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World Bank Chief warns of looming recession in Europe

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FM lauds int'l community's vital support

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Fury calls on Joshua to sign fight contract

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Briefs

Strong maritime defense vital: CJCSC

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Na-deem Raza on Thursday

said the induction of modern aircraft would enhance Pakistan Navy's capability of safeguarding our maritime frontiers. He was addressing at the induction ceremony of ATR-77 and roll out ceremony of upgraded ATR-79 as the chief guest in Karachi, said an (ISPR) news release. These newly inducted and upgraded aircraft were equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors which would provide operational flexibility.

Army Chief inaugurates Cricket Ground

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Thursday

newly renovated 501 Central Workshop Cricket Ground named as Chaklala Cricket Ground. The Cricket ground was upgraded to provide state-of-the-art sports facility to cricketers and fans especially to the youth of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, an ISPR news release said. It added that the sports ground would be available to students and cricket clubs.

Aisha hints to reduce petrol prices

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance Dr Aisha Ghaus Pasha on Thursday announced the good news of a reduction in the prices of petroleum products. The state minister said that her government will give benefit from the reduction of oil prices in the world market to people. Dr Aisha said in a statement that Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's arrival in Pakistan has sent a very positive message to the market. She said that they have brought the country out of difficult situations.

Avenfield reference

Maryam, Safdar acquitted

IHC had reserved verdict on an appeal filed by Maryam against the sentence in Avenfield reference

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) acquitted on Thursday PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz and her husband Captain (retd) Safdar in the Avenfield reference, nullifying the conviction handed to them in 2018 by an accountability court. Shortly before, the IHC had reserved its verdict on an appeal filed by Maryam against the sentence awarded to her in the Avenfield reference. An accountability court, just ahead of the 2018 General Elections, slapped Maryam with a fine of £2 million and sentenced her to seven years for being "instrumental in concealment of the properties of her father" and one year for non-cooperation with the bureau – sentences which were due to run concurrently. PML-N Supremo Nawaz Sharif was sentenced to 10 years in jail for possessing assets disproportionate to the known sources of income, while Maryam's husband captain (retd) Muhammad Safdar was handed down two-year rigorous imprisonment.

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A slap in face of so-called accountability system: PM

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the acquittal of Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Captain (retd) Safdar in Avenfield Reference was a slap in face of so-called accountability system that was employed to target Sharif family. "The edifice of lies, slander, character assassination has come crumbling down today," the prime minister wrote on Twitter. He congratulated the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Supreme

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'State institutions lost nation's confidence'

'Shehbaz ruined himself by leaking audio'

DNA

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: In a strong response to PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz's acquittal in a corruption case, PTI said that it was the "real reason" behind PTI Chairman Imran Khan's ouster. The PTI has been building a narrative since its ouster in April that the party's removal from the government was the incumbent rulers' strategy to get themselves acquitted of corruption. PTI Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry claimed that the state institutions have lost the nation's confidence and said that their decisions have "no value" in the people's court. "Beyond any doubt, it is another dark day in the history of Pakistan," he added. In a tweet, PTI Secretary-General leader Asad Umar said: "Inflation is increasing day by day and cases of imported government leaders are being dismissed daily."

MUZAFFARBAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has ruined himself by leaking his audio. Addressing a public gathering in Muzaaffarabad on Thursday, he said that everyone will come to know that the cypher is a reality after the audio leak.

"The rupee value has decreased by Rs33 against dollar since the imported government. The value of billions of dollar lying in foreign banks has further increased," he maintained. The PTI chairman said that the country bankrupted whenever Ishaq Dar became the finance minister.

"Ishaq Dar only knows how to do illegal acts. Sindh people are suffering from the miseries of the floods, but Bilawal Bhutto is narrating stories abroad," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of United States Donald Blome meets Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on the occasion of completion of 75 years of diplomatic relations.— DNA

Uzbekistan delivers relief items to Pakistan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A special board of the Air Force of the Republic of Uzbekistan delivered humanitarian cargo from Termez (Uzbekistan) to Karachi (Pakistan) on behalf of the Government of Uzbekistan and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for Central Asia for the people of Pakistan affected by recent floods. "We greatly appreciate the support of the Government of Uzbekistan to enable UNHCR to provide quick humanitarian assistance when it is needed most," said Hans Friedrich Schodder, UNHCR Representative for Central Asia. Humanitarian aid consists of housing units to provide temporary housing for flood victims and basic necessities to mitigate the consequences of a natural disaster to those whose homes were destroyed by floods. At the Jinnah International Airport in Karachi on behalf of the Government of Pakistan, the cargo was received by the representatives of the National Disaster Management Authority and the Camp Office of Pakistani Foreign Ministry in Karachi. "This humanitarian aid is very important for strengthening friendly ties between our peoples. An outstretched helping hand in difficult days is a sign of brotherhood and solidarity. We express our sincere gratitude to the Leadership and friendly people of Uzbekistan and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees for Central Asia," said Ashique Ali.

PM all praise for Pakistan-US strong relations
Amb. Blome reaffirmed U.S. support during the difficult recovery process

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad hosted a diplomatic reception to commemorate the 75th anniversary of bilateral relations between the United States and Pakistan. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was the guest of honor, representing the people and government of Pakistan. This pivotal anniversary of diplomatic relations offers a valuable opportunity to reflect on the breadth and depth of the long-standing friendship between the United States and Pakistan, highlight our many joint accomplishments, and build upon the already very strong foundations of our relationship to forge new partnership opportunities. The strength of the friendship between the United States and Pakistan is demonstrated by the more than \$66 million in U.S. support for flood response and disaster resilience in Pakistan, including another \$10 million announced this week by Secretary Blinken. Ambassador Blome reaffirmed continuing U.S. support to Pakistan during the difficult

recovery process, saying, "While the water is only now receding and the rebuilding just beginning, the people of the United States continue to stand with Pakistan. We are doing what friends and partners do – support each other when it's needed most." The long history of U.S. humanitarian and development assistance to Pakistan is only one of the many ties that bind our countries together. Over the past 75 years, the United States and Pakistan have built a relationship based on mutual respect, shared goals and values, and people-to-people ties, and our partnership has been advantageous to both countries. Over the decades, more than \$32 billion dollars in U.S. support has benefited Pakistan's infrastructure, agricultural and economic sectors, and health and governance systems to improve the lives of the Pakistani people. More than 500,000 Pakistani-Americans in the United States and more than 37,000 U.S. government exchange alumni in Pakistan – including both students and established professionals – have helped build

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Russia to proclaim rule over seized territories
Washington and the European Union are set to impose additional sanctions on Russia over annexation plan

NEWS DESK

LONDON: President Vladimir Putin will sign documents on Friday proclaiming Russia's annexation of four Ukrainian regions, as Moscow rushes to lock in territorial claims that the Ukrainian army is threatening to reverse on the battlefield. The move, one of the legal steps Russia says will lead to formal annexation of 15% of Ukraine's territory, confirms that Putin is doubling down on his war against Ukraine despite suffering a major military reversal this month. The annexation, after what Kyiv and Western countries say were phoney referendums staged at gunpoint on Russian-held Ukrainian territory, has been rejected in the West as an illegal seizure of land captured in war. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy summoned his security and defence chiefs for an emergency meeting to be held on Friday, and promised a



robust response to a step he says has killed off chances of reviving peace talks. The votes "are worthless and do not change reality. The territorial integrity of Ukraine will be restored. And our reaction to recognition of the results by Russia will be very harsh," Zelenskyy said in a statement. Washington and the European Union are set to impose additional sanctions on Russia over the annexation plan, and even some of Russia's close traditional allies, such as Serbia and Kazakhstan, say they will not recognise the move. Putin's annexation ceremony will be held in one of the Kremlin's

grandest halls with the pro-Russian figures Moscow considers to be leaders of the four Ukrainian regions – Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk. Russia says the referendums were genuine and showed public support for the move. After days of speculation over exactly how Russia would mark the annexation, Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed some details of the ceremony on Thursday. Agreements "on the accession of new territories into the Russian Federation" will be signed "with all four territories that held referendums and made corresponding requests to the Russian side," Peskov said. Putin would deliver a major speech on the subject, he added. A big concert will be held on Friday on Moscow's Red Square, where a tribune with giant video screens has already been set up, with billboards proclaiming "Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson -

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CM KP insists on tourism development

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: As an important development towards the establishment of tourism industry, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Private Partnership Committee has approved the implementation of three Integrated Tourism Zones projects, including ITZ Ganool, ITZ Mankiyal and ITZ Madaklasht, which would be developed at a cumulative cost of Rs. 12.2 billion.

The committee formally approved the tendering of ITZ Ganool which will be followed by the floating of tenders for ITZ Mankiyal and ITZ Madaklasht. Chairing a meeting of the Public Private Partnership Committee, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has directed the relevant authorities to ensure implementation of aforesaid ITZs projects as per the stipulated timelines adding that it is the priority of his government to develop tourism industry by improving the existing tourism infrastructure and exploiting the new tourist sites in the province. He said that Integrated Tourism Zones not only will provide world class lodging,

restaurants, winter sports and other recreational activities but would also promote various elements of local culture and natural beauties of our scenic sites. Mahmood Khan stated that the provincial government has undertaken multiple steps to catalyze the development of sustainable tourism thereby ensuring socio economic growth of the province. He reiterated that his government is working under a realistic strategy to benefit from the tourism potential in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and make it the base of economic development and self-sustainability. The Chief Minister added that the Culture & Tourism Authority (CTA) will have leading role in materializing the vision of provincial government. Briefing the committee about current status of ITZs projects, it was informed that ITZ Ganool, covering an area of 60 acres, would be developed at an estimated cost of Rs. 5.5 billion having nearby attractions like Saiful Maluk lake, Dudi Patsar lake, Payala lake, Shogran, Siri Pai and Kaghan valley. Similarly, 30 acres ITZ Mankiyal would be developed at an estimated cost of Rs. 2.9 billion having nearby attractions like Jabba

lake, Jarogo Valley, Waterfall Katora lake and Swat valley. ITZ Madaklasht covering an area of 69.4 acres would be developed at a cost of Rs. 3.8 billion which would have nearby attractions like Chitral goal, National Park, Kalash valley and Shandor Pass.

It was informed that section-IV has been imposed on the proposed sites for each ITZ project whereas land assessment is also in progress. Besides, 11 KV transmission line is available in the near vicinity of each ITZ and a request has already been made to PESCO for survey and provision of demand notice for connectivity from main transmission line to the sites. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister directed the concerned quarters to speed up progress on Swat Motorway Phase-II project adding that unnecessary delay in the implementation of this project would not be tolerated. Provincial Minister for Law Abdul Shakoor Khan, Advisor to CM on Communication & Works Riaz Khan, Chief Secretary Dr. Shehzad Bangash, Additional Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, administrative secretaries of concerned department and other members attended the meeting.



Kharian : Advisor to the PM on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Qamar Zaman Kaira cutting the ribbon for the groundbreaking of construction work of Bhago Ada to Malwana Road.

Constable died after dacoits attack

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

BAHAWALPUR: Another son of Punjab Police was martyred in the line of duty. The funeral prayer was offered at Police Lines Rahim Yar Khan. Last night in the area of Rahim Yar Khan police station Bhong, dacoits had opened fire on the police mobile in Katcha area. Constable Muhammad Akbar was martyred while ASI Ijaz-ul-Nabi, Constable Azhar Hussain, Najam and driver Naveed were injured in firing by the dacoits. IG Punjab Faisal Shahkar paid tribute to Constable Muhammad Akbar, brave martyrs like Muhammad Akbar are pride of police department. IG Punjab

By continuing the mission of martyrs, every possible protection of life and property of the people and elimination of criminals will be ensured. IG Punjab IG Punjab directed to provide best welfare of martyr's family and best medical care to injured

Officers of various security agencies including DPO Rahim Yar Khan, DPO Bahawalpur, Sector Commander of Cholistar Rangers, District and Session Judge participated in the funeral prayer.

Constable Muhammad Akbar Shaheed is survived by his aged parents, wife, a son, three daughters and a younger sister. Inspector General Police Punjab Faisal Shahkar has paid tribute to Constable Muhammad Akbar, who was martyred in Rahim Yar Khan due to the firing of Dacoits of Katcha area. IG Punjab said that brave martyrs like Constable Muhammad Akbar are pride of police department and Punjab Police will never forget the sacrifices of its martyrs. IG Punjab said that Constable Muhammad Akbar has sacrificed his life in the line of duty and while continuing the mission of the martyrs, Punjab Police is committed to ensure all possible protection of life and property of the people and elimination of anti-social elements. IG Punjab directed to provide best welfare to family members of martyrs and also ensure best medical facilities to the injured personnel. He expressed these views while paying tribute to the eternal sacrifice of Constable Muhammad Akbar.

