pakistani Universities/Institutions. According to official sources from HEC, the applications are invited from outstanding students of Gilgit-Baltistan who intend to pursue undergraduate studies (four/five years BS programs) from HEC-recognised public sector universities/degree awarding institutions (DAIs). They said that the scholarships are being offered for the academic year 2022-23 in all areas of study/disci-

plines under the "Undergraduate Scholarship Programme for the Students of Gilgit-Baltistan in top Pakistani Universities/Institutions (Batch-II)". The official sources said that the deadline for receipt of applications is October 24, 2022. As per HEC directions, the applicants must have a domicile/local certificate of Gilgit-Baltistan. He/she must have completed Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and/or Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) and/or equivalent. However, priority will be given to those students who have passed/completed their SSC/HSSC or equivalent

from Gilgit-Baltistan, they added. Applicants who are already availing of any other scholarship are not eligible to apply. The maximum age limit is 22 years as of the closing date of application submission. The candidates will have to meet HEC and university criteria for admission to BS programs. The scholarships will cover tuition fees, hostel fees, and other charges maximum of Rs. 240,000 per year, while a stipend of Rs. 15,000 per month will also be given. Similarly, books and traveling allowances of Rs. 30,000 per annum will also be given. The candidates will be

shortlisted based on their scores in Aptitude Test (to be conducted by Education Testing Council, HEC) and academic credentials, in which a candidate must secure at least 50% marks. Test Results will be valid for one year after the announcement of the Test Result date. The award of scholarships will be purely merit-based and irrespective of gender, caste, race, and religion. The students already enrolled in any BS program in public sector universities/institutions prior to the advertisement (maximum one academic year/ session) may also apply. The applicants can apply to any public sector

university/institution of Pakistan. However, any expenditure over and above the cost given in the project PC-1 will be borne by the student himself/herself. HEC reserves the right to postpone or cancel the scholarship process at any stage without assigning any reason. For further details and guidelines, please visit www.hec.gov.pk. The applicants are required to submit online applications through: <https://portal.hec.gov.pk> and they are also advised to keep their log-in ID and Password safe for future use. The application in the hard form will not be

entertained, it added. The applicants are required to deposit Rs. 500 (Non-refundable) in any branch of HBL as an application fee in Account No. 1742 7900 133401, Account Title: Higher Education Commission, Bank: Habib Bank Limited, Branch Code: 1742, SRC H-9 Islamabad branch and upload the scanned copy/image of bank receipt online while applying. It is mandatory to bring the original applicant copy of paid fee challan on test day along with your original CNIC/original passport, otherwise, the candidate will not be allowed to sit in the examination.—APP

ECP announces results of Balochistan LG polls

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Wednesday announced the results of local government elections held in 57 wards of 11 Union Councils of four districts of Baluchistan which were delayed due to torrential rains and floods. According to consolidated results of three wards, the candidates of JUI-F and PK-MAP managed to secure one seat each from out of three seats of the elections announced by the commission so far. While an independent candidate won another seat. According to results, an independent candidate Muhammad Qasim was declared winner on a general seat of ward no 3, Union Council no 6, district Duki by securing 254 votes. His closest rival Abdullah of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) managed to get only 16 votes. The average voters turnout was 57 per cent.—APP

PM commends Miftah for saving country

ISLAMABAD, Sep 28 (APP)—Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday appreciated the professionalism of former finance minister Dr Miftah Ismail, saying that he saved the country from default during severe economic crisis. The prime minister said Miftah Ismail took the toughest task of dealing with the economic situation including with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme. "Taking up one of the toughest jobs at the height of economic crisis, he led the effort to save Pakistan from default and successfully negotiated the IMF programme," he said in a tweet.—APP

Business community felicitates Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD: The business Community on Wednesday felicitated Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar for taking oath as Federal Minister for Finance and hoped he would play leading role in steering out country from deep financial crunch. In a press statement, Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis said that country was plunged into severe financial crisis and at this critical point of time Pakistan urgently needed a fairly competent leader to head the important portfolio of Federal Finance Minister. He said Ishaq Dar also earlier occupied same coveted position four time and former President of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1993. He said Dar would make all possible hectic sincere endeavours to resurrect the cash strapped economy by taking solid sustainable result oriented monetary policies to accelerate the trade activities besides boosting the exports and ease of doing business. He hoped that inflation touching new peaks would also be controlled significantly and faltering economy would be brought back to the fast track of growth. Meher Kashif Younis said chambers of commerce and industries and all other elected trade bodies would extend helping hand to him to put the country on the path of development, prosperity and progress. He said Ishaq Dar would take leading industrialists and traders into confidence to make epoch making decisions to make the policies a success in real term.—APP

Int'l Education conference concludes in AIOU

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The sixth international conference on "Research and Practices in Education" at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) concluded yesterday. As a result of panel discussions and various working sessions, a road map was prepared to increase the quality of education and research. The conference stressed the need to use technology in the teaching process, develop students' creativity,

provide opportunities for skill-based education, and formulate a common policy for the promotion of stem education. The researchers and speakers emphasized providing opportunities for research practitioners and academics to explore new avenues in the field of research, including revision of teaching methods, adoption of modern teaching methods, teacher education and upgrading of curricula, improvement of collective and individual lives, and social

issues. The speakers congratulated the Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Professor Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, and the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood for organizing the sixth international conference on this important topic. Emeritus Professor, Dr. Mahmood ul Hasan Butt was the chief guest at the closing ceremony. The conference was organized by the Faculty of Education, AIOU with the theme of "Education for Future".

Porters demand more compensation

ISLAMABAD: The porters working at different railway stations across the country have demanded of the government to pay them compensation as the train service suspended due to recent torrential rains and flood. "We are unable to feed our families due to train services' suspension as the earning from passengers have stopped due to suspension of train services," the railway carriers said while talking to APP on Wednesday. They said that the country had faced worst floods in the history which affected

several labourers, especially those who have no permanent source of livelihood. Due to the floods, the trains operation of Pakistan Railways have also been severely affected, the department had suspended the railway operation due to standing water on the track, which has still not receded. After the railways operations were suspended, Minister of Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique had announced Rs 10,000 each for the porters, the low-wage labourers so that their lives were not be affected.—APP

ANF recovers over six kg heroin

RAWALPIND: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in an operation on Wednesday recovered 6505 grams heroin at Bacha Khan International Airport. According to an ANF spokesman, ANF Peshawar arrested a passenger going to Malaysia, resident of Sahiwal and recovered 6505 grams heroin concealed tactfully in trolley bag of the passenger. A case has been registered against the accused, he said and informed that accomplices of the accused would also be sent behind the bars.—APP

COMSTECH organizes seminar on women's health

DNA

ISLAMABAD: (COMSTECH) COMSTECH organized a seminar on current trends in virology and epidemiology in the context of women's health at COMSTECH on Tuesday. Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary welcomed the participants. He said that this multidisciplinary international event is focused on Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection and associated cancers in women. He informed that this program is designed to not only deliver an inventory of recent scientific research, but also to provide awareness and sensitization in health care workers, opinion makers, and general public. Prof. Choudhary said that the objective is to help all stakeholders to be better prepared to fight against the diseases related to HPV. Prof. Choudhary mentioned that according to a recent article in prestigious sci-

ence general Lancet Oncology, Pakistan is becoming the hotspot of HPV which is still overlooked as a major risk factor for cervical cancer in over 86 million women 15 years and older. Actual prevalence of HPV infections and related morbidity and mortality remain to be investigated in systematic manner. He said only a few epidemiological and molecular studies have been conducted on this topic. He said that among the general public, HPV is perhaps the most underrated viral disease in OIC region. This event is meant to highlight knowledge and public awareness deficits about HPV. Country Director, Jhpiego, Johns Hopkins University Affiliate, Dr. Fozia Assad said that HPV causes cervical cancer and other cancers which is one of the top four causes of cancer deaths in women. She mentioned that over 600,000 cases of cervical cancer worldwide each year, caused by HPV. Dr. Fozia said we have effective

HPV vaccine for over three decades which stops the spread of HPV infection and 90% drop in cervical cancer. She said that girls can be saved by vaccinating them before the age of 17. She said the elimination of this scourge of women's health is truly possible. Director, Institute for Medical Virology and Epidemiology of Viral Diseases, University of Tubingen, Germany, Prof. Dr. Thomas Iftner said in his inaugural remarks that we need to tackle cancers at very early stages. Dr. Iftner said there are different forms of cancers and we have chance to prevent cancer by using vaccines available to save lives. Professor of Medicine, Aga Khan University of Health Sciences, Dr. Waseem Jafry, said that if these health issues are not handled today will have catastrophic impact in future. He said viral diseases are global problems. Dr. Jafry suggested that the ministry of health should be sensitized to tackle the emerging health issues.

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Briefs

AGM of PHHSA to be held on Thursday

ISLAMABAD: The annual general meeting (AGM) of the Pakistan Hi-Tech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) would be held on September 29 (Thursday) in order to review the crop position in the country.

The meeting would be held with its Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik in the Chair, where as all members across the country will participate and deliberate the agenda items especially taking stock of damage of rice crops in Sindh and South Punjab.

The meeting would also discuss ways and means to further promote this crop of vital importance, besides promotion of hybrid seeds for achieving bumper crops resulting better profitability. AGM will also unanimously adopt a resolution demanding federal and provincial governments to provide interest free production loans to flood hit growers on easy terms and conditions for purchasing agricultural inputs. The government will also be urged to ensure timely provision of seeds, fertilisers, diesel and uninterrupted power supply to growers for ensuring maximum crop sowing during the season. —APP

Police arrest PO wanted in murder case

RAWALPINDI, Sep 28 (APP): Rawalpindi Police here on Wednesday arrested a proclaimed offender (PO) wanted in a murder case registered in Naseerabad Police Station. According to a police spokesman, Naseerabad police managed to arrest an accused named Younas Khan, who had allegedly killed a person named Manda Khan and injured another Towakal Khan. A case on application of the victim's brother was registered in Naseerabad police station in 2020. He informed that police working on human intelligence and scientific lines managed to net the accused. —APP

3 held for illegally decanting LPG

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested three persons for illegally decanting the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in cylinders during operation here on Wednesday.

According to police spokesman, Police have also seized filling instruments and other related items from their possession. During course of action, New Town police nabbed three Haider Ali, Abid and Sarwar who were refilling gas cylinders and recovered gas cylinders and other related items from their custody. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress. SP Rawal Babar Javed Joya appreciated the performance of police team adding that the actions against the law-breaking elements will be continued without any discrimination.

UAE Ambassador visits institute for art and culture

In the Guest of Honor's Address to students and Faculty, he showed his profound interest in establishing the education sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD : The Ambassador of United Arab Emirates, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, paid a visit to Institute for Art and Culture. Meeting was held with Chancellor Mr. Muhammad Faisal Janjua, Pro. V.C. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ashraf Khan and Registrar Brig.(R) Muhammad Safer Vaseer. Cordial bond with UAE has also resulted in development of education in Pakistan. In the Guest of Honor's Address to students and Faculty, he showed his profound interest in establishing the education sector.