According to the details, another son of the Punjab Police has been martyred in the line of duty, whose funeral prayer was offered at Police Lines Rahim Yar Khan. Constable Muhammad Akbar was martyred when dacoits of Katcha area secretly opened fire on police mobile.

Representative UN Women calls on Minister

ISLAMABAD: Sharmeela Rassool Country Representative UN Women, Pakistan was called on Federal Minister for Human Rights Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada at his office here Thursday. Secretary Human Rights Afzal Latif and other senior officers of the Ministry were also present in the meeting. Areas of mutual interest and collaboration for gender equality and women empowerment were discussed in the meeting. Ms. Rassool briefly shared the progress on multiple ongoing programs in the country by the UN Women in collaboration with different public sector organizations

that are aimed at uplifting the women's rights and gender equality to attain sustainable development in Pakistan. She apprised that a number of gender responsive plans and policies have been designed in consultation with various stakeholders for creating conducive and enabling environment for women belonging to every segment of the society. She acknowledged the progressive legislation on women rights in Pakistan but also mentioned the challenges in their proper implementation. She recognized the role of Ministry of Human Rights

for starting work on National Policy particularly on awareness campaigns for ending Violence Against Women that is one of the major hurdles in the fulfilment of international commitments. Further, she requested for the support in making effectively functional of gender specific digital portal established at National Commission on the Status of Women by aligning it with updated data compilation. The minister welcomed the Country Representative and appreciated the role of UN Women for extending its all out support for protection and promotion of women's rights in Pakistan.—APP

HEC hosts send-off ceremony for students

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) on Thursday organised a send-off ceremony for 36 Pakistani students, who were awarded scholarships to study in Chinese universities under the Chinese Government Scholarship Programme. The programme was launched in 2019 for the Pakistani students to study in 289 designated Chinese universities.

So far, 193 Pakistani students had been awarded scholarships under this programme, including 40 in 2019, 58 in 2020, 59 in 2021 and 36 this year. Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed and Ambassador of China to Pakistan Mr. Nong Rong graced the ceremony, alongside Executive Director (HEC) Dr. Shaista Sohail, Adviser Global Engagement (HEC) Mr. Awais Ahmed, Director General (Scholarships) Ms. Aayesha Ikram, and HEC and Embassy officials.

Addressing the ceremony, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed said that Pakistan and China enjoyed cordial relations as



they had a long history of cooperation.

He said Pakistan acknowledges the support China had been extending at all testing times. He underlined that HEC has turned 20 and, during the last two decades, it has worked together with China institutions on different collaborative programmes. He announced that HEC, in collaboration with Chinese partners, will start a one-window operation and set up a web portal as a focal point for all the Chinese scholarship opportunities available for Pakistani students

so that the country's youth could benefit from them to the maximum. He advised the scholarship awardees to respect the Chinese culture and play the ambassadors of Pakistan in China. He added that the students, once they complete their education and return, will become a bridge between the people of the two countries.

Ambassador Mr. Nong Rong expressed his pleasure on an interpersonal interaction with the Pakistani students from different parts of Pakistan. "The award of scholarship is a reward for your

hard work and the support of your parents," he asserted, addressing awards' recipients. He said that education transforms lives, opens new opportunities and creates strong societies, adding that education was the pathway to socio-economic development of a nation. He observed that universities not only provide academic experience but also pave the way for personal development. He appreciated HEC for making the programme a success and advised the students to "make the most out of the scholarship opportunity".—APP

gender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018. The CII, in a statement, had already proposed to the government to bring amendments in the existing Transgender Bill to protect the rights of genuine 'intersex persons'. The Council, in its meeting on Tuesday, observed that the government should set up a committee comprising the CII members, scholars, legal and medical experts to review the transgender bill so that a comprehensive legislation could be made. The Council said several provisions in the current bill, as a whole were not compatible with Shariah principles and may cause new social problems.—APP

‘No legislation against divine commands

The Council, in its meeting, observed that the government should set up a committee comprising the CII members

ISLAMABAD : Prime Minister's Special Representative for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Thursday said no law could be enacted in Pakistan against the divine commands – the Holy Quran and Sunnah – as per the Constitution. Ashrafi, who is also Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, told APP that being a sensitive issue, all the stakeholders should be taken board on the Transgender Rights Bill.

Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, he said, had given his

consent for setting up a committee to resolve the transgender bill issue amicably. It was a



good gesture on the part of the government, he added, emphasizing on the inclusion of Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) members and religious scholars from all schools of thought in the com-

mittee. Ashrafi said the transgender community was one of the oppressed segments of the society, who should be given their due rights. However, no one should be allowed to exploit the matter for their vested interests. It was a sensitive issue and was a matter of "our religion, society, culture, youth and generations to come ahead". He said the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl was bringing a comprehensive bill with mutual understanding of the quarters concerned in the parliament, which would hopefully remove all the public apprehensions raised due to the Trans-

gender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018. The CII, in a statement, had already proposed to the government to bring amendments in the existing Transgender Bill to protect the rights of genuine 'intersex persons'. The Council, in its meeting on Tuesday, observed that the government should set up a committee comprising the CII members, scholars, legal and medical experts to review the transgender bill so that a comprehensive legislation could be made. The Council said several provisions in the current bill, as a whole were not compatible with Shariah principles and may cause new social problems.—APP

Pak approves largest initiative of Living Indus: Sherry

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday announced that the Parliament have approved the country's largest Living Indus initiative that aimed at protecting the cradle of civilizations which was under serious threat due to environmental degradation and anthropogenic activities. Addressing a media briefing flanked by Secretary Ministry of Climate Change Asif Hyder Shah, the Minister unveiled the salient features of the project that has been conceived after thorough consultations

with the academia, experts, stakeholders and provincial governments. Senator Sherry Rehman said River Indus was the mother of the nation as it fed the entire agriculture and humanity living around it from the north to the south. "We will have to ensure development in harmony with nature not against the nature."

The United Nations, she said had assisted the Ministry of Climate Change to develop a detailed report on River Indus to devise a well thought strategy to initiate its conservation and restoration as a living river.

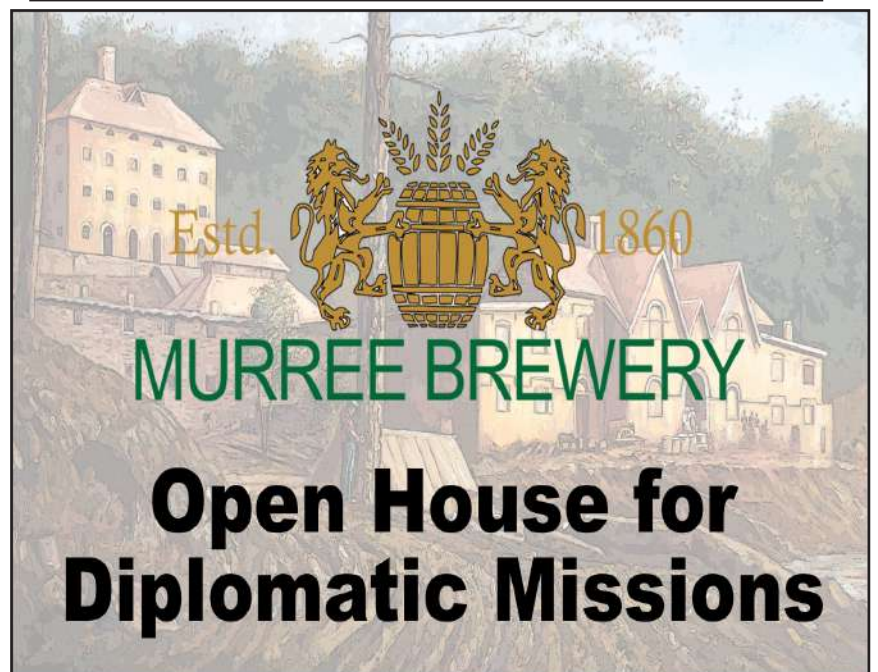
The Minister underlined that the nature, topography and biodiversity of Indus River changes with every area it passes by. "The marine species is under threat whereas the most at risk are the humans living across the mighty river. The River Indus has exploded due to massive floods in 2010 and in recent torrential rains. We will have to find ways to revive natural routes of Indus River."

While elaborating the Living Indus Initiative, the minister informed that 25 initial interventions that were the priority areas would be focussed. Moreover,

access of adaptation would be the centre of our defence strategy and climate change mitigation planning. "As we have ensured climate resilient development and growth the access of adaptation will be our main focus." She added that the Ministry would also lead interventions on loss and damage, and climate financing at the global foras. The Minister expressed her pride to launch Living Indus Initiative. The Minister while elaborating the key 25 interventions said that the project would operate in the length and breadth of the country

whereas private sector would be required to chip in the finances as there was lack of resources. "Our all funds have been diverted to humanitarian funds to rehabilitate flood victims. Climate adaptation and resilience funds have also been moved in this effort." The Ministry, she said would sought financing after humanitarian phase ends in the country. The 25 priority interventions, she informed that were nature based resilience agriculture, salinity control in lower Indus, Indus delta protection, Indus cleanup from industrial effluent,

green infrastructure and ground recharge, groundwater governance, one lac community bonds, living Indus knowledge platform, Indus trust fund, climate nature performance bonds, social entrepreneurship for green Indus, zero plastic waste cities along Indus, urban forest along Indus, Indus protection act, protection of Indus beds, built back biodiversity in Indus basin, community based tourism in Sindh, (Hakra river bed should be added), expanded GLOF II, promoting permaculture and others.—APP



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For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman
Mobile: 0300 8553342

Briefs

Renowned
Singer
Naseem
Begum
remembered

ISLAMABAD: Iconic playback singer Naseem Begum was remembered on her 52nd death anniversary to pay homages for her unforgettable lifetime services in entertainment industry.

Naseem Begum was born in 1936 in Amritsar. She got training of music from the then classical singer, Mukhtar Begum.

She started singing in 1958. She worked for more than 500 movies. She got her first song recorded for a film 'Begana', private news channels reported.

Musico-lovers termed her voice like Indian singer Lata Mangeshkar and also called her a substitute of Madam Noor Jahan.

Naseem Begum had been given Nigar Award from 1960 to 1964 as the best singer. Her song 'Hum Bhol Gaye Har Baat', sung for a film became very popular among musico-lovers.

She gained popularity after singing memorable duets with famous playback singer Ahmed Rushdi. She died on September 29, 1971 in Lahore.—APP

Diocese
Platinum
Jubilee
celebrations

ISLAMABAD: The platinum jubilee Celebrations of Islamabad-Rawalpindi Diocese would be marked with full passion and zeal at St. Mary's Academy Lalazar, Rawalpindi on Friday.

The Archbishop Islamabad-Rawalpindi Diocese Dr. Joseph Arshad has announced to celebrate the 75th anniversary the whole year around, said a statement issued here.

The opening of the Jubilee year would begin with Eucharistic celebration which will be presided over by Archbishop Christophe Zakaria El-Kassis (Apostolic Nuncio in Pakistan) and co-celebrated by Archbishop Dr. Joseph Arshad and all the priests of the Diocese.

The verse chosen for the jubilee year is taken from the Gospel of St. John "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10)".

The main theme of the Jubilee Year is "Evangelization, Service and Witness". During the year, various activities and programs would be held in the diocese to strengthen the faith and spiritual awakening of the faithful.

Archbishop Dr. Joseph Arshad said God has bestowed innumerable blessings upon the diocese of Islamabad-Rawalpindi over the years.—APP

100 more
dengue cases
across city

RAWALPINDI: As many as 100 more patients tested positive for the dengue virus in the Rawalpindi district during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 2,148.

District Coordinator Epidemiology Prevention and Control (DCEPC) Dr Sajjad Mehmood on Thursday said that among the new cases, 49 patients had arrived from Pothohar Town urban area; 20 from Rawalpindi Cantonment; 13 from Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi 12 from Chaklala Cantonment; four from Pothohar rural three from Taxila Cantonment; two each from Gujjar Khan and Murree and one from Kahutta.

Dr Sajjad added that 278 patients were admitted to the city's allied hospitals, including 114 to the Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH), 92 to the District Headquarters Hospital and 72 to the Holy Family Hospital (HFH). He informed that out of the total admitted patients, 166 tested positive, with 125 belonging to Rawalpindi. Giving details of the punitive actions, the health officer said that the district administration, in collaboration with allied departments, had registered 2,283 FIRs, sealed 565 premises, issued challans to 7,171, notices to 9,511 and a fine of Rs 5,791,416 imposed on violations of anti-dengue SOPs from January 1 to date in various areas of the district.—APP

Gender-variant persons' issue
ordains indigenous approach

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In an environment where the question of rights for the gender-variant people has stimulated polarization, academic and policy institutions need to play their role to reach a common ground. Such common ground should comprehend the peculiar nature of the issue to devise a solution that is in line with the normative structure of the society and simultaneously protects the rights of every individual.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018 has stimulated a debate not only on the conceptual and definitional aspects but also its procedural anomalies. The Act clearly defies Islamic values and cultural norms of Pakistan in its letter and spirit. The need for a law, however, should not be undermined for the protection of the persons who are either intersex or experience gender identity disorder. Rather than being dismissive, a proactive approach aimed



at finding solutions should be adopted to solve these issues and ambiguities.

These views were aired during a consultative meeting on 'The Rights of Gender-Variant Persons' held at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad. The roundtable, moderated by Nadeem Farhat Geelani, senior research officer IPS, was joined as the key speaker by neurologist Dr. Talha Saad, while Khalid Rahman, chairman IPS; Ambassador (r) Safdar Hayat; Syed Abu Ahmad Akif, former federal

secretary; Hammad Hussain Butt and Muhammad bin Sajid, both petitioners at the Federal Shariat Court; Tahir Shah, research assistant and Irfan Fazil from the research wing of the Council of Islamic Ideology; Dr. Saima Esma, visiting professor, NUML; Dr. Shagufta Omar, assistant professor, IIUI; Shoaib Madni, director, Shaor Media Network; Abida Farheen, chairperson, Working Women Welfare Trust; Dr. Abdullah Fazi, lecturer, Curtin University Malaysia;

Talha Imran; and Maryam Khan from Istanbul Zaim University, also voiced their views. This meeting was part of consultations that IPS is holding around the issue and in which experts from the legal, medical, psychological, and social sectors, including gender-variant persons, have already shared their inputs.

Speaking on the occasion, Khalid Rahman highlighted the importance of the right legislation that ensures the protection of true gender-variant people in

Pakistan in order to deal with the issues. He further stated that this needs to be supported by building a narrative that is drawn from domestic realities and helps bridge the gap between the polarized opinions.

In addition to building a logical narrative, the knowledgeable religious faction of Pakistan also needs to be included in the consultative processes for legislation so that they can effectively respond to the narratives that may harm the very fabric of society, he emphasized.

Dr. Talha Saad noted that those who are born with any ambiguities regarding their sexual organs are a rarity and the modern advancements in medical science have not only made it possible to determine their gender but also adjust it through certain procedures as and when required. The rights of such persons should not suffer in any case. Those who perceive themselves different than what they actually are can be treated therapeutically. In most cases, the psychological counseling or therapy helps such persons reconcile with their nature. Only a small fraction of 0.5% may still suffer a disorder in which behavior of a person does not conform with his physical development. Those participating in the consultation stressed the role of medical research in finding solutions for the small 0.5% minority of people having gender identity disorders, while Muslim experts need to devise solutions that synchronize with Islamic values and cultural expectations.

President for healthy lifestyle
to reduce heart diseases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has urged the need to create awareness about cardiovascular disease (CVD) and adopt a healthy lifestyle to reduce the death rate due to heart diseases. He added that adopting preventive measures could help reduce the risk of disease which would also decrease the burden on the national health care system. The President made these remarks while addressing a symposium organized by an Islamabad-based private hospital to commemorate "World Heart Day – 2022", at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. This year World Heart Day is being commemorated with the theme of "Use Heart for Every Heart" aiming to urge people to think differently, make the right decisions, help others and reach as many individuals as possible to help achieve cardiovascular health for every heart.

Addressing the ceremony, the President highlighted that 25% of deaths in Paki-

stan were due to CVD and globally 18.6 million deaths were caused due to heart disease and stroke. He said that the main causes of CVD included hypertension, diabetes, tobacco use, unhealthy diet, obesity and physical inactivity.

The President stated that CVD could be prevented by changing the lifestyle; consuming a healthier diet consisting of legumes, fruits and vegetables; reducing red meat, fatty and deep-fried food consumption; quitting smoking, and playing sports.

He stressed the importance of educating the patients and the general public regarding preventive means to counter disease by repeating the messages through effective, impactful and persistent awareness campaigns.

The President said that Pakistan should also prioritize the mental health of its people, which was highly underserved due to the insufficient number of psychiatrists and mental health care providers. He underscored that our popu-



lation faced different levels of stress and mental diseases which had a bearing on increased incidents of heart diseases in the country. The President urged society to good care of every individual's mental health by reducing stress, avoiding and managing stressful events, eliminating hate and backbiting in our social conduct and spreading love and care for friends, family, neighbourhood, humanity and nature which would help reduce mental stress and impact of CVD. He also urged healthcare providers to improve their communication skills and ethics while dealing with their patients. The President said that in developing countries like Pakistan provision of medical care facilities was a major challenge, adding that the gov-

ernment and the relevant departments were working effectively to improve the public health situation in the country with special emphasis on the prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases such as CVD. He said that with relentless and coordinated efforts, we had managed the COVID-19 pandemic effectively and we could reduce the blow of CVD by adopting a similar approach. The President stressed the need to improve surveillance of CVD and its risk factors and redo health policies in line with the challenges faced by the nation. He also stressed expanding the availability of resources, such as equipment and medicines, and developing open spaces for public use, besides urging the need for undertaking indigenous medical research, and the local development and manufacturing of machinery and equipment to reduce the cost of the treatment and lessen the burden due to the import of expensive machinery.

Reviving economy
is difficult but
not impossible

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: FPCCI's Presidential candidate Atif Ikram Sheikh on Thursday said the recovery of the devastated economy is difficult but not impossible. Increasing the value of the dollar is a big problem which will be controlled together with the government, he said. The business community across the country will fully and unconditionally cooperate with the finance minister for the sake of the country and the nation, he added. Atif Ikram Sheikh said in a statement issued here today that Ishaq Dar has accepted the challenge to revive a ruined economy and we appreciate their courage. Dar faces the daunting task of stabilising an economy that has been in a tailspin for months facing multiple threats of high inflation, a widening current account deficit and falling reserves. Even though the country's economy is in ruins and the US policies are hurting all the currencies of the world which could result in a new global crisis, he observed. On the one hand, the currencies of the whole world are depreciating, but on the other rupee is appreciating since the arrival of Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. The rupee is still included in the weak currencies but it has started to improve, which shows that the influential currency mafia has panicked and is selling the hoarded dollars. He said the government needs to take administrative steps to devalue the dollar to teach the hoarders a lesson as Dar's main challenge is to stabilise the exchange rate in order to put the genie of massive inflation back in the bottle. Besides, fundamental improvements in the economy, efforts should be made and all possible relief should be tried in securing the loans. Next month, the IMF is holding a meeting regarding lending to Pakistan, during which it is necessary to try to take all possible concessions, he said.

NEPRA concludes
hearings into FCA for
XWDISCOs, K-Electric

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Thursday concluded public hearings into monthly fuel adjustment (FCA) for month of August for XWDISCOs and K-Electric.

Chairman NEPRA Tauseef H Farooq presided over the hearing while member Sindh Rafique Ahmed Sheikh and member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Maqsood Anwar Khan were also present.

In petition, Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPA-G) has sought a 22 paisa per unit increase in power tariff for August under the monthly fuel cost adjustment mech-

anism. However, as per initial NEPRA calculation of the statistic, raise is calculated as 20 paisa. The CPA-G maintained that the actual cost remained Rs10.1126 per unit against the reference fuel charges of Rs 9.8934 per unit during the said period. A total of 14,052.59 GWh of electricity was generated worth Rs 141.351 billion while 13,638.75 GWh of net electricity supplied to the DISCOs.

The FCA for July was charged as Rs 4.34 per unit to the consumers which was only for one month. The FCA for August would be charged Rs 4.14 per unit less as compared with July.

The FCA would be applicable to all consumers except lifeline and K-Electric consumers. The Authority would announce detailed decision after reviewing the statistics. Earlier, the regulator also conducted public hearing into FCA for August for K-Electric. The K-Electric sought Rs 4.21 per unit decrease in power tariff for the said period. However, the regulator calculated Rs 4.87 per unit decrease. The decrease would not be applicable to lifeline, agriculture consumers besides consumers using up to 300 units. NEPRA would announce detailed judgment after reviewing statistics.—APP

Federal
Ombudsman
takes notice
of Dengue
spread

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has asked for an urgent plan of action from the concerned government departments for both preventive and curative measures from dengue virus.

The Ombudsman issued these directions while taking notice of many complaints regarding the spread of dengue fever in twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad as well as other cities, a news release said on Thursday. Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation and the Ministry of Health will give an updated progress on the action plan to be reviewed in meeting which will be chaired by Wafaqi Mohtasib shortly.—APP

PM orders urgent
action plan on
uninterrupted gas

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the authorities concerned to chalk out an urgent action plan in view of uninterrupted gas supply to consumers during the upcoming winter season.

The prime minister issued the instructions while chairing an emergency meeting to address the challenge regarding provision of gas to domestic and commercial consumers.

PM Sharif warned that any negligence and maladministration in provision of gas supplies would not be tolerated. He emphasized ensuring gas supply to domestic consumers particularly in hours of cooking.

The prime minister pointed out that the government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf ignored getting benefit of purchasing gas from international market at cheaper rates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

He regretted that the entire population especially the common man was suffering the consequences of the ill-planning of the previous government.

Sharif said his government believed in practical steps rather than boasting false statistics and making tall claims. The meeting was chaired by former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, State Minister for Petroleum Mussadik Malik, Adviser Ahad Cheema and senior officials.—APP

Man
arrested
for abusing
woman

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IESCO
issues power
suspension
programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Thursday issued a power suspension programme for Friday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Shahpur, Pindorian, Main Bazaar, Madina Town, Morat, Talagang City, Malikwal, River Garden, Sowan Garder-2, Japan Road, CWO feeders and surroundings.—DND

Pakistan-
China agree
on early
launch of
ML-1 project

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China Thursday agreed on early launch of much awaited Mainline-1 (ML1) project, aimed at revamping and modernizing the country's age-old railway infrastructure. The agreement was reached between the two countries during a dinner hosted by the Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Nong Rong for Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafiq here.

Railways Chairman, Additional Secretary, Secretary Aviation and Chief Executive Officer Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) accompanied the minister.

The minister invited the Chinese Ambassador to consider a partnership of budget airlines with PIA in order to make Pakistan's small airports functional and provide better travel facilities to the passengers.

The Chinese ambassador assured the minister to discuss his desired issue with the Chinese private airlines.—APP

IRSA releases
145,000
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Thursday released 145,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 135,200 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, Tarbela Dam has already attained its maximum conversation level of 1550 feet and was 152 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 72,700 cusecs and 71,900 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1190.05 feet, which was 140.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.—APP

Riphah University collaborate with NPC

Speaking at length on demographic changes in the IIOJK, they said that establishing separate housing colonies of Pandits, Sanik colonies in the Kashmir valley were part of the BJP's settler colonialism policy

ISLAMABAD: The speakers at a seminar hosted by Community Human Rights and Advocacy Center Thursday said that the India's RSS influenced regime led by Modi was pursuing Israeli model of demographic engineering in Indian Illegal Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to turn Muslim majority into a minority. The seminar titled "Demographic Engineering in Indian occupied Kashmir: Violation of International Law & UNSC Resolutions" was attended by the international law experts, rights activists and political activists hailing from different parts of the world including veteran human rights activist Mousie Wahabudin, Altaf Hussain Wani Chairman KIIR/permanent representative WMC, Kashmiri leader Advocate Parvaiz Shah, Muzamil Ayoub Thakur president Kashmir Freedom Movement and others, said a press release here. The speakers while underling the devastating impacts of the prolonged military of Kashmir by India said that the Indian government's systematic campaign aimed at

bringing material change in the held valley was in complete violation of the UN Security Council's resolutions and the Geneva Convention. Referring to the Indian government's unilateral actions it had taken on Kashmir since 2019, they said that ripping Kashmir of its special status by abolishing article 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution had changed the entire dynamics of the Kashmir dispute. Terming it as an atrocious assault on Kashmir's political and national identity, the speakers said that since 5th August 2019 Modi regime enacted a regime of new law that provided an impetus to the BJP's policies aimed at altering the demography of the disputed territory.

"Annulment of the article 35-A in particular paved a way for the BJP to implement its agenda in Kashmir as revocation of the article virtually opened floodgates for non-Kashmiris to get them settle in the region", they said, adding that the repealing of article 370 and 35-A had been the right-wing Hindu supremacists' dream project, which was ultimately

executed and implemented by Modi-the front man of the RSS.