He also appreciated the education segment of Pakistan and showed his will to continuity of brotherly ties between both states. Students were also encouraged to play their roles to elevate the educational growth in Pakistan.



KIIR chief seeks revocation of UAPA, other draconian laws

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) Altaf Hussain Wani while seeking the UNHRC's attention towards the woeful plight of Kashmiri human rights defenders, political activists and civil society organizations has said that India was using black laws to persecute rights defenders, suppress legitimate political voices and people's right to dissent in the Indian occupied Kashmir.

In a joint letter addressed to all members and observer states of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the KIIR chief while referring to use and abuse of UAPA by authorities in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir, said that over the

last several years, the Indian authorities in Indian-occupied Jammu & Kashmir have been engaged in a systematic campaign of repression towards the human rights and restrictions on civic spaces, said a press release. "After the withdrawal of special status on August 05 2019, the Kashmir region witnessed a systematic erosion of press freedom and ruthless suppression of dissent and shrinking of space for civil society", communicate said adding that the intimidation, harassment, reprisals and attacks on human rights defenders have reached a new low which has never been witnessed in the past. "It has become more difficult and dangerous for human rights

defenders, activists, and civil society organisations to operate in the territory", the letter said adding that shutting down independent media, intimidating and harassing human rights defenders and political activists, banning peaceful protests, and imposing unwarranted restrictions on the operations of civil society organizations were amongst the most abhorrent colonial-era tactics being exercised by the Indian authorities in the region. Wani while citing the ruthless suppression of dissent in the region, mentioned that prominent human rights defenders and political leaders who have been championing Kashmir's political and democratic rights. —APP

HEC announces LAW-GAT test

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced Law Graduate Assessment Test (Law-GAT) for eligibility to seek enrollment as an advocate with Bar Council. According to the HEC, as per eligibility criteria, the persons having passed Bachelor's degree in Law or equivalent from a university recognised by HEC/PBC are eligible to apply. The test will consist of Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs), while revised curriculum of Law-GAT can be downloaded from <https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/students/etc/Documents/Curriculum-LAW-GAT-test>. —APP

OGRA arranges certification of drivers

ISLAMABAD: OGRA arranges certification of drivers of LPG Browsers in collaboration with National Logistic Cell (NLC) for safe transportation of LPG. Islamabad. Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has arranged certification course "Heavy vehicle preventive driving course" for drivers of LPG Browsers for safe transportation of LPG being highly inflammable which can cause ignition and fatal accidents. The training has been arranged in collaboration with National Logistic Cell (NLC) at Applied Technologies Institute, NLC Headquarter Corporate Office, Rawalpindi consisting 1-2 weeks training focusing on pressurized gases/dangerous

petroleum products. OGRA has recently issued licenses allowing transportation of LPG through road browsers and advised all the LPG producers/Terminal Operators/LPG marketing companies to ensure that the browsers/containers hired/owned for transportation of LPG are in compliance with the standards, specifications, safety codes (ASME Code, Section VIII(Div-I) of LPG Rules, 2001/NFPA-58 for safe handling. In order to avoid accidents, all the LPG browser drivers should undergo "Heavy vehicle defensive/preventive training course" within 6 months. All the nominal expenses of training course shall be negotiated by the company. — DNA

Pakistan already facing multiple crises due to floods: Sherry

"Recession will have a negative impact on the Global South as all countries are moving towards a new crisis due to the impacts of environmental degradation," she said

ISLAMABAD: In a series of tweets, Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman said that Pakistan was already facing severe food and access problems due to devastating rains as torrential floods which had damaged the infrastructure including agriculture and transport systems. In a flurry of tweets on her official handle at the social networking site, the federal minister said that due to food crisis and damaged transportation system more problems could emerge in the future.

Senator Sherry Rehman said some 4.6 million acres of ripened crops were devastated, crops and commodities of worth Rs 481 billion had been destroyed, and more than



13,000 kilometers of roads and 410 bridges were washed away by massive floods. "The World Trade Organization (WTO) has warned the world about a global recession," Senator Sherry Rehman said adding the climate change and ongoing global conflict was causing recession

whereas the effects of climate change had gripped the entire world. "Recession will have a negative impact on the Global South as all countries are moving towards a new crisis due to the impacts of environmental degradation," she said. —APP

Armed Forces relief efforts, special sorties continue

ISLAMABAD: The Armed Forces relief efforts and special sorties continued to provide maximum assistance to the flood impacted communities in the disaster-hit areas at a fast pace across the country. The National Flood Response and Coordination Centre (NFRCC) on Wednesday issued a detailed report on the flood management measures ensured by the authorities concerned in the flood-hit areas. The Report underlined that the Army Aviation under its relief efforts so far have flown 625 Army Aviation helicopters' sorties to various areas for evacuation of stranded people whereas uptill now 4,659 stranded individuals

were evacuated through helicopter sorties. Moreover, some 47 Relief Camps and 172 Relief Collection points were established across the country for flood affectees in Sindh, South Punjab and Balochistan. There were 10,839.5 tonnes of food items alongwith 1,839.8 tonnes of sustenance items and 114,736,955 medicine items were collected so far. However,

10,684.4 tonnes of food 1,807.2 tonnes of sustenance items and 11,378,745 medicine items were distributed uptill now. The Report also highlighted the medical relief provided to the flood affectees. As over 300 medical camps were established so far in which over 619,808 patients were treated all across the country and provided 35 days' free medicine. —APP

Tourism and Pakistan: an overview

MUNAZA KAZMI

IF a country like Switzerland can earn several billion dollars from tourism, Pakistan can certainly take meaningful steps to attract tourists. However, for transforming Pakistan into tourism it requires some practical steps to create a culture of tourism which requires a mindset of locals, tour operators, hotels and authorities attached with the ministry of tourism. Let's understand the "Culture of Tourism". By the word culture it means, philosophy, background or refinement and here it comes in the area of tourism, it means how we can refine then promote it. However, it can be done by following four simple and significant steps. First, the attitude and behavior of those who are delivering the guidance and facilities to tourists. The vision, how they see Pakistan, what they project to the world. Second, observance to the standards of cleanliness and hygiene at restaurants, cafes, toilets and hotels at tourist attraction spots. Which is obviously a striking issue, I can give my personal experience

of Murree, Northern area and even motorway resting areas where using public toilet is the disaster, even the paid ones, moreover the sitting areas, eating desks are disgusting. I really want to see Nagarparkar, Chitral and Kalash however cannot due to the fear of non-availability of fine hotels. This factor I believe is of grave importance since it creates a very negative impression of tourist. Third, availability of economic accommodation, food and basic necessities. Since, it is a known fact that in every tourist season, the hotel owners take advantage of the situation and charge excessive rates. Ironically there's no check on the part of concerned authorities. Let's say Pearl Continental Burban on New Year's Eve charged me 45,000 for micro room, like a train compartment. Another thing I wanted to ask from the Hotel Association, "when you guys are operating in Pakistan then why charging in dollars?" The examples can be seen almost all over Pakistan. Conclusively, I would say in Pakistan there is completely the absence of tourism culture and it has much to do with corruption and inefficiency on the part of tourism

departments in various provinces of the country who are mostly irresponsible in their duties, taking bribery from under the table and having lack proper training on providing concentrated facilities to tourists at affordable prices. Disgracefully, that unlike India, China, the UAE and Sri Lanka, where there is a culture of tourism, one can observe the absence of proper work ethics and pursuance of a professional approach to attract foreign tourists. Truly, reasoning the COVID-19 pandemic tourist industry all over the world has suffered however such a crisis should have been used as an opportunity by articulating short and long-term policies to train those who are related to the tourism industry. In the year 2020 and early 2021, tourist places in Pakistan were closed and only reopened during the summer of 2021. It brought the rush in tourist destinations during the summer which led to the shortage of accommodation and overcharging of hotel accommodation. For international tourists, Pakistan is an appealing destination with spellbinding attractiveness of landscape, diverse culture, historical

heritage sites besides places of religious importance. Known for its extraordinary peaks, in North with silvery glaciers, heart shaped lakes, cold desert and pine forests with which not only local but international tourism can flourish. Likewise, the historical sites of Taxila, Mohenjo-Daro, Indus Civilization and glorious Lahore. The deserts of Tharparkar and Nagarparkar in Sindh and Cholistan in Punjab, as well as the coast of Gwadar and Karachi, particularly the magical sights Makran, including Spinix and Princess of Hope in Balochistan, and most importantly the regional foods. Major requirement is the make sure that adequate facilities are provided. Along there are few more issues to reconsider. Mainly the Corruption which give birth to "tourist mafia" that is very common practice in North, acts of cheating, fraud and overcharging have been in recorded by numerous travels, plus the inability better to say failure of providing proper infrastructure, let's say road to Khaplu in Sarkdu is more than dangerous since its broken at several places. And the road to Lake Saiful Muluk, why it's never been considered? Because

of "Jeep Mafia" indeed.

Another thing I should mention is the tourism education required attention for the population, which will enhance the ideology as well as hospitality for the international travelers. As we all can understand how uncomfortable a person would be if he/she may become a center of attention for every passer, we lock our sisters and daughters behind walls and took pleasure in disrespecting the privacy of others. I wonder when Pakistanis would learn this. In my opinion hectic efforts should be made both at federal and provincial levels to create the culture of tourism by taking measures which have been highlighted above. When there was civil war going on in Sri Lanka from 1983 till 2009 and foreign tourism dropped, the government encouraged local tourism which tried to bridge the gap in income from foreign tourism. Pakistan needs to promote homegrown tourism and take practical steps to provide safety, security, privacy, better hygienic, infrastructure and accommodation facilities so that both local and foreign tourism may uplift.

World Maritime Day to be observed tomorrow

ISLAMABAD: World Maritime Day will be marked on September 29 (Thursday) across the globe including Pakistan.

The day is observed to highlight on the importance of shipping safety, maritime security and marine environment, and to emphasize a particular aspect of International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s work. The day also features a special message from the IMO secretary-general, which is backed up by a detailed discussion paper on the selected subject.

The IMO marks the World Maritime Day to celebrate the international maritime industry's contribution in the global economy. The event's date varies by year and country, but it is usually in the last week of September.

Activities and events range from symposiums to luncheons, as well as school lessons that focus on the day. Some classes may organize a trip to a maritime museum so students can understand the significance of the maritime industry in shaping world history and its importance in world trade. Throughout history, people have understood that international regulations could improve maritime safety so many treaties have been adopted since the 19th century. Various countries proposed for a permanent international body to be established to promote maritime safety more effectively, but it was not until the UN was established that these hopes were realized. The IMO's original name was the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) but the name was changed in 1982 to IMO. — APP

Etisalat delegation visits PTA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from Etisalat here on Wednesday visited Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) headquarters and discussed the future plans of Etisalat Group, PTCL, Ufone for enhancing connectivity, improving infrastructure and future investment opportunities in Pakistan.