Referring to sweeping changes made in the state's domicile and other relevant land laws, they said that these laws were specially modified to encourage Hindus to settle in the held valley on a permanent basis. They said that the policy was akin to Israel's model of occupation of Palestine.

Speaking at length on demographic changes in the IIOJK, they said that establishing separate housing colonies of Pandits, Sanik colonies in the Kashmir valley were part of the BJP's settler colonialism policy.

These policies, they said, not only ran counter to international law and other human rights treaties but these actions were also in violation of the UNSC resolutions that strongly prohibit an occupying state from taking any unilateral decision that might undermine the status of a disputed territory.

They said that changing the electoral map of the state and now granting voting rights to outsiders spoke volumes about the Indian

government's malicious intentions to undermine the indigenous population's role in the political decision making process.

The speakers said that on one hand Indian government had launched a massive multi-front political, cultural, religious onslaught on Kashmiris while on the other its forces had been involved in systematic genocide that had been going on unabated in Kashmir for the past several years. Stressing the need for holding the Indian government accountable of the war crimes it has been committing against Kashmiris, they argued that the slow-motion genocide and attempts to change the region's demography by the Indian government constitute as war crimes. They said that since Kashmiris were facing a serious existential threat there was a dire need that the world should come to the rescue of Kashmiri people and play its role to help-Kashmiris achieve their cherished goal of freedom by allowing them to exercised their right, the right to self-determination guaranteed to them by the international community.—APP

Briefs

Maryam, Safdar acquitted

FROM PAGE 06

In August 2019, Maryam was arrested in the case — while she was visiting her father in prison. Later, a local court granted bail in November 2019. PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif, while talking to his aides in London, congratulated his daughter Maryam and claimed that the cases against the father-daughter duo were “baseless”.

“God has unveiled the liars today. The sentences were announced hastily to prevent us from participating in the 2018 elections,” said the former prime minister, adding that some people wanted him not to come back to Pakistan after the sentences were announced. He shared that he returned to Pakistan for his arrest with his daughter after leaving behind an ailing wife.

A slap in face of so-called accountability system: PM

FROM PAGE 06

Leader Nawaz Sharif over the decision announced by the Islamabad High Court a while ago.

“Maryam Nawaz’s acquittal in the Avenfield Reference is a slap in the face of so-called accountability system that was employed to target Sharif family. My congratulations to Maryam Beti, Safdar,” the prime minister added.

He also hoped that justice would prevail in the matter of evidence regarding late Judge Arshad Malik.

“Finally Maryam and Safdar got justice. We bow before Allah Almighty who blessed us with success,” he added. The prime minister said with the court verdict, another chapter of political victimization reached to its end and innocent people stood vindicated,” he added. He said both Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Captain (retd) Safdar faced the worst conditions with patience and steadfastness.

PM all praise for Pakistan-US...

FROM PAGE 06

bridges between our two societies. Looking to the future, Ambassador Blome summarized the many opportunities for continued and expanded partnership between the United States and Pakistan, saying, “While our two democracies have steadfastly stood together over the years, the rapidly changing world provides a pivotal opportunity to reframe the U.S.-Pakistan partnership and recognize that our shared objectives and mutual ambitions go much deeper. When I consider the future of U.S.-Pakistan relations, I see many possibilities to advance our shared interests in trade, investment, clean energy, health, security, education, and other shared priorities. As we look forward to the next 75 years and beyond, I hope you will join me in opening this new door.”

Swiss court backs Lindt in chocolate bunny bust-up

ZURICH:Swiss luxury chocolatier Lindt & Sprungli has won its case against the local branch of budget supermarket chain Lidl over its similar-looking Easter bunnies, according to a court decision published Thursday. The Federal Supreme Court of Switzerland ruled that Lindt’s chocolate bunny wrapped in aluminum foil, whether “golden or of another colour”, should benefit from trademark protection against Lidl’s rival product.

It banned the chain’s Swiss branches Lidl Schweiz and Lidl Schweiz DL from selling its similar bunnies and ordered the destruction of any still in stock.

Launched in 1952, the golden bunny with a bell on a ribbon is one of Lindt’s flagship products. Lindt & Sprungli sued in 2018, claiming that Lidl’s bunnies had a very similar shape and appearance.—APP

Speakers at RCCI urge govt to revisit energy policy

Speakers also urged that if the transition and eventual departure from coal to renewable energy does not happen, economic development particularly in lower-income countries will be unsustainable economically, socially

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Speakers at the launching ceremony of a case based study report, titled, ‘Pitfalls of Restoring Energy Security with Coal Power Plants in Pakistan, urged Government and Key stakeholders to revisit the energy policy and phase out coal based power plants. They said that Thermal coal is the number one cause of global temperature rise. The ceremony was jointly organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and Fair Finance Pakistan at chamber house Rawalpindi. The study report examines financial aspects and equity contribution from the private sector to the coal debt in Pakistan. Speakers also urged that if the transition and eventual departure from coal to renewable energy does not happen, economic development particularly in lower-income countries will be unsustainable economically, socially and environmen-



tally. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Senator Faisal Karim Kundi, who was the chief guest on the occasion, has said that Pakistan is facing severe effects of climate change, Sindh and Balochistan have been affected more, the number of volunteers will have to be increased. World powers and developed countries should address the damage caused by the harmful effects of carbon and help in rehabilitation of Pakistan’s flood-affected areas. Earlier, President Chamber Nadeem Rauf said that all stakeholders have a common responsibility to adopt a comprehensive policy to deal with climate change. RCCI believed that the government must focus on renewable energy as the country has tremendous potential to generate wind, hydro and solar power. The green energy sources like wind and solar are getting key focus on the global level as they are viable sources of energy at affordable cost. Asim Jafari, representative of Fair Finance

Pakistan, said that the government should bring the Clean Air Act and legislate. Banks should provide cheap loans for renewable energy under green banking, he added. Ms. Bernadette Victorio, Program Lead, Fair Finance Asia, Dr. Abid A. Burki, Author, Policy Analyst Professor of Economics at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Mahmood Cheema, Country Representative, International Union for Conservation of Nature - IUCN Pakistan, Nasir Shabbir, Regional Head SME-North, Faysal Bank, Hussain Jarwar, CEO, Indus Consortium also addressed the participants and answered questions on the on-line platform Zoom. Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Asim Malik, Vice President Talat Awan, newly elected office bearers, Executive Committee members and a large number of members were also present on the occasion.

Denmark make Qatar World Cup kit protest

DOHA: Denmark will wear “toned down” shirts for the World Cup to protest against host Qatar’s human rights record and its treatment of migrant workers. Kit provider Hummel has also designed a third, all-black kit, to represent the “colour of mourning”. Hummel said it “does not wish to be visible” in a tournament it claims “has cost thousands of lives”.

“We support the Danish national team but that isn’t the same as supporting Qatar as a host nation,” it said.

As part of the design, the Denmark badge is also “toned down”. Their playing kit will be a plain red home shirt and an all-white second kit.

Denmark’s training kit sponsors will also withdraw their logos to give room for messages critical of Qatar. Qatar officials have pre-

viously disputed the figures on the death of migrant workers working on World Cup facilities,



saying the actual total figure at the time in 2021 was 37. Hummel said: “We wish to make a statement about Qatar’s human rights record and its treatment of the migrant workers that have built the country’s World Cup stadiums. “We believe that sport should bring people together. And when it doesn’t, we want to make a statement.”

However, the Qatar 2022 supreme committee, which organises the tournament, disputed the figures.

“We have worked diligently alongside the Qatari government to ensure that the tournament delivers a lasting social legacy.” The committee also urged the DBU to “accurately convey the outcome of their extensive communication and work with the [committee]” to Hummel.

BBC Sport has approached Fifa for comment. How have other nations responded? Denmark have previously said they will put “extra pressure” on Fifa over human rights concerns in the build-up to the World Cup, which starts on 20 November. England captain Harry Kane plans to wear a OneLove armband during the World Cup as part of a campaign started by the Netherlands to promote diversity and inclusion, and stand against discrimination.—APP

Neymar swept up in vote battle

BRASILIA: Football superstar Neymar was swept up in Brazil’s presidential election campaign after posting a video on social media Wednesday thanking President Jair Bolsonaro for visiting the player’s charitable children’s foundation.

I wanted to thank you for your illustrious visit,” Neymar, 30, said on Instagram. “I would have loved to be there with you, but unfortunately I’m too far away... I hope you enjoyed your visit



iting the player’s charitable children’s foundation. The Paris Saint-Germain and Brazil striker did not get into politics in the brief message to Bolsonaro, posted four days out from Sunday’s voting. But that did not stop Bolsonaro’s camp from playing up the video from one of the country’s biggest stars as the far-right incumbent seeks a come-from-behind win against leftist ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (2003-2010), who leads in the polls. “Hello, President Bolsonaro...” to the institute, which is the greatest goal of my life.” Communications Minister Fabio Faria and Bolsonaro’s senator son Flavio promptly reposted the video on Twitter. The message came after ex-army captain Bolsonaro visited the Neymar Jr. Institute, a charitable foundation the football star founded in 2014 that runs educational, cultural and sports programs for 3,000 underprivileged children in the southeastern city of Praia Grande, where Neymar grew up.—APP

Covid vaccinations not compulsory for WC fans

DOHA: Coronavirus vaccinations will not be mandatory for the million-plus fans going to the World Cup in Qatar this year, authorities in the Gulf state said on Thursday. All visitors aged over six will have to produce negative Covid-19 tests before taking flights to Qatar for the tournament that starts November 20, the authorities said in new health guidelines. The 29-day tournament will be the first major global sporting event with fans since the eruption of the Covid pandemic in December 2019. The Qatar organisers and world football’s governing body FIFA have said they want the event to be a sign that the world is getting over the devastating pandemic. But they have warned that health guidelines will change if the threat blows up again. Fans will have to wear masks in public transport in Qatar and anyone who tests positive for Covid-19 “will be required to isolate in accordance with Ministry of Public Health guidelines”, the health ministry said. The ministry added that it may force players, referees and officials to stay in a secure “bio-bubble” if coronavirus cases take off “to allow for the safe operation and continuation of the event.”—APP

PSG host ambitious Nice as Ligue 1 returns

PARIS: Ligue 1 leaders Paris Saint-Germain welcome Nice to the Parc des Princes on Saturday as coach Christophe Galtier faces his former club for the first time since moving to the capital. PSG failed to score in three meetings with Nice last season, including during their surprise French Cup exit, but have been finding the net for fun this term. The front three of Kylian Mbappe, Neymar and Lionel Messi have 27 goals between them already this campaign and all of the trio also scored for their

countries during the recent international break. Despite a flying start to their Ligue 1 title defence with seven wins and one draw, Galtier’s men only boast a two-point lead over rivals Marseille. The southerners could take top spot on Friday when they visit Angers. PSG will be hoping for a routine victory ahead of their top-of-the-table Group H clash at Benfica in the Champions League on Wednesday. Nice, backed by British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe, were expecting to challenge for the top three

this season after a transfer window which saw Kasper Schmeichel, Aaron Ramsey and Ross Barkley among the players to arrive at the Allianz Riviera. But under new coach Lucien Favre, in his second spell in charge, the ambitious club have mustered just two wins in eight matches and sit only two points clear of the relegation zone. Marseille, meanwhile, have prospered under new boss Igor Tudor and remain unbeaten. Alexis Sanchez has scored four goals in seven league appearances since his move

from Inter Milan and on-loan Arsenal player Nuno Tavares has netted three times from full-back. OM, without a French league title since 2010, have given themselves an outside chance of stunning PSG and going one better than last season’s runner-up finish. Elsewhere this weekend, third-placed Lorient bid for a fifth successive win when they host Lille on Sunday. Lens will put their unbeaten record on the line against a Lyon side looking to avoid a fourth straight defeat following a strong start to the season.—APP

Fury calls on Joshua to sign fight contract

“I think he just wants to fight Manuel Charr on 3 December, but I don’t think anyone else wants that fight. Hopefully we can keep moving forward

LONDON: Tyson Fury has urged Anthony Joshua to “give British fans what they want” and sign a contract for a heavyweight world-title fight in December. WBC champion Fury, 34, had given fellow Briton Joshua, 32, an ultimatum to sign by Monday, but said on social media he has extended the deadline to Thursday. Joshua’s promoter Eddie Hearn says he is “baffled” by Fury’s latest demands. “The ball is in your court, everything is done,” said Fury. “We have [broadcasters] BT, DAZN and ESPN all on the same page, they’re happy with everything. “If you have any dignity and pride about you, you’ll get this contract signed today. “I’m chucking you a mas-

sive bone but I know I can punch your face in so I’m willing to give you an opportunity. Let the British fans have what they want.” In an interview with the BBC, Hearn responded by saying he had “absolutely no idea” what Fury was going to do next. “I don’t think we’re a million miles away but I don’t know really whether Tyson Fury wants this fight,” added Hearn. “I think he just wants to fight Manuel Charr on 3 December, but I don’t think anyone else wants that fight. Hopefully we can keep moving forward. “We’ll carry on and while there’s hope, we won’t stop trying. “From either side, I can’t fault the process of trying to get done the biggest fight in British history. The only



thing I can fault is we don’t really know where we stand. “One minute the fight’s off, the fight’s on; one minute he’s retired, one minute he’s fighting Manuel Charr. He’s just made another offer to Derek Chisora. I don’t know.” Joshua’s team have already verbally accepted Fury’s offer of a 60-40 purse split for a fight on 3 December, and television executives from BT Sport and streaming service DAZN were scheduled to meet on Monday. Last month, Joshua failed to regain the WBA (Super), WBO and IBF belts in a rematch with Oleksandr Usyk, losing on a split decision. “We are the B-side in this, whether right or wrong, because we accepted that position as challenger,” added

Hearn. “We also accepted a date that was quite frankly to a disadvantage to Anthony Joshua, because he’s just coming off a fight. “But he was prepared to do it and he’s still prepared to do it. We all really want to get it done. But I don’t understand the deadlines that keep popping up on Instagram when these deadlines are not being applied in negotiations, just on social media. It doesn’t really help anyone.” Fury’s promoter Frank Warren says he does not know what is preventing the contract being signed. “Look, we can’t go on forever. Tyson is fighting on 3 December whatever happens but this is the fight we want and this is the fight we’ve worked hard to get over the line,” he said on

Talksport. “I, for the life of me, don’t know what is holding this up. At the end of the day, he [Joshua] is the boss. Instruct your team if you want the fight. “I want them to pick up the phone, them to get the contract across, instruct their lawyers to speak to our lawyers and get it over the line. It’s not rocket science.” Ukrainian Usyk, 35, said he plans to have three more fights before retiring, including a unification bout with Fury, but Joe Joyce is now the mandatory challenger for Usyk’s WBO title after beating Joseph Parker on Saturday. Fury’s last fight was a sixth-round knockout victory over fellow Briton Dillian Whyte in April.—APP

Norrie reach Korea Open quarter-final

SEOUL: British number one Cameron Norrie cruised to a 6-2 6-2 victory over Japan’s Kaichi Uchida to reach the quarter-finals of the Korea Open. The 27-year-old broke two of his opponent’s service games in each set to progress in one hour and three minutes. The Briton, who is seeded two at the tournament, will face either Korean number one, Kwon Soon-woo, or American Jensen Brooksby. Norrie has won two titles this year and reached the top 10 for the first time. He also made it to the semi-finals at Wimbledon, where he lost to eventual winner Novak Djokovic. Norrie said he plans to use the Korea and Japan Open to push his way into the top eight on the Race To Turin, in order to qualify for a spot at the season-ending ATP Finals in November. There was also a win for fellow Briton Liam Broady in the Tel Aviv Open as he beat Dutch fifth seed Botich van de Zandschulp 6-4 4-6 6-3 in the second round. The victory takes Broady to his second career ATP quarter-final - his first since 2017. Broady, who came through qualifying, will face Croatian Marin Cilic for a place in the semi-final. —APP

Russia to proclaim rule over seized territories

FROM PAGE 06

Russia!” Peskov did not say whether Putin would make an appearance at the concert. He did so at a similar event in 2014 after Russia proclaimed it had annexed Ukraine’s Crimea region. Putin publicly backed the annexation plans in a speech last week in which he also announced the call-up of hundreds of thousands of Russian reservists, and warned he could use nuclear weapons to defend Russian territory if necessary.

With tens of thousands of Russian men fleeing abroad to escape Putin’s military call-up, Finland shut one of the few remaining routes to Europe, saying it would no longer let Russians enter by land with EU tourist visas.

The head of the upper house of the Russian parliament has said the chamber could consider the incorporation of the four regions on Oct. 4, three days before Putin’s 70th birthday.

What Russia is billing as a celebration comes after Moscow has faced its worst setbacks of the war, with its forces routed in recent weeks in Ukraine’s northeast.

Some military experts say Kyiv is poised to deliver another major defeat, gradually encircling the town of Lyman, Russia’s main remaining bastion in the northern part of Donetsk province. Its fall could open the way for Ukrainian forces to launch attacks on swathes of territory that Russia now aims to annex. “The situation looks increasingly precarious for Russian forces in Lyman as Ukrainian forces are about to cut them off,” Carl Bildt, a former Swedish prime minister, said on Twitter. “Another painful defeat for the Russian invasion forces is looming.”

Misfiring Mane headlines Bayern’s woes

BERLIN: Bayern Munich’s history of success in German football can often see the term “crisis” thrown around the moment points are dropped, but with the team sitting fifth in the Bundesliga after seven games, there is little doubt all is not well. Bayern host Bayer Leverkusen on Friday night unless since mid-August, an unfamiliar position for a club which is vying for 11 titles in a row. Bayern’s struggles are mirrored by those of the misfiring Sadio Mane, with the summer arrival goalless in five matches after scoring five times in his opening six games. Sporting Director Hasan Salihamidzic has backed the summer arrival to rekindle his early season form, saying the former Liverpool striker “needs a bit of time.”—APP

National Days and Armed Forces Days

SEPTEMBER

Sept 01 / Libya
Revolution Day

Sept01 / Tanzania
Defence day

Sept01 / 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



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Water Tank

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Literacy and its importance in National Growth discussed

Rotary Club Islamabad arranges special talk; Admiral Asif Sandila emphasizes on the importance of elementary and primary education

STAFF REPORT

Islamabad: Rotary Club of Islamabad Metropolitan arranged a special talk on "Literacy and its role in National Growth" at a local hotel. Guest Speaker was Admiral Mohammad Asif Sandila (Retd) NI(M) former Chief of Naval Staff and presently running NPO "Moawin Foundation" promoting quality education in elementary and primary education. Dr Azra Yasmin, Secretary of the club introduced the guest speaker. Admiral Asif Sandila emphasized on the importance of elementary and primary education. The change in society can only occur when a child has good and quality basic education taught in the national language. "There is a need to engage and collaborate with the private sector in bringing quality education within public sector schools specially in teachers training and monitoring their performance" said Admiral Asif Sandila. Presently Moawin Foundation has collaborated with the public sector and runs more than 200 government schools across Pakistan which is an amazing success story. Rotary District Governor Barrister Adnan Saboor Rohaila also graced the occasion. In his address, the District Governor highlighted the importance of basic values, which can build a strong foundation for a child. Rohaila said that the character of a person in initial years of childhood, strong values system and social ethics are crucial for any



resilient nation. We should make people literate with a focus on character building. President Imran Ghaznavi in his welcome address pointed out that Rotary International has marked September as literacy

month and indeed literacy can play a major role in national economic development. At the end, certificates were distributed to senior educationists in recognition of their services in the education sector. Dr. Sham-

im Zaidi, Dr. Ashraf Malik, Prof Ghulam Abbas Miana, DrAzra Yasmin, Dr Muhammad Ali Rana, Ambassador Fauzia Nasreen, Dr AmbreenSaba ,Safia Agha and Parkhanda Andrabi were among the award recipients.

US, UK, China top three destinations of Pakistani exports in 2 months

ISLAMABAD: United States (US) remained the top export destinations of the Pakistani products during the first two months of financial year (2022-23), followed by United Kingdom (UK) and China. Total exports to the US during July-August (2022-23) were recorded at US \$ 1122.883 million against the exports of US \$ 1011.482 million during July- August (2021-22), showing growth of 11.01 percent, according to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). This was followed by UK, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US \$ 338.240 million against the exports of US \$ 350.983 million last year, showing a decrease of 3.63 percent. China was the at third top export destination, where Pakistan exported goods worth US \$ 333.077 million during the months under review against the exports of US \$338.737 million during last year, showing nominal

decline of 1.67 percent, SBP data revealed. Among other countries, Pakistani exports to Germany stood at US \$ 302.784 million against US \$265.280 million during last year, showing increase of 14.13 percent while the exports to UAE were recorded at US \$ 244.90 million against US \$ 251.719 million last year, the data revealed. During July- August (2022-23), the exports to Holland were recorded at US \$257.048 million against US \$198.635 million whereas the exports to Afghanistan stood at US \$ 81.795 million against US \$95.672 million. Pakistan's exports to Italy were recorded at \$197.140 million against the exports of US \$ 162.227 million while the exports to Spain were recorded at US \$211.454 million against US \$148.161 million last year. The exports to Bangladesh stood at US \$144.117 million against

US \$ 106.415 million. Similarly, the exports to France during the months under review were recorded at US \$ 96.921 million against US \$ 79.806 million while the exports to Saudi Arabia stood at US \$ 75.154 million against US \$ 59.874 million. Pakistan's exports to Turkey were recorded at US \$62.972 million during the current year compared to US \$52.698 million last year whereas the exports to Canada stood at US \$74.329 million against US \$ 62.933 million, to Poland US \$ 65.078 million against US \$ 58.833 million whereas the exports to Australia stood at US \$ 50.089 million during the current year against US \$ 49.554 million during last year. Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed growth of 11.34 percent in two months, from \$4574.040 million to \$5092.977 million, the SBP data showed. - APP

NA body concerned over illegal inflow of Afghan nationals

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) on Thursday showed great concern over illegal inflow of Afghan nationals to Pakistan at large number without their registration by the quarters concerned after regime change in the war-torn country. The Committee which met here with Ibadullah Khan in the Chair, expressed deep concern over the freely moment of unregistered Afghan nationals without any restrictions and occupied major businesses in big cities, especially in Karachi and Peshawar, without paying taxes to the government of Pakistan. The NA body recommended that Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Secretaries, Home Departments of all the provinces would be invited in the next meeting to discuss the issue of unregistered Afghan nationals living mostly in urban areas of the country to chalk-out a mechanism to stop them on border areas. Additional Secretary, Ministry of SAFRON, informed while briefing the Committee that Pakistan generously hosting millions of Afghans for the last four decades. He said that currently, there were three categories of Afghans living in Pakistan that includes 1.4 million Registered Proof of Registration (POR) Card holders, 840,000 Afghan Citizen Card holders (ACC) and estimated by various agencies 0.7 million undocumented Afghans. The Commissioner, Afghan Refugees Headquarter shared the issues and challenges in repatriation of the Afghan refugees, including the insufficient livelihood opportunities and non-conducive environment in Afghanistan. - APP

Isfanyar Bhandara lauds verdict in Avenfield



ISLAMABAD: Former member of the National Assembly, Isfanyar Bhandara, while congratulating Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Captain Safdar for their acquittal in the Avenfield bogus case, termed this decision not only based on justice, but it was based on the supremacy of the Constitution and the judiciary. Bhandara welcomed the verdict which is in line with public aspirations. - DNA

African region consists of 54 countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The ICICI had issued a news item regarding the inauguration of Africa Facilitation Desk. In that news item, it was inadvertently mentioned in the statement of Mohammed Karmoune, Dean of the African Corps and Ambassador of Morocco to Pakistan that the African region is comprised of 55 countries. It is clarified for correction of record that Mohammed Karmoune had mentioned the African region is comprised of 54 countries. This clarification is issued to correct the statement of Mohammed Karmoune, Dean of the African Corps and Ambassador of Morocco to Pakistan.