The delegation which comprised of Mikhail Gerchuk, Etisalat International Group CEO; Dr. Kamal Sameer Shehadi, Chief Strategy Officer Etisalat Group; Hatem Bamatraf, Group CEO PTCL, Abdul Rehman Al Raheem Al Nooriyani, CEO Etisalat International Pakistan met with Chairman PTA, Maj. Gen. Amir Azeem Bajwa (R), said a news release. — APP



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US can't dodge the bullet of illicit guns

The manufacturing and trafficking of illicit firearms not only causes enormous civilian casualties, it also has obvious spillover effects such as exacerbating regional instability and fueling terrorism and transnational organized crimes.

While it is one of the safest countries in the world with the least gun-related violent crimes, China is willing to use its ratification of the Firearms Protocol as a chance to work with all parties so that concerted efforts can be made to address the global problem of gun proliferation.

State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi announced that China has launched the domestic procedure to ratify the United Nations' Firearms Protocol in a speech at the general debate of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly on Saturday.

The United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition is the only legally binding instrument at the global level to counter the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms, their parts, components and ammunition.

It aims to curb the manufacturing of illicit firearms and prevent the diversion of legally manufactured guns into the illegal circuit, as well as facilitating the investigation and prosecution of related offenses without hampering legitimate transfers. China is firmly opposed to the illegal manufacture and trafficking of firearms and actively supports the international multilateral process of light arms control. It has always taken a prudent and responsible attitude toward military exports, strictly abides by its international obligations and does not transfer firearms to non-state actors.

China has faithfully fulfilled its obligations under the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons as well as the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. It has actively participated in activities initiated by the World Customs Organization and Interpol to counter gun smuggling. And in July 2020, China formally acceded to the Arms Trade Treaty. At present, the global gun epidemic is still serious. Governments of all countries should fulfill their responsibilities, strengthen domestic gun control and enhance international coordination and cooperation. The United States not only has the world's largest number of private gun owners and a serious domestic gun violence problem, it is also the world's largest source of smuggled guns. The US has refused to accede to the Firearms Protocol and other international legal instruments on gun control, and refrained from signing the Arms Trade Treaty, seriously undermining the efforts of the international community to regulate the conventional arms trade.

To build a peaceful and safe world free from gun violence, the US is obligated to play its part in curbing gun proliferation.

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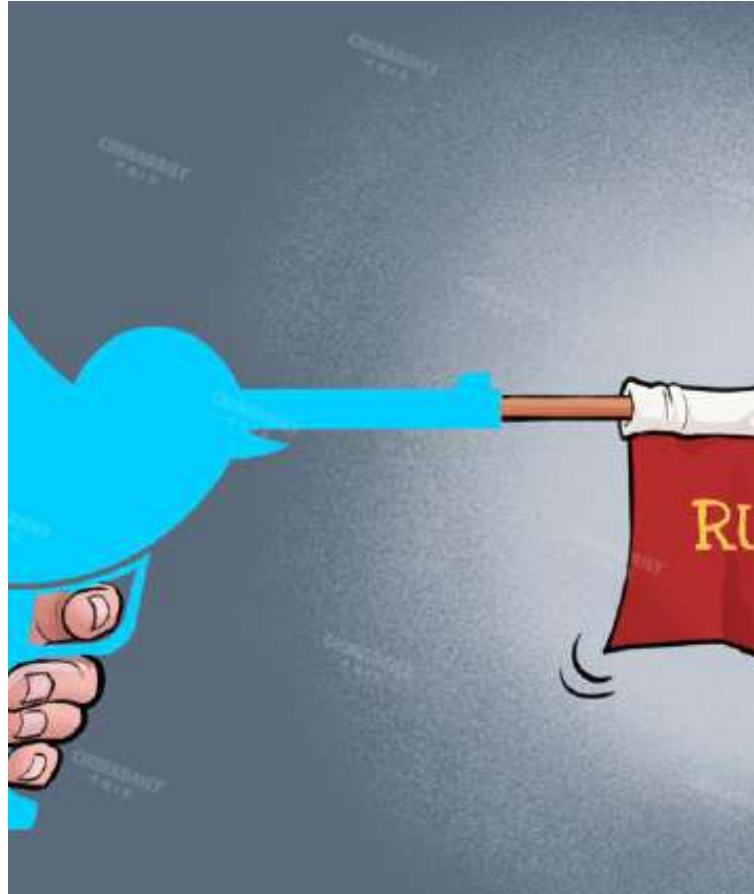
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UK embassy to Jerusalem: don't do it

Donald Trump's relocation of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in 2018 was incendiary. Widely criticised, including by the British government, it sparked protests and clashes in which Israeli security forces killed dozens of Palestinians. Though a superpower's example offers cover to others, only four countries followed suit: Honduras, Guatemala, Kosovo – and Paraguay, which swiftly reversed course. Yet Liz Truss last week said that she was considering relocating the British embassy. The case against a move is logical, legal and practical as well as moral. East Jerusalem has been considered occupied territory under international law since the six-day war in 1967, and the future capital of a Palestinian state. Mr Trump's proposals for an unworkable "peace plan" committed to Jerusalem as an "undivided" capital – Israel's position. But British policy remains unchanged. Moving the embassy would tear up the commitment to any meaningful two-state solution. It would tacitly condone the march of illegal settlements. Palestinian doors would slam in the faces of diplomats, the British Council and others: longstanding suspicion of the UK has accelerated in recent years. Relations with other Middle East nations would suffer. All this for minimal, if any, benefit. The prime minister's remarks came on the sidelines of the UN general assembly meeting where Yair Lapid voiced support for a two-state solution – the first Israeli prime minister to do so since 2017. This is a return to the rhetorical status quo ante, without either intention or ability to act upon his words, while the reality on the ground makes a peace deal ever more distant. There is no prospect of serious talks with Palestinians and minimal external pressure. While it may have been intended to sweeten his message on Iran, most have seen it in the context of November's general election – Israel's fifth in less than four years, and once again shaping up as a contest for and against former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu (currently favoured by polls). The thinking is that Mr Lapid hopes to encourage voters on the left to turn out or, more likely, switch to him, keeping him at the head of the anti-Bibi bloc. It may also smooth relations with Joe Biden, who hailed his remarks, but has shown little real interest in the future of Palestinians. His administration vowed to reopen the consulate in Jerusalem, which served Palestinians, and the PLO mission in Washington; neither has happened. The president's cursory trip to East Jerusalem and Bethlehem this summer looked like cover for his meeting with Saudi Arabia's Mohammed bin Salman. Badly failed by their own leadership too, Palestinians feel not only frustrated and angry, but betrayed. Ms Truss's review is further confirmation that they are right. Her brief tenure has already demonstrated that a policy's badness, stupidity and unpopularity are not obstacles to embracing it: the opportunity to "challenge conformity" – ignoring officials' warnings – may even be a spur. This is still more likely when Palestinians, rather than her own electorate, will pay. But Britain's historical responsibilities, as well as international law, demand that it does better. It should keep the embassy in Tel Aviv, and not add to the damage already done.

Muslim piety in Southeast Asia mirrors increased religious traditionalism in ME

James Dorsey

The Indicator considers various sectors, including halal food, Islamic finance, Muslim-friendly travel, recreation, and media. Malaysia maintained its long-standing top position because of a 20 per cent jump in investment in Shariah-compliant funds and the success of its Islamic cartoons for children. Ninety-one per cent of the respondents of the Southeast Asian survey conducted by two New York-based consultancies, Wunderman Thompson Intelligence and the Muslim Intel Lab established last year by YMLY&R.

In a mirror image of recent polling in the Middle East, a just-published survey of Muslims in Southeast Asia suggests Islam's central role in people's daily lives and choices. The survey was published days after former Indonesian minister of social affairs Habib Salim

Segaf Al-Jufri was named secretary general of the Qatar-based International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS), founded by controversial Islamic scholar Yusuf al-Qaradawi, one of the world's foremost Muslim theologians associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Mr. Al-Qaradawi died on Monday in Doha at the age of 96. Intriguingly, Mr. Al-Jufri, a senior member of Indonesia's Brotherhood-affiliated Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), also represents the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) in East and Southeast Asia, a Saudi government-funded organization initially established in the 1970s to promote Saudi religious ultra-conservatism globally. Since 2016, the group has been redirected to promote Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman as a reformer pushing the kingdom towards a more moderate and tolerant interpretation of Islam.

The publication also came as Nahdlatul Ulama, the world's largest Muslim civil society organisation in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country and democracy, forged an unlikely alliance with Saudi Arabia's Muslim World League. Like WAMY, the League, once a prime vehicle globally propagating Wahhabism, has become Mr. Bin Salman's primary vehicle in his effort to garner religious soft power and propagate an autocratic version of Islam that is socially liberal, but that demands absolute obedience to the ruler. Neither event will have influenced the responses of the 1,000 people covered in the survey of Southeast Asian Muslims. But the events put the poll into a context in which Muslim organisations, whether state-controlled or not, are pushing different concepts of a moderate interpretation of Islam and making political Islam's perceived legitimacy or illegitimacy one of their key drivers.

Mr. Bin Salman, who pushes social reform against the background of a history of promoting ultra-conservative dominance, may be more concerned about the growing importance of traditional Islam than governments in Southeast Asia, whose history and encounter with Islam are often influenced by local culture, tradition, and mysticism. Even so, political and business leaders in Southeast Asia, home to 276.5 million Muslims who account for 40 per cent of the region's population, are likely to take note of the Southeast Asian survey as well as recent polling in the Middle East amid perceptions of greater religious conservatism in their countries that are not only aligned with trends in other parts of the Muslim world but also in major non-Muslim faith groups across the globe.

Malaysia and Indonesia, together with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, emerged as the top four halal markets on this year's Global Islamic Economy Indicator compiled by US-based research and consultancy company DiGiStandard. The Indicator considers various sectors, including halal food, Islamic finance, Muslim-friendly travel, recreation, and media. Malaysia maintained its long-standing top position because of a 20 per cent jump in investment in Shariah-compliant funds and the success of its Islamic cartoons for children. Ninety-one per cent of the respondents of the Southeast Asian survey conducted by two New York-based consultancies, Wunderman Thompson Intelligence and the Muslim Intel Lab established last year by YMLY&R, described a strong relationship with Allah as very important. Lagging in importance was wealth, which was of significance to only 34 per cent of those surveyed, followed by 28 per cent who cared about their passions and 12 per cent to whom fame was a concern. Eighty-four per cent of the respondents in Malaysia and Indonesia said they prayed five times daily. Thirty-three per cent described themselves as more observant than their parents, 45 per cent said they were just as observant as their parents, and 21 per cent stated that they were less observant.

Religion's increasing importance stroked with the polling in the Middle East where 41 per cent of 3,400 young Arabs in 17 Arab countries aged 18 to 24 said religion was the most important element of their identity, with nationality, family and/or tribe, Arab heritage, and gender lagging far behind. That is 7 per cent more than those surveyed a year earlier.