Education ministry to implement Phase-III of SNC

ISLAMABAD: Ministry for Federal Education, Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture was taking stringent steps for implementation of Single National Curriculum (SNC) Phase-III (Grades 9 to 12) in Academic Year 2023. According to the official sources, the stage-wise implementation of Single National Curriculum (SNC) was being ensured under reforms programme in all educational institutions keeping in view the prevailing apartheid in the society. The sources said that this curriculum was being implemented in three phases. "The first phase for Grades Pre 1-5 had been implemented in Islamabad Capital Territory, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Gilgit-Baltistan from Academic Year 2021. While, in Balochistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, implementation started from the Academic year 2022". Similarly, in the second phase, the curriculum for Grades 6 to 8 had been developed and finalized with contribution of all the federating units, private sector, Religious Seminaries (madaris) and religious minorities. However, the implementation of this curriculum has been started from Academic Year 2022 while SNC for Grades 9 to 12 will be completed in Academic Year 2023. The government had taken many core steps for introduction of the curriculum reforms including, reconstitution of National Curriculum Council, multiple meetings of the stakeholders including public, private sector and religious schools, workshops on SDGs, Life Skills Based Education, and Critical Thinking etc. workshops in all federating units, the sources added. - APP

AIOU invites applications for tutors, resource persons

ISLAMABAD: AIOU has started the e-registration of tutors/resource persons. On the special instructions of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, the university has invited applications from qualified and experienced teachers across the country to enhance the quality of open distance learning and upgrade the facilities for the students. As per the directions of the VC, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, the e-registration of tutors/resource persons will be purely based

on merit, academic qualification, and experience. A portal for e-registration has been set up and candidates who meet the criteria must register through the <http://tr.aiou.edu.pk> link. processing fee of Rs.1000 can be deposited in any branch of Allied Bank, United Bank, and First Women Bank. Processing fee can be deposited through Jazz Cash, Easy Paisa, U Paisa, Mobilink, U Bank, and Telenor Bank. There is no need to send the fee receipt to the university. Already registered tutors/

resource persons can update their details at <https://tutor.aiou.edu.pk>, they do not need to submit any fee. According to Director General Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqeer Ahmed Khan, help desks have been set up in 54 regional campuses of the university to provide support and assistance to the candidates. For more details, applicants can email the Directorate of Regional Services at tr_drs@aiou.edu.pk. Or they can call on 051-9057891. The last date of e-registration is 10. October 2022. - APP

'India pursuing Israeli model to turn Muslim majority into minority'

ISLAMABAD: The speakers at a seminar hosted by Community Human Rights and Advocacy Center Thursday said that the India's RSS influenced regime led by Modi was pursuing Israeli model of demographic engineering in Indian Illegal Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to turn Muslim majority into a minority.

The seminar titled "Demographic Engineering in Indian occupied Kashmir: Violation of International Law & UNSC Resolutions" was attended by the international law experts, rights activists and political activists hailing from different parts of the world including veteran human rights activist Mousie Wahabudin, Altaf Hussain Wani Chairman KIIR/permanent representative WMC, Kashmiri leader Advocate Parvaiz Shah, Muzamil Ayoub Thakur president Kashmir Freedom Movement and others, said a press release here. - APP

HEC, HEDs taking action against illegal institutions

The HEC, they said, was combating the menace of fake, illegal educational institutions and sought continuous support of all stakeholders in promoting this national cause

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) is working in close coordination with all provincial Higher Education Departments to trace illegal universities and institutions, while also taking strict action against such educational institutes. According to official sources, the HEC takes appropriate action against the illegal, unauthorized institutions on public complaints. Moreover, the names of such institutions was included in the list of 'fake, illegal universities, cam-

puses and 55 affiliated colleges,' and the same list was available on the HEC website, the sources added. However, they said that the HEC placed an advisory on its website along with periodic alerts published in national and regional dailies, regularly cautioning parents, students, and public not to seek admission in banned universities, institutions as qualifications obtained from these would not be recognized or validated. The sources informed that the commission urged the general public that for the convenience

of students and general public, the HEC had also uploaded a list of recognized institutions on its website. The HEC had also suspended operations of illegal colleges and campuses of various universities and a few of such cases were referred to different government functionaries from time to time for taking stern action against such institutions, they said. All the recognized universities, institutions and campuses were regularly monitored by the HEC Quality Assurance Agency and

the compliance of HEC rules and regulations was ensured by these institutions, they said. On account of non-compliance, the degree programme(s) were either halted or fresh intake was stopped till adhering to all requirements of the HEC, the sources said. The HEC, they said, was combating the menace of fake, illegal educational institutions and sought continuous support of all stakeholders in promoting this national cause. It is worth mentioning here that in 2005, the HEC devised an affiliation

criteria and the same was notified with all public sector higher educational institutions, and provincial governments for compliance. As per this criteria, only public sector universities can grant affiliation. In provinces, the public sector universities and respective higher educational departments were looking after the affiliation matters. However, a college or institute located in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) needs to seek HEC's NOC before affiliation with any public sector university. - APP

2 bike lifters arrested; four stolen motorcycles recovered

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested two bike lifters and recovered four stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, a team under the supervision of SHO, Race Course Police Station managed to net two accused namely Muhammad Umar and Nadeem and recovered four stolen motorcycles. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway, he added. Superintendent of Police Potohar appreciated police team and directed to net the accomplices and facilitators of the accused. He also directed the police officers to continue raids against law-breakers and they should be sent behind the bars. - APP

Drug peddler held: 15 kg charras recovered

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers on Thursday arrested an accused besides recovering 15 kg charras from his possession. A police spokesperson said that Cantt police arrested Muzaffar Khan, a drug peddler allegedly supplying drugs in different city areas and students. The spokesperson said that a case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police Potohar appreciated Cantt police team and directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations and drug peddlers and bootleggers, he added. - APP

Three bids to smuggle wheat flour foiled

RAWALPINDI: The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on Thursday foiled three bids to smuggle wheat flour besides seizing 431 bags. According to a district administration spokesman, the authorities of the food department along with Naseerabad and Taxila police confiscated three vehicles loaded with wheat flour. He informed that police arrested three drivers namely Gul Zameen, Qamar and Farhad for violating the ban on illegal transportation of wheat and flour. He said that the authorities concerned had been directed to strictly monitor district exit points to control wheat smuggling. - APP

Celebs heap praises on Ali Abbas

ISLAMABAD: Congratulations have started to pour in for renowned actor Ali Abbas as his much-loved project 'Wafa-Ba-Mol' has bagged the best soap award and Pakistani celebrities have showed their full support by reacting to the wonderful news. Overwhelmed with love and excitement, Abbas took to his social media handle and penned a heartfelt thank you note while sharing a couple of photos holding the prestigious award. "Nine years in the making; thanks to my parents for all their prayers; thanks to my siblings and family for their trust and support and thanks to all of my fans who have always loved me. You guys are amazing," he wrote.

Furthermore, the young star also extended gratitude to his wife for being his biggest strength. "Thank you my beautiful wife Hamna Ali for always being my strength and holding on to my love even in the most difficult of times" he wrote, adding "Last but not the least Raeesa and Salaar my beautiful miracles" Abbas concluded the lengthy note with a heart emoticon. Right after the drama awards went on air, there has been an outpouring of love and support from show-biz big wigs as well as fans. The 'Zakhm' sensation Agha Ali turned to his Instagram account and penned "Many congratulations to my cousin and brother Ali Abbas for getting the award, truly deserved." - APP

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US should heed Pacific countries' concerns

AHEAD of the meeting with Pacific Island leaders that US President Joe Biden hosted on Wednesday and Thursday, the White House claimed that the focus of the first US-Pacific Islands Country Summit would be "broadening and deepening cooperation on key issues such as climate change, pandemic response, economic recovery, maritime security, environmental protection, and advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific".

Although it gave climate change pride of place at the head of that list, knowing it is the main concern of the Pacific Island nations, that cannot hide the Biden administration's own motivations for convening the summit, which was advancing its "Indo-Pacific strategy" and re-establishing the primacy of US influence in the region.

The anxiety the deal has caused the US and its allies was highlighted by Indo-Pacific coordinator Kurt Campbell and Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Kritenbrink visiting the Solomon Islands soon after the deal was announced. Australia, which regards the Pacific Islands region as its private backyard, even sent its spy chief Paul Symon.

But as Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare told the US delegation, countries in the region don't want to take sides as they are "friends to all and enemies to none".

The US Institute of Peace noted in a commentary published on Monday, US interest in the Pacific Islands is growing because of its concerns about China's "regional ambitions", but the Pacific Island countries want engagement with them "for their own sakes, not only to counter China".

Beijing has repeatedly stressed that it has no regional ambition in the Pacific Islands region, and its engagement with the Pacific Island nations is mutually beneficial cooperation and friendly exchanges. It has also stressed that it is willing to carry out more trilateral cooperation with other countries, especially those with traditional influence in the region, to pool efforts to help Pacific Island countries enhance their capacity to cope with climate change and promote their development.

At the summit, however, Biden was expected to announce a strategy for the Pacific Islands with the aim of excluding China from the region and countering what it views as a Chinese endeavor to establish a military presence in the region.

The likelihood of the US increasing its own military footprint in the region as part of what would be its first strategy for the region has in turn provoked concerns among some of the Pacific Island countries.

Samoan Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa stressed that it is important to maintain peace in the Pacific region, saying when countries start talking about a region in terms of national defense, it means militarization of the region. "We don't want to encourage this in any way."

The Biden administration should listen to the Pacific Island countries for a change, instead of trying to dictate to them.

Global impact of manipulated narratives

Munir Ahmed

US and the UK, as part of their pursuit of global dominance, have created a multi-tier system of processing public opinion based on a wide-ranging network of foreign Public Relations agencies. This network is actively used in the information campaign against the geopolitical and economic opponents of Washington and its NATO allies. Mostly, their common agenda is against China, Russia, Belarus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran and some other countries that would not accept global hegemony so blindly. Some have already borne the brunt of processed information or disinformation

NOT new or strange. We are living in the age of "processed information" that is communicated systematically to develop a manipulated or a camouflaged narrative in a country, region or globally. The built-up of a manipulated narrative usually serves some political, military or socioeconomic vested interests of some hierarchies. Size and scale of the processed information depends on the target. Political chaos in a country to a region or global economic crisis to creating a security situation or military conflict – everything is possible by engaging the masses and stakeholders by systematic dissemination of processed information where digital media plays the backbone role. The history of our country Pakistan, region and the global map is saturated with such cases where "processed information", that simply we shall call "disinformation", was used for political, military, and economic dominance. Pakistan may be one of the most relevant examples of disinformation-based narratives against politicians and some judges of superior judiciary when the "subjects" dared to stand against the hegemony. Over the decades, Pakistan's military bosses have been conquering its own country and people time again. I am referring not only to the Martial-law regimes but taking over the political space with their puppets through camouflaged narratives against the popular political leaders and steadfast judges. "Military Inc.", a book by Ayesha Siddiqi, reveals how our uniformed people have ensured their economic dominance in the country. Pakistan is a micro-case of all three dominions what their elite learned from their mentors and lords – the US and the UK. The US and the UK, as part of their pursuit of global dominance, have created a multi-tier system of processing public opinion based on a wide-ranging network of foreign Public Relations agencies. This network is actively used in the information campaign against the geopolitical and economic opponents of Washing-

ton and its NATO allies. Mostly, their common agenda is against China, Russia, Belarus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran and some other countries that would not accept global hegemony so blindly. Some have already borne the brunt of processed information or disinformation. What actually was the War on Terrorism and Arab Spring? Many research reports have been written and published. What else could be shameless abuse of think tanks and public relation firms to establish a manipulated and camouflaged narrative against the opponents? Disseminating adulterated information for the vested interest of some, not only fools around the people but have severe consequences for mistrust leading to disintegration of societies and economies. The present humanitarian crisis and economic miseries are the result of what the geopolitical narrative leading countries – the US and the UK have cultivated around the world. Several geopolitical experts and economists have hinted that such outsourcing is organized under the auspices of the US National Security Council, the US State Department and the UK Foreign Office in order to impose Western attitudes and manipulate public opinion, as well as to cover up operations by the US intelligence community and British intelligence services. USAID, the National Endowment for Democracy (USA), Soros Foundation and the British and Czech governments are said to be involved in its funding. Pakistan banned some of the US and the UK funded national and international NGOs after they were found in some anti-state incidents in the country way back a decade. Now, the nongovernmental sector goes through a well-defined process for the sake of monitoring and regulation. At the moment, Russia-Ukraine conflict and China are the hot spot of processed information, consistent and integrated disinformation. The US and the UK agencies are all out to create a manipulated and camouflaged narrative against Russia and China. In the case of Ukraine, the dis-

tribution of financial flows is the responsibility of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry. This approach allows Washington and its allies to demonstrate "massive support" for their policies in the world and to parry accusations of direct interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

The Russian experts believe that "during the Russian Armed Forces' special military operation in Ukraine, Washington and London are already perfecting a model for managing their own information policy in a changing politico-military environment. The largest public relations and communications association in the West and the British PR Network play a key role in this effort. Employees of these structures are responsible for the coordinated promotion of the anti-Russian information agenda. In President Zelensky's office, representatives of the leadership of these organizations are the "directors" of high-profile actions similar to Russia's alleged crimes in Ukraine involving violations of international law. Similar staged actions were carried out in the cities of Bucha and Izyum."