The Middle Eastern polls further showed that a majority disagreed with the notion that "we should listen to those among us who are trying to interpret Islam in a more moderate, tolerant, and modern way."

In many ways, the Southeast Asian survey was more granular because it focused on Muslim consumer behaviour.

The poll put into perspective a decision in March by the Indonesian ministry of religious affairs headed by a prominent Nahdlatul Ulama figure to deprive the once-powerful Indonesian

Ulema (Islamic scholars) Council of its de facto monopoly on halal certification by opening the sector to competition.

Halal certificates are big business. The Halal Product Assistance Agency issues the certificates based on a fatwa issued by the Council to companies in food, fashion, education, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, tourism, media, travel, medical, health, art, culture, and finance.

The overwhelming majority of respondents in the Southeast Asia survey, 91 per cent, said whether a product was halal was very important in their decision to purchase. At the same time, 83 percent identified halal with certification by an Islamic body.

Sixty-one percent factor halal into their banking and investment preferences. Seventy-seven percent said the availability of halal facilities was important in their choice of travel destinations. Eighty-five per cent wanted a metaverse that caters specifically to Muslims, and 53 percent used prayer and Qur'an apps. All in all, comparing the polls suggests that religion plays an increased role in people's lives in the Muslim world beyond the Middle East.

In Southeast Asia, the survey underlines the importance of efforts by groups like Nahdlatul Ulama to promote a humanitarian interpretation of Islam that is tolerant, pluralistic, and respectful of human and minority rights.

In the Middle East, the surveys challenge autocratic leaders whose concept of moderate Islam is social reform needed to cater to youth aspirations, enable economic diversification, and provide religious legitimization of their absolute power as part of a strategy for regime survival.

As a result, Southeast Asia, rather than the Middle East, could emerge as the cradle of religious reform in the Muslim world.

Nahdlatul Ulama appears to believe it can achieve that if it convinces the likes of the Muslim World League that reform has to be genuine and holistic rather than self-serving. That's an if with a capital I in a strategy that is as risky as it is bold.

Dr. James M. Dorsey is an award-winning journalist and scholar, an Adjunct Senior Fellow at Nanyang Technological University's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, and the author of the syndicated column and blog, *The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer*.

World youth, ageism & way forward

Hani Zarbaft Ali

The poorest people in low- and middle-income countries are most affected. At the ménage position, substantiation is arising that CVDs and other noninfectious conditions contribute to poverty due to disastrous health spending and high out-of-fund expenditure. At the macro-economic position, CVDs place a heavy burden on the husbandry of low- and middle-income countries.

PERIODIC observance of World Heart Day held on September 29 is intended to increase public mindfulness of cardiovascular conditions,

including their forestallment and their global impact. Cardiovascular conditions are a major trouble prevailing in the world community at a massive scale that have eventually posed serious morbidity and mortality across the globe. As much as it is insanillness of pressing attention, it stems from veritably simple root causes similar as the mundaneness of life, and general physical behaviors. Obesity, diet, cigarette smoking, poor income and sedentary habits are highrisketiologies leading to deterioration of cardiovascular health.

The current profitable recession is making it more delicate for the community to cover their health due to lack of coffers and vacuity of primary health care. People in low- and middle-income countries who suffer from CVDs and other noninfectious conditions have lower access to effective and indifferent health care services which respond to their requirements. As a result, for numerous people in these countries discovery is frequently latetudering the period of disease and people die at an early age from CVDs and other noninfectious conditions, frequently in their most productive times.

The poorest people in low- and middle-income countries are most affected. At the ménage position, substantiation is arising that CVDs and other noninfectious conditions contribute to poverty due to disastrous health spending and high out-of-fund expenditure. At the macro-economic position, CVDs place a heavy burden on the husbandry of low- and middle-income countries.

The WHO has estimated that 17.9 million people (about the population of New York) have failed from CVDs in 2019, representing 32 of all global deaths. Of these deaths, most were due to heart attacks and strokes. Over three diggings of CVD deaths take place in low- and middle-income countries. It is imperative to descry cardiovascular com-

plaint as early as possible so that operation with comforting and drugs can begin. There are also several underpinning determinants of CVDs. These reflect the major forces driving social, profitable, and artistic change – globalization, urbanization, and population ageing. Other determinants of CVDs include poverty, stress, and heritable factors. Cessation of smoking, reduction of salt in the diet, eating further fruit and vegetables, regular physical exertion and avoiding dangerous use of alcohol have been shown to reduce cardiovascular associated morbidity.

Health programs that produce conducive surroundings for making healthy choices affordable and available are essential for motivating people to borrow and sustain healthy behaviors.

Common symptoms of cardiovascular diseases Often, there are no symptoms of the underlying disease of the blood vessels at an early stage. A heart attack or stroke may be the first alarming sign of abnormal functioning. Symptoms of a heart attack include

Pain or discomfort in the center of the chest; and/or Pain or discomfort in the arms, the left shoulder, elbows, jaw, or back.

In addition, the person may witness difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath; nausea or vomiting; light-headedness or feebleness; a cold sweat; and turning pale. Women are more likely than men to experience shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

The most common symptom of a stroke is unforeseen weakness of the face, arm, or leg, most frequently on one side of the body. Other symptoms include unforeseen onset of Impassiveness

of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body; Confusion, difficulty speaking or understanding speech; Difficulty seeing with one or both eyes; Difficulty walking, dizziness and/or loss of balance or collaboration; Severe headache with no given cause; and/or Fainting or unconsciousness.

People passing these symptoms should seek medical care incontinently. The key to cardiovascular complaint reduction lies in the addition of cardiovascular complaint operation interventions in universal health content packages, although in a high number of countries health systems bear significant investment and reorientation to effectively manage CVDs.

Substantiation from 18 countries has shown that hypertension programs can be enforced efficiently and bring effectiveness at the primary care position which will eventually mitigate the probability of coronary heart disease and stroke. Cases with cardiovascular complaint should have access to applicable technology and drug.

Nonetheless, a healthy, balanced diet is recommended for a healthy heart. Grown-ups are advised to do at least 150 minutes (about 2 and a half hours) of moderate exertion a week, similar as cycling or brisk walking for 40 minutes, as for most of us the age-old adage "Your Greatest wealth is your health" stands true.

Healthy physical activity is a hack to life. In short, be healthy, prioritize life, live strong and before it is too late, go and take advice! With a healthy heart. The beat goes on.

–The author is a 4th Year MBBS student, an aspiring researcher, her field of interests revolve around cardiovascular diseases and public health.

Briefs

High level committee to probe matter

FROM PAGE 01

"The meeting was told that an investigation is being conducted on the issue of the audios circulating on social media. It was briefed about certain aspects related to the security of the Prime Minister's House and the fool-proof arrangements taken to remedy them."

The statement reads that the meeting's participants were informed that emergency measures were being taken to ensure the security of the Prime Minister's House and other important places, buildings and ministries in order to "avoid any such situation in the future".

It said that after consultation, the NSC directed the Law Ministry to prepare a "legal framework" related to cyber security. Furthermore, the participants agreed to review the security, safety and security of government communications keeping in mind the current changing environment of modern technology and cyberspace to "ensure security and security systems are not breached".

The development comes after audio recordings of conversations between key government figures – including PM Shehbaz, PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz and some members of the federal cabinet – discussing governance matters privately surfaced over the weekend, prompting concerns over the security of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Forensic audit to be conducted..

FROM PAGE 01

"Khan has created a narrative of an American conspiracy to mislead the nation and divide it," he added. Criticising the PTI chief, the interior minister said that Khan has caused "irreparable damage to Pakistan's economy and political culture."

"I will show students Imran Khan's awful face," said Sanaulah with reference to a university lecture that Khan delivered, adding that this "political fitna" has to be ended in a political way. The PML-N leader further said that the audio talks about changing the minutes of government meetings. "This player is playing with the nation and is working on a specific agenda," he added. Sanaulah also said that Khan's political narrative will be exposed.

Last week, two audios allegedly featuring Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had leaked. The first audio contained a discussion regarding PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz asking for a power plant from India to be imported for her son-in-law. The second alleged video about Sanaulah, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and others was also leaked, and it contained a discussion regarding PTT's resignations.

Chinese citizen...

FROM PAGE 01

He said that at around 4:05pm, an unidentified person posing as a patient came to the private dental clinic of Dr Richard Hu near Preeedy Street and sat in the waiting area for tooth treatment. "After about 15 to 20 minutes, he entered the clinic area and opened fire on Dr Richard Hu, his wife Mrs Phen Teyin and Ronald Raymond Chou with a 9mm pistol," he said.

"The assailant was wearing a red cap and was clad in dark blue trousers and shirt," Raza elaborated, continuing that the suspect managed to escape from the crime scene with help of his accomplice who had parked his motorbike around the corner of Preeedy Street towards M.A. Jinnah Road. As a result of the firing, Dr Richard and Phen Teyin sustained bullet injuries, while Ronald, who was their employee, passed away on the spot. "Reportedly, Dr Richard H is running a private clinic in this area of Karachi for more than 40 years and the three victims held dual nationality of China and Pakistan," the official added. Raza said that the police responded to the emergency in time and cordoned the area for the collection of evidence.



ANKARA: Pakistan ambassador to Tuykiye, Syrus Qazi pays farewell call to Foreign Minister of Turkiye, Mevlut Cavusoglu. - DNA

Zionist forces kill four Palestinians in Jenin raid

Authorities and political parties declared a day of mourning and general strike with stores closed in the majority of West Bank cities including Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah and Hebron. On September 6, Israeli forces raided Jenin and blew up an apartment that belonged to Raad Hazem

NEWS DESK

OCCUPIED WEST BANK: Four Palestinians have been killed and more than 40 others injured during an Israeli military raid on a refugee camp in Jenin in the northern occupied West Bank. The raid began with dozens of Israeli military vehicles entering the camp at approximately 9am (06:00 GMT). The Palestinian ministry of health said on Wednesday morning that the men killed were Ahmad Alawneh (26), Abed Hazem (27), Mohammad al-Wanneh (30), and Mohammad Abu Na'sah. Al Jazeera's Walid al-Omari, reporting from Ramallah, said that the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade had said that three of the men killed were members of the Palestinian armed group. At least 44 others were injured, according to the ministry. Local media said Ahmad Alawneh was 24 years old and worked as a Palestinian Authority (PA) intelligence officer. Surveillance camera footage circulated by local journalists of the moment he was killed showed him exchanging fire with Israeli forces. Abed Hazem and al-Wanneh were killed when Hazem's father's home was hit by a missile. Abed



was the brother of Raad Hazem, who carried out an attack in Tel Aviv in April, killing three people, before being killed by police himself. Plumes of smoke were seen after the missile exploded in the house. The army then proceeded to encircle the home, during which heavy armed clashes broke out with Palestinian fighters. The Israeli army said that it had

shot dead "two suspects involved in a number of recent shooting attacks". Clashes were continuing at midday. In addition to armed Palestinian fighters exchanging gunfire with the Israeli army, young Palestinians threw rocks at the entrance to the Jenin refugee camp, which Israeli forces responded to with live ammunition and tear gas. Outrage among Palestinians was

further heightened as photos shared online appeared to show that the body of Alwaneh had been desecrated, reportedly by an Israeli soldier. Authorities and political parties declared a day of mourning and general strike with stores closed in the majority of West Bank cities including Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah and

Hebron. On September 6, Israeli forces raided Jenin and blew up an apartment that belonged to Raad Hazem, killing a 29-year-old Palestinian man and injuring 16 others. Israel regularly carries out punitive demolitions of the homes of Palestinians who have carried out attacks against Israelis, something human rights organisations have described as "collective punishment". Israeli forces have been conducting near-nightly raids and killings in the northern occupied West Bank, mainly in Jenin and Nablus, where Palestinian armed resistance is becoming more organised and new groups of fighters have been formed. More than 150 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in the 1967-occupied territories since the start of the year, including 51 in the besieged Gaza Strip during Israel's three-day assault in August. More than 30 of those killed were either from Jenin or were killed in the Jenin region in the occupied West Bank. Twenty people have been killed in attacks carried out by Palestinians in Israel and the occupied West Bank in 2022.

Verstappen on verge of 2nd crown

SPORTS DESK

SINGAPORE: Red Bull's dominant Max Verstappen can clinch a second world championship when the Singapore Grand Prix returns this weekend after a three-year absence because of Covid. The flying Dutchman has a mathematical chance to seal back-to-back world titles under lights around the spectacular and demanding Marina Bay street circuit. To do so, the 24-year-old must win the race – something he has never done in Singapore – and needs his closest rivals to falter badly. If that does not happen, the championship fight will move on to the Japanese Grand Prix a week later. It looks a case of when, not if. "You need a bit of luck for that as well," Verstappen told Sky Sports of retaining his crown in Singapore. "I don't think about it," Verstappen opened up a 116-point lead in the drivers' standings over Ferrari's Charles Leclerc following his victory at the Italian Grand Prix. He is 125 clear of third-placed Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez.



He needs to extend his lead to 138 points by Sunday's chequered flag to be crowned with five races to spare – the earliest championship win since Michael Schumacher's in 2002 with six GPs remaining. Monza was Verstappen's 11th victory in 16 races of a potentially record-breaking season. He needs two more wins to equal the single-season mark of 13 jointly held by Schumacher (2004) and Sebastian Vettel (2013). "I want to go to Singapore and try to win that race as well," Verstappen said. "We are having a great season, so we should really try and appreciate it and enjoy the moment." To take the title this weekend, he must

win the race with Leclerc finishing no higher than eighth or ninth – depending on who claims the extra point for the fastest lap – and Perez outside the podium places. Much will depend on Saturday night's qualifying for a grand prix that has been won from pole position seven times in its last 11 runnings. The night race around the tight street track affords precious few overtaking opportunities and the stifling heat and humidity provide a test of stamina and reliability as much as driving ability. Singapore's climate always carries a threat of rain-induced chaos, as happened in 2017, when Vettel and Verstappen started on the front row only to crash out before the first bend. Red Bull also look sure to wrap up the constructors' championship – although they won't do so in Singapore – but the race for second is still alive with Mercedes banking on a late-season revival to overtake early front-runners Ferrari. The consistent George Russell is still in mathematical contention for the drivers' crown in his first Mercedes season, though a Verstappen victory would end his hopes.

Syria: US bring new reinforcements

WASHINGTON: American occupation forces have brought in new military reinforcements to their bases in the northeastern province of Hasakah, as Washington pushes ahead with the looting of oil reserves and natural resources in the war-ravaged Arab country. Local sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Syria's official news agency SANA that a convoy of 33 trucks, carrying various types of weapons, military equipment and logistical supplies, as well as chiller lorries and tankers crossed the Waleed border crossing on Monday evening, and headed toward US positions in the oil-rich town of Rumeilan. The sources added that a US military cargo plane, loaded with heavy

weapons systems, also landed at Kharab al-Jeer Airport in the same Syrian province. Separately, Syrian government troops have intercepted a US military convoy in the country's Hasakah province as the occupation forces were attempting to pass through a community in the energy-rich region. SANA, citing local sources requesting anonymity, reported that Syrian army soldiers blocked the convoy of five armored vehicles as it was trying to enter the village of Qubur al-Gharajneh, which lies north of Tell Amer town, on Monday. The American troops were subsequently forced to turn around and go back in the direction they came from. There were no reports of clashes or injuries. – Agencies

Most Britons lack confidence in Truss: Poll

The wide-ranging poll found that in regard to Britain's exit from the European Union (Brexit), 52 percent of those interviewed agreed it had been a bad thing and, by a margin of 46 % to 19 percent

AGENCIES

LONDON: More than half of the British public do not have confidence in Conservative Prime Minister Liz Truss to perform at the highest levels as a world leader, according to a recent poll. The state-of-the-nation survey by Deltapoll, which is representative of the whole British population with a slight margin of error, showed that 52 percent of the 2,096 British adults questioned lacked confidence in Truss. And, just six percent said they were "very confident" that the new British prime minister would be an effective world leader, the poll conducted exclusively for

and published by The National showed on Monday. Thirty percent said they were "not very confident" about her being in Downing Street domestically or internationally, while 22 percent said they were "not at all confident." However, 28 percent said they were "quietly confident" about her leadership. The wide-ranging poll found that in regard to Britain's exit from the European Union (Brexit), 52 percent of those interviewed agreed it had been a bad thing and, by a margin of 46 percent to 19 percent, that the process had gone ahead badly. The survey, which was carried out between September 9 and 12, during the prime minister's first week in of-

ice, described, according to the pollsters, the state-of-mind and concerns of Britons at the start of a new chapter in UK history following the death of Queen Elizabeth II and the accession of King Charles III as the new monarch. Anand Menon, a professor of European politics and foreign affairs at King's College London and director for the UK in a Changing Europe think tank, noted, however, that it was still too soon to say what kind of leader the Conservative Truss was likely to be. He suggested that public confidence in Truss could rise in the coming months if her government's "mini-budget" and emergency package of measures achieved its aim

of effectively reducing the strain of the cost of living crisis on households and businesses. Menon said, in addition to that, much more would depend on how the opposition Labour Party would seize the crisis as an opportunity to boost itself as a government-in-waiting. He said it "hinges on Labour banging home the message" that "this is the government for the few." The leader of the UK's opposition Labour Party has promised to revive the country's economy, improve public services and take the government out of an "endless cycle of crisis" if he is chosen to lead the country at its next general election. Delivering the keynote speech at his par-

ty's annual conference in Liverpool on Tuesday, Keir Starmer attacked Truss' move to cut taxes for the wealthiest amid a major cost-of-living crisis, urging voters not to "forget" or "forgive" the moves ahead of an anticipated national vote in 2024. He said Labour was once again "the party of the centre ground" and promised to fix the UK's ailing economy, revitalize the country's National Health Service (NHS), and confront the climate crisis. "This is a Labour moment," Starmer told a packed auditorium in the northern English city of Liverpool. "Britain will deal with the cost-of-living crisis. Britain will get its future back... That's my commit-

ment to you... the national mission of the next Labour government. And together with the British people," he said, concluding with, "We will do it." Just 20 days after the new government took power, the UK pound suffered severe devaluation after new Chancellor of the Exchequer Kwasi Kwarteng promised sweeping tax cuts, costing the public billions in tax revenues while requiring the government to borrow. The British pound fell to an all-time low against the US dollar, reaching as low as \$1.0373 on Monday morning before rallying back to \$1.07. The drop equates to a loss of more than 5 percent of the pound's value against the dollar since Friday.

Imran Khan's alleged audio with PS leaked

FROM PAGE 01

Azam Khan to "play" with the US cypher has come to the fore. In the audio allegedly featuring Khan, a man can be heard talking about the cypher which Khan – time and again – has claimed mentions the "threat" to remove his government.

Khan allegedly told Azam in the audio – the date of which cannot be ascertained at the moment – that "let's just play" with the cypher and not mention America's name.

In response, Azam tells Khan a scheme of how to use the cypher to forward PTI's political agenda – and in that, he also suggests using Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood so the matter can be highlighted at a "bureaucratic level". In July, senior journalist Ansar Abbasi had warned that the audio would come forward and the PTI, in response to the blog, said that it would "not sit quietly" if such a thing happens.

Dar vows revival of damaged...

FROM PAGE 01

"As a nation we had challenges, we have faced them with success in the past," he said while citing the examples of economic restriction following the nuclear tests of 1998 and declared macroeconomic instability of 2013. "I will not make verbal promises only," he said and reminded of the past history of PML which had left the government in 2018 with the lowest Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation of 4 percent, food inflation of 2 percent, the highest growth rate of 6.3 percent, highest reserves, the interest rate at 6.25 percent and stable exchange rate of Rs104.50 against the dollar.

He said, this all was done despite three sit-ins during the period which had affected the growth rate, otherwise the figures could have touched 7.5 percent.

He said, had the country been allowed to grow at the same pace, it was poised to become the 18th largest economy by 2025-26 instead of 2030, leaving behind Italy and Canada. However, it was pushed to 54th position, he said. He said, becoming the 18th economy, the country could have enjoyed becoming part of the G-20 world premium club, however, everything was ruined. To a question, the minister said that former finance minister, Miftah Ismail was the part of PML(N) economy team and had played a good role in saving the country from default.

Resurgence of terrorism not to be...

FROM PAGE 01

the troops. Expressing satisfaction over the operational preparedness of the army, the COAS tasked all the formations to maintain strict vigil to guard against any threat. The forum expressed solidarity with flood victims that were braving great difficulties and also reiterated its resolve to extend maximum assistance for their relief and rehabilitation. The COAS directed the army to focus on relief, rehab, reconstruction, and help restore normalcy in the flood-devastated area. Gen Bajwa commended the formations for reaching out to people in distress and helping them mitigate their suffering.

Cypher should be leaked...

FROM PAGE 01

a sound bite of former prime minister Imran Khan speaking about the US cypher – what he time and again has alleged was a "threat" letter to Pakistan – surfaced earlier today after multiple audio leaks of top government officials. The PTI was quick to defend the leaked conversation and senior party leader, Fawad Chaudhry was the first to react. "The new leaks only confirm the attempt to hide the US cable from the [then] prime minister [Imran Khan]," Fawad wrote on Twitter, minutes after the audio surfaced. While speaking to the media later, Fawad said that this is the first case of an audio leak from PM House. "The Supreme Court must take notice and order investigations," he said.

Briefs

Erdogan, Zelenskyy discuss war in Ukraine

ANKARA: The Turkish and Ukrainian leaders discussed the latest developments in Russia's war in Ukraine during a phone call on Wednesday.