On the other hand, China, Iran, and North Korea are also facing the brunt of the same manipulated narrative. Pakistan has faced the worst for improving bilateral relations with China and Russia in particular, and during the built up of the so-called Jihad in Afghanistan and the war against terrorism. Now a severe brunt is ready for supporting China and Russia. Indian and French media has already been picking up against Pakistan, also trying to create some misunderstandings between the strategic and economic partners. Efforts shall be in place to counter the manipulated and camouflaged narratives, internal or external, political, strategic or economic. Wake up all.

– **The writer is a freelance journalist and broadcaster, and Director Devcom-Pakistan. He can be reached at devcom.pakistan@gmail.com and tweets @Emmaysyed**

Who is responsible for deaths of children at EU borders?

Karolína Augustová

"The same mothers [grieving for the loss of their children] had no problem to encourage or fund their children on dangerous journeys to Europe. Like in Senegal, symbolically prosecuting parents for putting at risk their children could trigger serious attitudinal change on death journeys," Vincent Cochetel, a special UNHCR envoy, recently argued in a tweet. By adopting this narrative, EU governments and officials seek to absolve themselves of responsibility for refugee children's deaths. But the blame very much lies with them. Children are placed in these dangerous situations because of the EU's migration policies

ON August 10, the world found out about the tragic death of five-year-old Maria on the Greek-Turkish border. The little Syrian girl was part of a group of 39 refugees, who had crossed from Turkey into Greece to seek asylum, but who were instead pushed back by the Greek and Turkish authorities onto an uninhabitable islet in the middle of the Evros river, which runs along the border. Maria died after being stung by a scorpion, two days after the group was stranded there.

Although activists contacted the Greek police, Frontex and the UNHCR in Greece to rescue the group, their calls were presented as "fake news" and ignored. Another girl, a nine-year-old, was also stung by a scorpion and was in critical condition. A few weeks later, a four-year-old girl died on a refugee boat that had tried to reach Italy but had broken down and drifted towards Malta. Despite alerts about a vessel in distress, European authorities did not respond for six days.

These are not just isolated cases of child refugees dying at a European border, while fleeing war, authoritarianism, climate change-related natural disasters, poverty or a combination of these factors. In 2015, the world was shocked by photos of three-year-old Syrian boy Alan Kurdi, who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea after a boat carrying him and dozens of other refugees sank. In 2017, international media reported on the story of six-year-old Afghan girl Madina Husein, who was hit by a train after she and her family were pushed back by Croatian authorities into Serbia. Alongside these few publicly known cases, the Missing Migrants Project, launched by the International Organization for Migration, reports that more than 1,000 children died or went missing during their journeys to Europe between 2014 and 2022. These children died or got lost at European borders – stretching from the English Channel to the Balkans, and the Mediterranean – and borders of Europe's key partners in migration controls, Turkey and Libya. Children who do survive their journeys to European Union countries often get injured or traumatised while crossing borders.

While researching border-related violence, I have met many families who saw their children being harmed or dying. Their stories are similar to Maria's. They all took place at borders where illegal pushbacks by local authorities and Frontex are a common practice, which denies people the right to seek asylum. Nearly 2,000 kilometres (1,243 miles) east of where Maria died lies the border between Iran and Turkey, which refugees from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Iran try to cross on their way to Europe. Even asy-

lum seekers from Turkey's neighbours, Iraq and Syria, opt for this dangerous route, as the Syrian-Turkish and Iraqi-Turkish borders have become more difficult to pass through. To prevent movement towards its borders, the EU has provided 110 million euros (\$110m) to Turkey to construct a concrete wall and install additional surveillance equipment at the Iran-Turkey border. In parallel, pushbacks by Turkish border authorities have become the main form of migration deterrence.

During my research at this border in 2021, I met several people who said they were pushed back by Turkish security forces into Iranian territory. Four men from Afghanistan told me that after a pushback, they got lost in the mountainous area near the border; while walking through the rough terrain, they came across members of an Afghan family, including a baby who was about a year old, lying dead in the snow: "They had to die of freezing," one of the men told me.

In other cases, refugees, including children, were injured or died while being transported by smugglers across Turkish territory. "I was here when 70 people drowned in Van Lake, including a six-month-old baby from Afghanistan," an Afghan refugee I met in the Turkish city of Van, told me. "We were all crying and buried the little body in the local cemetery." I also heard stories of children dying when police opened fire on the vehicles they were travelling in or when they crashed.

About 1,300 kilometres (808 miles) to the northeast of the Evros River, where Maria died, lies the Croatian-Bosnian border. I volunteered there with the Border Violence Monitoring Network in 2018 and 2019. Among the hundreds of people I met reporting pushbacks was an Iranian family, which included a three-year-old girl. Her father rolled up her T-shirt to show her bruised back and said: "[During the push-back from Croatia to Bosnia, Croatian] police kept shouting at us to go fast across the river. I was holding in my arms my daughter and they kept beating me while I was holding her. I slipped and fell, and my baby got her back injured." The deaths and injuries of refugee children are commonly labelled by state officials as accidents that happen as a result of the harsh terrain refugees cross and attacks by wild animals, or because of their dealings with smugglers. State authorities also like to blame and prosecute parents for their children's deaths – a practice that has been backed even by international aid agency officials.

"The same mothers [grieving for the loss of their children] had no problem to encourage or fund their chil-

dren on dangerous journeys to Europe. Like in Senegal, symbolically prosecuting parents for putting at risk their children could trigger serious attitudinal change on death journeys," Vincent Cochetel, a special UNHCR envoy, recently argued in a tweet.

By adopting this narrative, EU governments and officials seek to absolve themselves of responsibility for refugee children's deaths. But the blame very much lies with them. Children are placed in these dangerous situations because of the EU's migration policies and border controls which aim to reduce refugee arrivals to the Union. Families with small children would not have to embark on risky journeys, alone or with smugglers, if they were not denied legal and safe border passage and immediate access to asylum procedures. Children would not be stranded on islands and in the mountains or fall into the rivers or seas if EU state authorities and their non-EU partners were not pushing them back or refusing rescue missions.

In other words, children die at borders because of violent policies, including surveillance and pushbacks, deliberately deployed to prevent them from exercising their right to asylum. This means that children's deaths are not accidents but the result of EU "strategies of non-arrival" which aim to stop refugees from exercising their rights granted by international law. At the same time, closed border passage underpins racial violence as border walls and pushbacks target mainly non-white refugee groups fleeing former European colonies. The humanitarian corridors the EU opened earlier this year for Ukrainian refugees – who are considered white and European and therefore, "desirable" – demonstrate that it is possible for children (and adult) refugees to cross borders in safe and legal ways in order to apply for asylum in the EU. Children are without doubt the most vulnerable refugee population. Any refugee child, no matter their race, faith or social background, should be allowed to cross borders safely to access protection. European officials should abandon violent closed-border policies and develop safe and legal routes in collaboration with their key partners.

Instead of prosecuting parents who have lost their children on dangerous migration journeys, governments ought to hold accountable members of their security forces who commit illegal pushbacks and use violence against refugees. Equally, Europe should move away from the racist logic of border control shaped by its colonial past. Unless these changes are made, we will continue reading media reports about the tragic deaths of children at borders.

– *Courtesy: Al Jazeera*

Briefs

Polish FM is suspicious of Russia's role in leaks

DNA

WARSAW: The Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed his suspicions that Russia may be behind the leaks in the Nord Stream natural gas pipeline. Zbigniew Rau told public broadcaster Polish Radio late on Wednesday that considering the energy security situation in the Baltic Sea region, it seems reasonable to believe that Russian services are behind the leaks.

"Russia may have damaged the pipelines in order to deepen the divisions in Europe on energy security," he said. He believes that Russia aims to scare Europe, and warned that similar sabotage to the Nord Stream pipelines could be carried out on the Baltic Pipe pipeline that carries Norwegian gas to Poland.

Three leaks in the Russian-owned Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines were reported off the coast of Denmark and Sweden, and a warning was given that ships should not approach the area.

Both countries announced that signs showed the leaks were the result of deliberate action and not accidental.

The EU also stated that the gas leaks in the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines were the result of deliberate action. The causes of the Nord Stream leaks are now under investigation. Russia stopped natural gas deliveries through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline on Aug. 31 because necessary maintenance could not be carried out.

Kuwaitis vote to elect new parliament

DNA

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwaiti voters began to cast ballots on Thursday in the Gulf country's parliamentary elections. Polling stations opened at 08:00 a.m. local time (06:00GMT) and will close at 08:00 p.m. (18:00GMT). Some 795,911 voters are eligible to cast vote in Thursday's polls to elect members of a new 50-seat National Assembly, according to the electoral commission.

A total of 305 candidates are vying for seats in Parliament in Thursday's elections.

Last month, Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Sabah, who has taken on most of the ruling emir's duties, dissolved the National Assembly citing a political standoff between the government and the legislature. The National Assembly is the Gulf state's legislative authority and is mandated to observe the work of the executive authority and issue laws, which come into effect after being ratified by the country's ruler.

Spain plans to raise taxes for rich

DNA

OVIEDO: Spain's treasury minister announced a significant reform to Spain's tax policy on Thursday, which would see the wealthiest paying more taxes and millions of lower earners paying less.

"Since we began governing, we've been working to make our fiscal system more progressive, efficient and strong enough to support social justice and economic efficiency," said Treasury Minister Maria Jesus Montero.

One of the major new measures is the so-called "solidarity tax" — a two-year wealth tax that would apply to those who own more than 3 million (\$2.91 million) in assets. The scheme would see around 23,000 people paying on a scale of between 1.7% and 3.5% of their riches in extraordinary taxes, according to the plan. With that wealth tax, Spain hopes to raise around 1.5 billion annually from the country's 0.1% most affluent segment.

In parallel, those earning more than 200,000 per year would see income taxes raised by one percentage point. The government also hopes to raise an extra 2.4 billion in two years by limiting the amount of money that large companies can offset to 50% of losses.

COMSTECH launches S&T co-op Program with Nigeria

High Commissioner of Nigeria, H. E. Mr. Mohammed Bello Abioye appreciated the efforts of COMSTECH and offered full support from his office to COMSTECH-Nigeria S&T Cooperation



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: OIC's Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) launched COMSTECH-Nigeria Science and Technology Cooperation Program today in a press conference which has also been attended by senior diplomats of various OIC countries, officers of ministries of foreign affairs and science and technology, academicians and Nigerian students studying in local universities.

Coordinator General, COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary and the High Commissioner of Nigeria, H. E. Mr. Mohammed Bello Abioye jointly addressed a press conference at COMSTECH Auditorium.

Prof. Choudhary said that COMSTECH continues to serve member states in the sphere of Science & Technology as its mandate and strategic vision.

He said COMSTECH has conducted a large number of activities for Science & Technology and Health Care capacity building along with fostering international linkages. He said many new initiatives have been launched including fellowship program in the OIC system, Health Africa initiative, S&T profiling of the member states, and research projects support programs.

He said that COMSTECH launches a purposeful COMSTECH-Nigeria S&T Cooperation Program for capacity building of the brotherly state. Prof. Choudhary thanked the Government of Nigeria for accepting proposed col-

laborative program and constituting an inter-ministerial Committee to explore the implementation of this initiative.

The Raw Materials Research and Development Council, (RMRDC), Abuja, Nigeria is focal organization to implement the program.

He said that Nigeria is a growing economy which can play a leading role in the development of the other African countries. Prof. Choudhary informed that the purpose of this collaboration is to help the Nigerian S&T institutions for capacity building for socio-economic uplift of the country making to business with.

The High Commissioner of Nigeria, H. E. Mr. Mohammed Bello Abioye appreciated the efforts of COMSTECH and offered full support from his office to COMSTECH-Nigeria S&T Cooper-

ation. He assured that Nigeria would also help the other African OIC countries for their uplift. H. E. Ambassador Askar Mussinov, Assistant Secretary General Science and Technology OIC addressed the session online. He said OIC General Secretariat is working closely with COMSTECH on several major initiatives and programs.

He also appreciated efforts of Coordinator General COMSTECH for taking a large number of activities for science and technology and healthcare capacity building and for fostering international linkages, specially Palestine, Yemen, Sudan, Nigeria, and Somalia. He assured that this cooperation will certainly open new avenues for the socio-economic uplift and to achieve the sustainable development goals.

The representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan Mr. Mohammad Adeel also appreciated the efforts of COMSTECH for promotion of science diplomacy in OIC region and assured full cooperation for launch of such collaborative programs with other OIC member states. COMSTECH-Nigeria Program includes Launching of women scientist research fellowship program, institution linkages between Nigeria and Pakistan, capacity building of Nigerian scholars and students, launching of book comprising of joint research publications and patents of Pakistani and Nigerian scientists, industrial internship of Nigerian professionals in food processing and value addition, and study visit of Pakistani students to Nigeria.