According to a statement by Türkiye's Communications Directorate, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy that a deal on Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant could be reached through Turkish mediation between Kyiv and Moscow, just like the Istanbul grain deal brokered by Türkiye and the UN. Erdogan also expressed pleasure over the successful prisoner exchange between Ukraine and Russia last week.

The Turkish leader reiterated Ankara's readiness to take any steps to help end the Russia-Ukraine war through peaceful means, saying that referendums held in Russian-controlled Ukrainian territories would hamper such diplomatic efforts. Ukraine's separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk and Russian-controlled parts of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson held referendums on joining Russia on Sept. 23-27. The polls have been widely condemned by the international community, with European nations and the US calling them "sham" and saying they will not be recognized.—APP

NATO chief, Danish minister discuss Nord Stream leaks

BRUSSELS: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and Danish defense minister Morten Bødskov on Wednesday discussed unexplained leaks in two Russian gas pipelines under the Baltic Sea.

"I discussed the sabotage on the Nord Stream pipelines with Defense Minister Bødskov of our valued ally Denmark," Stoltenberg said on Twitter, following a meeting at the NATO headquarters in Brussels.

"We addressed the protection of critical infrastructure in NATO countries," he added.

In a statement after the meeting, Bødskov called the leaks deliberate. "There is reason to be concerned about the security situation in the Baltic Sea region. Despite the war efforts in Ukraine, Russia has a significant military presence in the Baltic Sea region," he said.

Two leaks were found on Nord Stream 1, which Moscow shut down earlier this month indefinitely, and another leak was discovered on Nord Stream 2, which was frozen following Russia's war on Ukraine and has never been operational. While Poland's Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said the leaks were an act of sabotage, his Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen said it was hard to imagine they were a "coincidence."

EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen also called it "sabotage action," and the bloc's foreign policy chief, Josep Borell, agreed saying "all available information indicates leaks are the result of a deliberate act." —APP

Online Chinese culture talk series launched

ISLAMABAD: The China Cultural Center has launched a series of lectures on "Online Chinese Culture Talk" in order to further deepen the iron-clad friendship between Pakistan and China. The series of twelve lectures will cover a wide range of cultural fields, including philosophy, cultural heritage, literature, art, costume, cuisine, sports and Chinese medicine, said a press release issued here Wednesday. The first lecture was delivered by Yuan Li, a researcher at Chinese National Academy of Arts, on "Living Transmission", which provided a new window to citizens to learn more about the profound Chinese culture. — APP

African diplomats keen to promote trade ties with Pak

They appreciated that Ethiopia was going to start direct flights with Pakistan and stressed that other African countries should also start direct flights with Pakistan that would help in promoting trade, tourism, people to people contacts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) opened an Africa Facilitation Desk that would work to facilitate the business community in exploring opportunities of trade, exports and investment with African countries. Mohammed Karmoune, Dean of the African Corps and Ambassador of Morocco to Pakistan inaugurated the Africa Desk as Chief Guest. Jemal Bekker Ambassador of Ethiopia, Salih Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Siddiq Ambassador of Sudan, Mohammed Bello Abioye High Commissioner of Nigeria and Philip Riley Counsellor of South African High Commission were also present at the inaugural ceremony.



Speaking at the occasion, Mohammed Karmoune, Dean of the African Corps and Ambassador of Morocco to Pakistan lauded the initiative of ICCI for opening Africa Desk as it was the first Chamber in Pakistan to open such a desk. He said that Africa was the conti-

nent of the future and there was a huge potential for Pakistan to enhance trade & exports with it as well as explore joint ventures and investment in the African region of 55 countries. The Ambassadors of Ethiopia & Sudan, High Commissioner of Nigeria and

Counsellor of South Africa also spoke at the occasion and said that Asia and Africa should come together to promote trade and economic ties to achieve progress and prosperity. They said that Pakistan should focus on Africa for exports as it was still an untapped mar-

ket for Pakistan. Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry briefed the African diplomats about the aims and objectives of opening Africa Facilitation Desk at ICCI. He said that the Desk would work to provide busi-

ness related information to the business community so that they could be facilitated in capitalizing on opportunities of trade, exports, business and investment in the African market.

Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President, Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari newly elected President ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and others also spoke at the occasion. They appreciated that Ethiopia was going to start direct flights with Pakistan and stressed that other African countries should also start direct flights with Pakistan that would help in promoting trade, tourism, people to people contacts, business and investment relations between Pakistan and the African region.

Iran's IRGC attacks Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq

TEHRAN: Iran has attacked an Iranian-Kurdish opposition group in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, killing nine people and injuring several others, Kurdish officials said. The missile and drone attacks on Wednesday focused on bases in Koya, some 60km (35 miles) east of Erbil, said Soran Nuri — a member of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan. The group, known by the acronym KDPI, is a left-wing armed opposition force that is banned in Iran. Iran's state-run IRNA news agency and broadcaster said Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps ground forces targeted some bases of a separatist group in the north of Iraq with "precision missiles" and a "suicide drone."

"This operation will continue with our full determination until the threat is effectively repelled, terrorist groups' bases are dismantled, and the authorities of the Kurdish region assume their obligations and responsibilities," the IRGC said in a statement read on state television. Nine people were killed and 24 wounded, according to Kurdistan Regional Government's health minister, Saman Barazanchi. Iranian authorities have accused Iranian-Kurdish separatists based in northern Iraq of involvement in protests in Iran that have led to the deaths of dozens of people. The Iranian drone attacks targeted a military camp,

homes, offices and other areas around Koya, Nuri said. Nuri described the attack as ongoing. Following the first series of attacks, Iran then shelled seven positions in the Koya neighbourhood of Qala, a KDPI official said. The Qala area includes the party's politburo. On Saturday and Monday, IRGC forces unleashed a wave of drone and artillery attacks targeting Kurdish positions. Al Jazeera's Ali Hashem, reporting from Baghdad, said the death toll from the bombings is likely to rise. "At the moment, there is no official statement from the Iraqi government. It's been five days now since the shelling started," he added. The attacks come amid tensions generated by the

death in Iranian morality police custody of 22-year-old Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini earlier this month after she was arrested in Tehran for allegedly breaching the Islamic republic's strict rules on hijab and modest clothing. Protests have swept Iran, and in particular Kurdistan province, where Amini was originally from, prompting a domestic crackdown that has killed at least 76 people, according to the Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights. Iran's semi-official Fars news agency has put the protest toll at "around 60", inclusive of several members of the Iranian security forces. Iran has accused Kurdish separatists of smuggling weapons into Iran.—Agencies

Vote count in Donetsk ends in favor of Russia

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin will communicate with the heads of Ukraine's breakaway regions, the Kremlin spokesman said Wednesday.

However, as of Wednesday, Putin does not plan to address the nation on results of the referendums, said Dmitry Peskov at a press briefing in Moscow.

Russian state media announced that 98% of voters chose to join Russia following referendums in the Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. The votes have been widely condemned by the international community, with European nations and the US terming them a "sham" and saying they will not be recognized.

Speaking about the fate of Russia's special military operation in Donbas, Peskov said part of the Donetsk region is still under Ukraine's control. "Therefore, at a minimum, it is necessary to liberate the entire territory of the Donetsk People's Republic (before calling off the operation)," he said.

Denouncing the statement by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken about the possibility of using US weapons against territories where votes on joining the Russia were held, he said: "More and more, the American side is getting into this conflict, becoming a part to it, which is extremely dangerous."

"The decision of Turkish banks to stop using the Mir system was made under unprecedented pressure from the US," he said, referring to the Russian payment system. "The situation is complicated, and, of course, we need to jointly look for ways to counteract this pressure in such a way that at least does not

harm our trade and economic cooperation, and does not deprive many millions of Russian tourists who visit Türkiye every year of comfortable conditions," he said.

Turning to the grain deal, the Kremlin spokesman said Russia is interested in its implementation, but the grain has to go to the poorest countries. "Further joint efforts are needed by both the UN and the guarantors of this deal, aimed at ensuring that the recipients (of grain) are mainly the poorest countries," he said.

He underlined that lifting sanctions from Russian fertilizers is part of the deal as well. Peskov called the accident at the Nord Stream 2 pipeline "a big problem for Russia" and a loss of a valuable asset.

"This is a big problem for us. Both lines of the Nord Stream 2 are filled with gas, the whole system is ready for pumping gas, and this gas is very expensive," Peskov said.

"This gas costs a lot of money, now this gas is evaporating into the air," he added. Peskov rejected allegations about Russia's involvement in the accident as "predictable, absurd and stupid", pointing out that US President Joe Biden spoke about the necessity "to get rid of Nord Stream 2 pipeline" at the beginning of the year. "Do you remember the statements of the US president, which were made back in early February? Who promised then to get rid of the Nord Stream 2? What the US president meant, we do not know," he said. Russia will insist that Gazprom, as the owner of the pipeline, participates in the investigation of the emergency, he said. Peskov said that Russia suffers losses from the accidents on the pipelines, while the American energy companies benefit from it.—APP

US embassy urges citizens leave Russia

MOSCOW: The US Embassy in Russia urged its citizens on Wednesday to refrain from traveling to Russia, and those who are already in the country, to leave immediately.

In a security alert published on its website, the US mission said Moscow may call people having dual Russian-US citizenship for military service.

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a partial military mobilization, calling up to 300,000 reservists for deployment to Ukraine, where Moscow began a "special military operation" in February.

The embassy said flight options are extremely limited at present, but overland routes by car and bus are still open.

"If you wish to depart Russia, you should make independent arrangements as soon as possible. The U.S. Embassy has severe limitations on its ability to assist U.S. citizens, and conditions, including transportation options, may suddenly become even more limited. U.S. citizens should not travel to Russia and those residing or travelling in Russia should depart Russia immediately while limited commercial travel options remain," the embassy said.—APP

S. Korea claims North fired another 'suspected' missile

SEOUL: South Korea on Wednesday claimed that North Korea launched another suspected ballistic missile towards the East Sea.

In a short statement, the South Korean military said Pyongyang fired the missile without providing more detail, Yonhap News Agency reported. The launch came a day ahead of US Vice President Kamala Harris' expected visit to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) dividing the two Koreas during her visit to South Korea.

This is also the second missile test in three days as Pyongyang fired off a short-range ballistic missile into the East Sea on Sunday, while the US and South Korea started their joint naval exercises on Monday.

During the four-day combined exercises in the East Sea, the allies mobilized over 20 vessels, an American aircraft carrier, and South Korean warships. The US nuclear-powered USS Ronald Reagan is also in the South Korean waters to join the combined exercises.

The drill is part of the US and South Korean security cooperation to counter North Korea as tension further grew in the region after Pyongyang adopted a new law to use pre-emptive nuclear strikes to protect itself, declaring North Korea a nuclear weapons state earlier this month.

The US and South Korea have repeatedly offered North Korea dialogue to defuse current tensions on the Korean Peninsula, but neither has received a response.

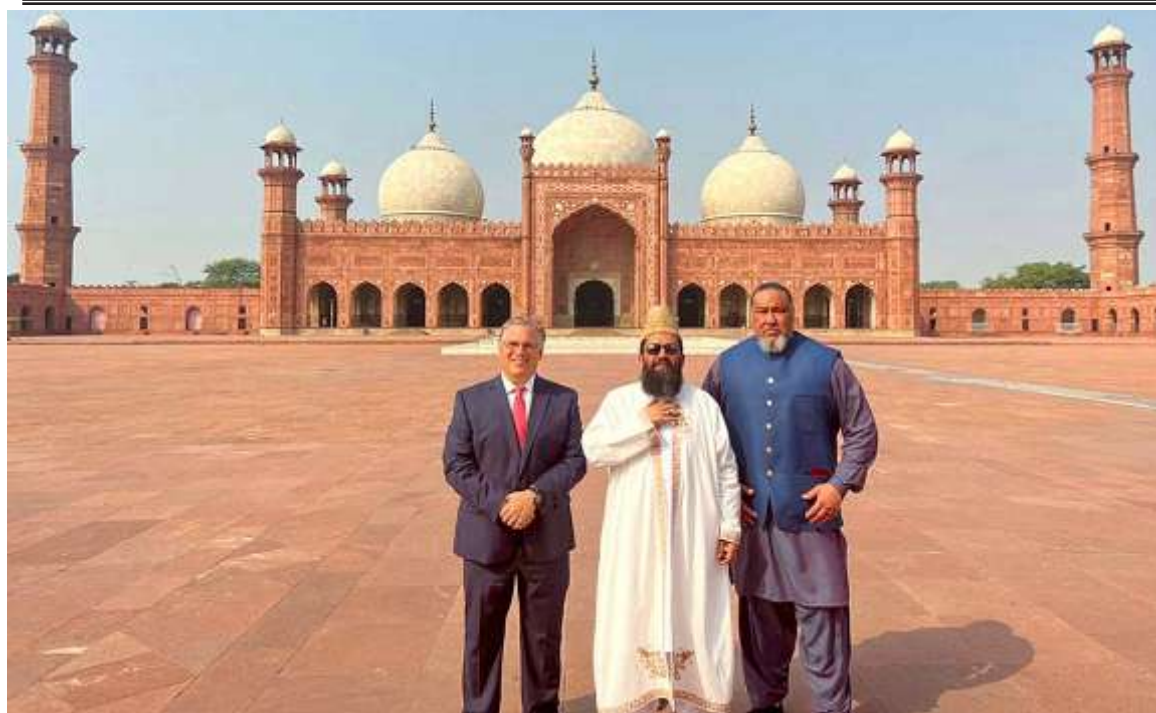
On Sept. 9, the White House also said the US is seeking to restart diplomatic talks with North Korea after Pyongyang passed a new law that raises the specter of a nuclear confrontation.

However, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un rejected any plan to abandon his nuclear program, accusing the US of attempting to topple his regime.

North Korea declared itself a nuclear weapons state after passing the new law, authorizing its armed forces to use nuclear weapons if an attack with nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction was initiated or became imminent.

Tension on the peninsula rose in 2020 when North Korea attacked and blew up the inter-Korean liaison office along the border. Seoul has threatened a strong response if Pyongyang "further worsens the situation."

However, tensions soared further last year when both Seoul and Pyongyang ramped up military drills to show off their might.—APP



LAHORE: US Consul General William Makaneole and Abdul Khabeer Azad in a group photo at Badshahi Masjid. —APP

COPHC set to bring 50 more Chinese firms to Gwadar Free Zone

ISLAMABAD: The China Overseas Ports Holding Co. (COPHC) is all set to bring 50 more Chinese companies to Gwadar Free Zone in a year or two, an official told Gwadar Pro.

The official said that the 60-acre Phase I of the Gwadar

Free Zone (GFZ) had already attracted 38 Chinese and 12 Pakistani firms. The North Free Zone (Phase II of the GFZ) has also been fully developed and two Chinese firms have already started construction activities there.

"We are all set to bring 50 more companies to the North Free Zone within a year or two", the official said. The Chinese companies coming to Phase II are large and prominent enterprises, which will give a big boost to industrialisation in

Gwadar, he added. The official, however, highlighted the scarcity of water and electricity in the port city as an impediment to future development. COPHC is doing everything in its capacity to end the two major problems, he said.—APP

Putin to talk with heads of breakaway regions

Denouncing the statement by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken about the possibility of using US weapons against territories where votes on joining the Russia were held, he said: "More and more, the American side is getting into this conflict, becoming a part to it, which is extremely dangerous."

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin will communicate with the heads of Ukraine's breakaway regions, the Kremlin spokesman said Wednesday.

However, as of Wednesday, Putin does not plan to address the nation on results of the referendums, said Dmitry Peskov at a press briefing in Moscow. Russian state media announced that 98% of voters chose to join Russia following referendums in the Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. The votes have been widely condemned by the international community, with European nations and the US terming them a "sham" and saying they will not be recognized.

Speaking about the fate of Russia's special military operation in Donbas, Peskov said part of the Donetsk region is still under Ukraine's control. "Therefore, at a minimum, it is necessary to liberate the entire territory of the Donetsk People's Republic (before calling off the operation)," he said. Denouncing the statement by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken about the possibility of using US weapons against territories where votes on joining the

Russia were held, he said: "More and more, the American side is getting into this conflict, becoming a part to it, which is extremely dangerous."

"The decision of Turkish banks to stop using the Mir system was made under unprecedented pressure from the US," he said, referring to the Russian payment system. "The situation is complicated, and, of course, we need to jointly look for ways to counteract this pressure in such a way that at least does not harm our trade and economic cooperation, and does not deprive many millions of Russian tourists who visit Türkiye every year of comfortable conditions," he said.

Turning to the grain deal, the Kremlin spokesman said Russia is interested in its implementation, but the grain has to go to the poorest countries. "Further joint efforts are needed by both the UN and the guarantors of this deal, aimed at ensuring that the recipients (of grain) are mainly the poorest countries," he said.

He underlined that lifting sanctions from Russian fertilizers is part of the deal as well. Peskov called the accident at the Nord Stream 2 pipeline "a big problem for Russia" and a loss of a valuable asset. "This is a big problem for us. Both lines of the Nord Stream 2 are filled with gas, the whole system is ready

for pumping gas, and this gas is very expensive," Peskov said. "This gas costs a lot of money, now this gas is evaporating into the air," he added. Peskov rejected allegations about Russia's involvement in the accident as "predictable, absurd and stupid", pointing out that US President Joe Biden spoke about the necessity "to get rid of Nord Stream 2 pipeline" at the beginning of the year. "Do you remember the statements of the US president, which were made back in early February? Who promised then to get rid of the Nord Stream 2? What the US president meant, we do not know," he said. Russia will insist that Gazprom, as the owner of the pipeline, participates in the investigation of the emergency, he said.

Peskov said that Russia suffers losses from the accidents on the pipelines, while the American energy companies benefit from it. "We see huge profits of American suppliers of liquefied natural gas, which have multiplied their supplies to the European continent, they are very, very interested in further obtaining these super-super profits. Are we interested in this? No, we are not interested, we have lost gas supply routes to Europe," he said. The Kremlin spokesman said the situation raises a lot of questions and demands a dialogue of the parties. "At the moment, we see an absolute deficit of such a dialogue," he said.

Briefs

Blinken defends F-16 package to Pakistan

DNA
UNITED NATIONS: Antony Blinken, America's top diplomat has stoutly defended the sale of F-16 aircraft maintenance package to Pakistan, as India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, who had sharply criticized the Biden administration's move a day earlier, listened silently while his US counterpart justified the deal, saying it was aimed at bolstering the country's capacity to fight terrorism. Standing next to Jaishankar at a press conference following their bilateral talks on Tuesday, Secretary of State Blinken was pointedly asked by Indian journalists whether the sale was justified as, they alleged, Pakistan had used F-16 aircraft against India. "To be very clear, this is a sustenance programme that Pakistan long had. These are not new planes, new systems, new weapons. It's sustaining what they have. We have a responsibility and an obligation to whomever we provide military equipment to make sure that it's maintained and sustained," Blinken said.

FO suggests renewing efforts for Dr Aafia's release

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) heard the petition filed for Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's release from imprisonment in America on Wednesday. During the hearing, the Foreign Office (FO) suggested renewing the efforts on the diplomatic front in Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's release case. Foreign Office Legal Advisor Asad Barki and Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's sister Dr. Fouzia Siddiqui appeared before the court. Talking about the renewed efforts for Dr. Aafia's release, Asad Barki said that our Attorney General can write to the US Attorney General. He added that the Foreign Office can only try on the diplomatic front, while the legal front has to be looked at by the Ministry of Interior. Furthermore, Dr. Fouzia Siddiqui mentioned that they have also made an appeal in the relevant department of United States in this regard. On which, the court directed the Foreign Office to submit a progress report every two weeks and adjourned the hearing of the case for two weeks.

UK Aid relief items arrive at Karachi Port

DNA
KARACHI: As part of the UK's aid package, £2 million worth of relief items for the most vulnerable people affected by the devastating floods arrived in Pakistan from the UAE. According to a press statement issued by the British High Commission Wednesday, the relief items include emergency shelters for up to 194,300 people, and blankets and mats for up to 10,000 people. The emergency shelters include coverage and fixing kits, poles and peg sets. The UK will also provide water filters and hygiene supplies for 32,495 people to mitigate health risks. The first shipment of 19 containers arrived at the Karachi port on Tuesday with another 26 scheduled to follow in the coming days and weeks. To date, the UK has committed a total of £16.5m to support flood relief efforts and the British public have donated over £25m via the Disasters Emergency Committee's Pakistan Appeal. This appeal has notably been supported by the England men's cricket team, who are currently touring Pakistan for the T20s, with the team making a personal donation which was then matched by the England Cricket Board.

Serena Hotels, Thai embassy join hands for a noble cause

Fundraiser gala held to support the flood victims

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels in collaboration with the Royal Embassy of Thailand organised a fundraising event to raise funds for the relief and rehabilitation for the people affected by the floods across Pakistan. The fundraising event was well attended by all walks of life, including members of the diplomatic community, corporate sector, and business community, where a troupe of performers from the Phattayakul Thai Music & Drama School presented a traditional cultural dance adorned in beautifully crafted traditional attire, an affair originally staged for the Royal Court. Alongside Muay Thai, the National Sport of Thailand which translates to Thai Boxing, was a delightful feat of agility and endurance by the Champion of Muay Thai, Anusorn Injai. The event would not have been successful without the full support of the Ambassador of Thailand to Pakistan, Chakkrid Krachaiwong. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, appreciated the generosity extended by the guests and associates in raising of the funds for the flood affected. Serena Hotels as a responsible corporate citizen has been active in supporting the flood affected. The Company is matching the funds donated by the Hotels' Guests and Associates. Ambassador of Thailand to Pakistan, Chakkrid Krachaiwong in his remarks thanked the Serena Hotels for taking lead in the noble cause of extending support to the flood affected people. He said two days colorful Thai Food, Fun, and Music Festival was held at a local mall in Lahore, which drew huge attention. It may be mentioned here that the relief goods, i.e. food supplies, and tents, are being distributed directly as well as through international NGOs under the banner of "Jazba-e-Khidmat - in the Spirit of Compassion" initiative. This special event featured the exotic taste of Thailand, and the guests were thrilled by the authentic taste of Thai cuisine, along with cultural performances.



Taliban in deal to procure Russian petroleum, wheat

KABUL: Afghanistan has entered an agreement with Russia to procure millions of tonnes of petroleum products and wheat, Taliban officials said on Wednesday. Russia has been hit hard by unprecedented Western sanctions over its invasion of Ukraine, causing Moscow to push exports to Asian countries to support its economy. "The contract was agreed upon last month when the minister of industry and trade visited Russia," Abdul Salam Jawad, spokesman for the ministry, told AFP. He would not comment on any financial details. The deal includes supplying Kabul with one million tonnes of gasoline, a million tonnes of diesel, 500,000 tonnes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and two million tonnes of wheat, Jawad said. The ministry of economy, in a separate statement, said the supplies from Russia are expected to arrive "in the next few weeks". Moscow confirmed that "preliminary agreements" had been negotiated with the Taliban. "Now they (the two sides) have to sign concrete agreements on volumes and list of products," Russia's special envoy to Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, was quoted as saying by Russian state news agency TASS. - APP

ADB to give US\$1.5 billion for food shortage and inflation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has announced to give US\$1.5 billion to deal with the issues of food shortage and inflation. According to sources, the grant will be approved in a couple of days. The ADB had announced plans to provide at least US\$14 billion over 2022-2025 in a comprehensive programme of support to ease a worsening food crisis in Asia and the Pacific, and improve long-term food security by strengthening food systems against the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. The assistance expands Asian Development Bank's already significant support for food security in the region, where nearly 1.1 billion people lack

healthy diets due to poverty and food prices which have soared to record highs this year. The funding will be channeled through existing and new projects in sectors including farm inputs, food production and distribution, social protection, irrigation, and water resources management, as well as projects leveraging nature-based solutions. The ADB will continue to invest in other activities which contribute to food security such as energy transition, transport, access to rural finance, environmental management, health, and education. "This is a timely and urgently needed response to a crisis that is leaving too many poor families in Asia hungry and in deeper poverty," said Asian Development Bank President

Masatsugu Asakawa, in remarks at ADB's 55th Annual Meeting. "We need to act now, before the impacts of climate change worsen and further erode the region's hard-won development gains. Our support will be targeted, integrated, and impactful to help vulnerable people, particularly vulnerable women, in the near-term, while bolstering food systems to reduce the impact of emerging and future food security risks." Asia and the Pacific is vulnerable to food shocks, as some of its countries depend on imported staples and fertilizer. Even before the invasion of Ukraine, nutritious food was unaffordable for significant portions of the population in many Asian Development Bank low-income member countries.

EU vows to protect energy systems

AGENCIES

BERLIN: Any intentional disruption to EU energy networks would meet a "robust and united response", its top diplomat said, after several states said two Russian pipelines to Europe had been attacked, causing gas to spew into the Baltic Sea. It remained far from clear who might be behind the leaks or any foul play, if proven, on the Nord Stream pipelines that Russia and European partners spent billions of dollars building. Russia, which slashed gas deliveries to Europe after the West imposed sanctions over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, has also said sabotage was a possibility. The European Union believes sabotage probably caused the leaks detected on Monday, Josep Borrell said, echoing views aired by Germany, Denmark and Sweden. The EU has not named a potential perpetrator or suggested a reason for the suspected sabotage. "Any deliberate disruption of European energy infrastructure is utterly unacceptable and will be met with a robust and united response," Borrell said. A statement issued by Russia's embassy in Denmark said that any sabotage on Nord Stream's pipelines was an attack on both Russia's and Europe's energy security. "The unsubstantiated accusations and assumptions that are now being made everywhere are intended to create information noise and prevent an objective and impartial investigation," the Russian statement said.

PM, COAS felicitate Saudi crown prince on appointment as PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Wednesday felicitated Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz on his appointment as the prime minister. Prime Minister, in a tweet, the prime minister expressed his wishes for the further development of the Kingdom under the leadership of Mohammed bin Salman as the prime minister. COAS also congratulated Prince Mohammed bin Salman on being appointed PM of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud for being appointed Defense Minister of the Kingdom. The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a news release said that the Army Chief also extended his felicitations to Prince Khalid Bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud for being appointed as Defence Minister of KSA. On the occasion, the COAS said, "Pakistan values its historical and brotherly relations with KSA & acknowledges its unique place in the Islamic world." Earlier, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud appointed Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud as Prime Minister of the Kingdom. The appointment was made through a royal decree as an exception to the provision of Article (56) of the Basic Law of Governance, and the relevant provisions contained in the Law of the Cabinet, Saudi Press

Agency reported. The Saudi King issued three decrees on appointment of the prime minister, his chairmanship of the cabinet as well as the reshuffle in the cabinet. According to a decree, the weekly session of the cabinet, which the King attends, will be held under his chairmanship. Besides appointing crown prince as prime minister, the King also appointed Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud as the Minister of Energy, Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki bin Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, as the Minister of Sport, Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Naif bin Abdulaziz Al Saud as the Minister of Interior, Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud as the Minister of Defense and Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah bin Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud as Foreign Minister. He also appointed Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Farhan Al Saud as Culture Minister, Dr. Walid bin Mohammed Al-Samaani as the Minister of Justice, Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan bin Mohammed Al-Rabiah, as Minister of Hajj and Umrah, Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasbi, as the Minister of Commerce and Acting Minister of Media, Eng. Abdulrahman bin Abdulmohsen Al-Fadhli as the Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture, Fahd bin Abdulrahman bin Dahes Al-Jalalaj as the Minister of Health and Yousef bin Abdullah bin Mohammed Al-Benyani, as the Minister of Education. - DNA

Pakistan concerned over terrorism originating from Afghanistan

NEW YORK: At the United Nations, Pakistan has expressed serious concern over terrorism originating from Afghanistan. Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Munir Akram, while speaking in the 15-member Council's debate on the situation in Afghanistan, urged Taliban to stop terrorist groups from using Afghan territory for attacks against neighbours. "In particular," Ambassador Munir Akram told the UN Security Council, "eliminating the threat posed by ISIL-K that is Da'esh, the TTP, ETIM (East Turkestan Islamic Movement) and IMU (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan), as well as Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, is of vital importance for Pakistan." The Pakistani envoy said the recent rise in high profile targeted killings and bombings, including against the Russian embassy is a cause for "special concern." "Should we fail to provide the necessary and continued long-term economic solutions to the Afghan people and to the authorities in Kabul, there is a risk of anti-Taliban groups, particularly ISIL-K (Da'esh) gaining further strength in the country," he warned. "We expect the Taliban to prevent Afghanistan's territory from being utilized for terrorism against neighbours or any other country," Ambassador Akram, adding that Pakistan will support all sincere efforts to neutralize and eliminate these terrorist groups while fully respecting Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. - DNA

As hurricane nears, Floridians told to hunker down

The Florida coastal zone at highest risk is home to miles of sandy beaches, scores of resort hotels and numerous mobile home parks, a favorite with retirees and vacationers alike

NEWS DESK

SARASOTA: After days of preparation, Hurricane Ian on Wednesday began lashing Florida's Gulf Coast with powerful winds and drenching rain, prompting authorities to warn residents to hunker down as the eye of the Category 4 storm lurked just offshore. At 7 a.m. Eastern, Ian was around 80 miles (130 km) southwest of Punta Gorda, Florida, carrying maximum sustained winds of 155 miles per hour (250 km per hour), the U.S. National Hurricane Center said. It upgraded Ian to an "extremely dangerous" Category 4 hurricane, though it said the storm was expected to weaken somewhat after reaching land. "The storm is here," Florida Division of Emergency Management Director Kevin Guthrie said at a news conference. "Stay indoors. Stay away from windows." Florida Governor Ron DeSantis warned that

people in four Gulf Coast counties were no longer safe to evacuate and urged residents to get off the roads and stay inside. "It's time to hunker down and prepare for this storm. This is a powerful storm that should be treated like a tornado was approaching your home," he said. "This is going to be a nasty, nasty day or two days. This is going to be a rough stretch." Earlier this week, authorities told more than 2.5 million residents to evacuate their homes for higher ground. But some, like Mark Feinman, a professional musician in St. Petersburg, chose to stay put. "There's absolutely no one on the roads here," Feinman, 36, said early on Wednesday. "The sky is this weird, ominous gray, and you can feel the wind gusts and the rain hits every little while. You can feel it in the air. My ears popped." Feinman said he does not regret his decision to stay; he feels his house is secure, and fortunately for him, the storm jogged to the south of earlier fore-

casts, which showed it making a direct hit on the Tampa-St. Petersburg area. "We still expect it to get bad here. But I've boarded up, put down sandbags. We're stocked up on supplies. I guess ready or not, it's coming." A day earlier, Ian hammered Cuba, leaving the entire Caribbean island nation without power. It was expected to crash ashore into Florida on Wednesday afternoon at about 2 p.m. in Charlotte County, about 100 miles south of Tampa and just north of Fort Myers. The Miami-based National Hurricane Center warned that Ian would unleash wind-driven high surf, torrential rains that may cause coastal flooding of up to 12 feet along with intense thunderstorms and possible tornadoes. The storm's outer bands were already bringing heavy winds and rains to much of the Gulf Coast on Wednesday morning. The Florida coastal zone at highest risk is home to miles of sandy beaches, scores of

resort hotels and numerous mobile home parks, a favorite with retirees and vacationers alike. Some 78,000 homes and businesses in Florida were without power early on Wednesday, and tens of thousands more could go dark before the storm passes. Deanne Criswell, administrator of the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, said one of the top concerns was the safety of Florida's large elderly population. Many have health and mobility issues or are in hospitals, nursing homes and other facilities that are difficult to evacuate. "We have a lot of individuals who are ... medically dependent on electricity. We know there's going to be power outages. That's going to be one of our big concerns," she told MSNBC. Overnight and into Wednesday morning, Hurricane Ian pounded the Florida Keys island chain to the southernmost shores of the state's Gulf Coast with heavy rains showers and winds gusts of 40 mph, the National Weather Service reported.

Crisis-hit Lebanon to devalue currency

BEIRUT: Lebanon will weaken its official exchange rate for the first time in more than two decades, a central bank official said, as part of efforts to tackle a crippling financial crisis. The exchange rate has been officially pegged at 1,507 Lebanese pounds to the dollar since 1997, but will drop to 15,000 to the greenback at the end of October, the official told AFP on condition of anonymity. With the Lebanese pound trading at beyond 38,000 to the dollar on the black market - close to a record low - analysts are sceptical that this step could stabilise a currency that has been in free-fall for three years. - APP