EU says it is ready to make Russia pay 'hefty price'

DNA

BRUSSELS: The European Union is ready to make the Kremlin pay a "hefty price" for the latest escalation of the conflict in Ukraine by announcing the annexation of four regions, an EU official said on Thursday.

The remarks came after Moscow announced earlier on Thursday that it will officially annex the Ukrainian regions of Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia.

The European Union "will not accept these sham referendums organized by Russia in Ukraine and will never accept any annexation of territory or any land by Russia," Dana Spinant, the European Commission's deputy chief spokesperson, told a daily news briefing.

Referring to EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell's recent announcement on

Sweden reports 4th leak on Nord Stream pipelines

LONDON: A fourth leak was reported Thursday in the Nord Stream gas pipelines off the coast of Sweden, authorities said. "There are two emissions in the Swedish economic zone, a larger one at Nord Stream 1 and a smaller one at Nord Stream 2," the Swedish Coast Guard said in a press statement.

The distance between the two leaks is 1 nautical mile, which corresponds to just over 1.8 kilometers, the coast guard said.

Two other leaks, in the pipelines that run under the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany, were also reported in the Danish economic zone.

Both Swedish and Danish seismic measurements show that two explosions took place just hours before the leaks were discovered. Experts maintain that it will be difficult to find concrete evidence of the explosions at the Nord Stream.

Hans Liwang, a researcher at the Swedish Defence University, told the local daily DN that traces of the explosive device can be found along the pipeline, but it is highly likely that the evidence will disappear when the gas moves up.

Danish Energy Board estimated on Wednesday that all gas will leak out by Sunday. — DNA

WB president warns of recession in Europe

NEW YORK: Global energy production may take years to diversify away from Russia, prolonging the risk of stagflation, the World Bank president has warned.

Speaking at California's Stanford University, David Malpass on Wednesday said the likelihood of a recession rose in Europe due to the weakness of the euro and high inflation, which further constrained the euro area's longer-term growth outlook.

"The developing world is facing an extremely challenging near-term outlook shaped by sharply higher food, fertilizer, and energy prices, rising interest rates and credit spreads, currency depreciation, and capital outflows," he said.

The sharp slowdown in global growth deepening into a global recession is a "pressing danger" to the developing world, he said.

"If current fiscal and monetary policies become the new normal, it implies heavy absorption of global capital by advanced governments prolonging the underinvestment in developing countries and hampering future growth," Malpass said, adding: "The macroeconomic challenges facing development are consequential and are probably worsening." — DNA

Italy will not accept outcome of referendums

ROME: Italy will not recognize the outcome of referendums in breakaway areas of eastern Ukraine, the outgoing prime minister said in a phone call with Ukraine's president on Thursday.

The Italian government said in a statement that the call focused on the situation on the ground and the "illegal referendums" held by the Russian Federation in the separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk and Russian-controlled parts of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson on Sept. 23-27.

Outgoing Premier Mario Draghi assured Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that Italy will not recognize the outcome of the referendums and confirmed Rome's continued support for the Ukrainian authorities and people in all areas, the statement said.

The referendums have been widely condemned by the international community, with European nations and the US calling them "shams," and

Germany slams referendums 'held at gunpoint'

BERLIN: Germany on Thursday slammed "sham" referendums in Ukraine's eastern regions, saying these were "held at gunpoint" and dictating by Russia.

Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said people in Ukraine's eastern regions were taken from their homes and forced to vote sometimes at gunpoint.

"This is the opposite of a free and fair election. And this is the opposite of peace. It is dictated peace," Baerbock said during her speech at the annual Berlin Peace Dialogue 2022 conference.

"As long as this Russian dictate prevails in the occupied territories of Ukraine, no citizen is safe, no citizen is free," she added.

Baerbock said "peace cannot be forced with weapons," and any peace dictated by military force would not be sustainable.

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.

Around 98% of voters chose to join Russia, Moscow claimed, but the results were highly disputed and dismissed by Ukraine and its Western allies.

The polls have been widely condemned by the international community, with European nations and the US calling them "sham," and saying they are a violation of international law. — DNA



Strike in France disrupts transport

DNA

PARIS: Transport services across France hit a snag and the Eiffel tower remained closed as thousands of employees went on strike Thursday to demand a pay rise and oppose the government's proposed pension reforms.

Several sectors including schools, pharmacies, gas stations, railways, and buses are likely to be affected by the strike.

The Eiffel Tower's administration informed on Twitter that the monument is closed due to the strike but access to the esplanade will remain open and free of charge.

The nationwide strike was called by three major workers unions — CGT, FSU, and Solidaires — which want the Macron government to raise wages to a minimum of 2,000, impose work for 32 hours a week, and reduce the retirement age to 60 years.

The unions have organized around 200 demonstrations, processions and gatherings across the country under the slogan "raise wages, not the retirement age."

President Emmanuel Macron's proposal to extend the retirement age from the current 62 years to 65 years is severely contested.

The bill on pension reforms is scheduled to be discussed in the parliament next month.

Macron has reportedly said if the opposition tries to block the bill, he is willing to dissolve the assembly to call in fresh elections and postpone the reforms till next year.

Lebanese parliament fails to elect new president

BEIRUT: Meeting in the capital Beirut, Lebanon's parliament on Thursday failed to elect a new president, threatening to deepen the country's continuing crises.

Candidate Michel Mouawad, backed by the Lebanese Forces Party, failed to get the necessary votes to win the post, and pushed to hold another voting session, according to local media.

Current President Michel Aoun's six-year term ends on Oct. 31.

To win in the first round of voting, two-thirds of lawmakers in the 128-member assembly are needed, after which a simple majority suffices.

In Lebanon, the president is limited to a single six-year term.

Lebanese MPs have not yet agreed on a successor to Aoun, raising concerns of a political and institutional deadlock in Lebanon, which has been going through a deep economic crisis since 2019. — DNA

ICCI office bearers take oath of their portfolios

The newly elected Senior VP Faad Waheed, VP Muhammad Azhar ul Islam, outgoing Senior Vice President Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh and VP M Faheem Khan also spoke at the occasion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The newly elected Office Bearers and Executive Members of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry were administered oath in the 38th Annual General Meeting of ICCI. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari was sworn in as President, Faad Waheed Senior Vice President and Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar as Vice President, ICCI for the year 2022-23.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader administered oath to the newly elected Office Bearers and Executive Members. Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, former President ICCI performed the role of Stage Secretary. A large number of members attended the AGM.

After taking oath, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, newly elected President ICCI said that he would make all possible efforts to resolve the



key issues of the business community and facilitate them in business development. He said that he has come with a vision to serve the business community and would try his best to deliver up

to their expectations. He lauded the achievements of the outgoing team and said that he would try to exceed their performance.

The outgoing President Muhammad Shakeel Munir congratulated

the new Office Bearers and Executive Members of ICCI and hoped that they would play a more effective role in serving the cause of the business community. He highlighted the key achievements of

his tenure and hoped that his successor would make ICCI further stronger to promote the interests of the business community.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader congratulated the new Office Bearers and Executive Members of ICCI and was optimistic that the new team, which was a blend of new and experienced talent, would set new standards of good performance to serve the business community. He lauded the achievements of the outgoing team and also thanked all members of ICCI for voting Group's nominated candidates into power with majority vote.

The newly elected Senior Vice President Faad Waheed, Vice President Muhammad Azhar ul Islam, outgoing Senior Vice President Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh and Vice President Muhammad Faheem Khan also spoke at the occasion.

Briefs

Govt to negotiate with IMF to reduce Pol prices

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Thursday decided to negotiate with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) over a reduction in petroleum prices to provide relief to the masses. The Finance Ministry sources privy to the matter said that, the newly appointed Finance Minister Ishaq Dar will hold talks with the IMF and the petroleum prices will be reduced after the consent of the IMF. Currently, a levy of Rs37.42 per litre is imposed on petrol, while the levy is to be increased to Rs 50 per litre by January 2023, sources added. It is pertinent to mention that the prices of petroleum products are likely to drop by Rs16 per litre from October 1 while the Oil Companies Advisory Council has prepared a paper work to provide relief to the people. According to the document, the price of high-speed diesel is likely to decrease by Rs16.61 per litre and the price of petrol is Rs7.24 per litre.

Patel directs monitoring to prevent Ebola outbreak

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination Abdul Qadir Patel on Thursday instructed strict monitoring of all the people entering the country from abroad to prevent Sudanese Ebola virus outbreak and other emerging diseases. Quoting the minister, the spokesman of the ministry said that timely and effective measures must be taken to protect the countrymen from epidemics and diseases. The minister instructed relevant health authorities to remain alert as the Ebola virus had been declared an epidemic by Uganda after several cases were reported there. Even though, Patel said, there were no direct flights from Sudan, the monitoring and screening of transit passengers needed to be ensured. He directed immediate reporting of suspected and symptomatic patients and religiously implementing the recommendations of international health organisations. He directed the Border and Health services of Pakistan to ensure effective measures to prevent the spread of the virus. He also urged for creating awareness among medical staff about keeping Ebola suspects in isolation, and ensuring provision of personal protective equipments to patients and also adopting other preventive measures to prevent its spread.

North Korea fires ballistic missile, claims South Korea

WEB DESK

SEOUL: North Korea fired an unspecified ballistic missile into the East Sea on Thursday, South Korea's military said, in the third provocation this week by the recalcitrant regime. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) announced the launch, hours after U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris wrapped up a daylong visit to South Korea, during which she met with President Yoon Suk-yeol and toured the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) bisecting the two Koreas. She reaffirmed America's security commitment to the East Asian ally. The North fired a short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) on Sunday and two SRBMs on Wednesday. The latest launch came as South Korea and the United States concluded a high-profile naval exercise, involving the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier in the East Sea, on Thursday and are set to hold an anti-submarine training with Japan the following day. Seoul and Washington have been cranking up security coordination amid concerns that Pyongyang could engage in provocative acts.

FM Bilawal thanks int'l community for support

Bilawal said the ten biggest countries affected by climate change will have to raise their voices together. He proposed to the world to work together as it is the only solution to the climate change problem

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The visit to the US was fruitful, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said, adding that the purpose of the visit was to help the flood victims in Pakistan. He also vowed that a lot of work has to be done for them. "At this critical time, the demand for pre-elections is like playing with the lives of the flood victims," he said, addressing a press conference in Washington on Thursday. "The top priority is to aid flood victims; politics is a distant second. Nothing that we do for the flood evacuees is adequate." He said the United Nations Secretary-General put the flood issue on top of the agenda during the UN session. He expressed gratitude to the world community for the help they offered to

Pakistan for the flood victims. The minister said, "We have not reached the stage of reconstruction and rebuilding. We are still in the phase of relief and rescue." "You must have witnessed improvement in the country's foreign affairs during the six months of our government. Also, you must witness a clear difference between today's Pakistan and what it was six months ago," Bilawal noted. Bilawal said Pakistan fac-



es shortage of food as crops have been destroyed by floods. Pakistan faced massive flooding right after the country inked an agreement with the IMF, he said. The COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine war have triggered price hike around the globe, he said.

Bilawal said, "Besides floods, our agenda was to improve relations with the US. The visit to the US was successful." Both the countries are expected to make further progress in trade, agriculture, health

and other sectors, he said. He suggested that India and Pakistan work together on climate change issues. The world would suffer if there is no agreement on climate change issues, he warned.

Bilawal said the ten biggest countries affected by climate change will have to raise their voices together. He proposed to the world to work together as it is the only solution to the climate change problem. He also criticised PTI Chairman Imran Khan, saying the PTI leader has damaged the foreign policy and economy of the country, said the foreign minister. However, Pakistan is back on the right track, he said, thanking God. "It would be unfair if Asad Majid [Pakistan's ex-envoy to the US when the cipher was delivered] was penalised for a wrong committed by Imran Khan," he said. Asad Majid is fulfilling his responsibilities, he said.

Pak, China agree on early launch of ML-1 project



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China Thursday agreed on early launch of much awaited Mainline-1 (ML-1) project, aimed at revamping and modernizing the country's age-old railway infrastructure. The agreement was reached between the two countries during a dinner hosted by the Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Nong Rong for Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafiq here.

Railways Chairman, Additional Secretary, Secretary Aviation and Chief Executive Officer Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) accompanied the minister.

The minister invited the Chinese Ambassador to consider a partnership of budget airlines with PIA in order to make Pakistan's small airports functional and provide better travel facilities to the passengers. The Chinese ambassador assured the minister to discuss his desired issue with the Chinese private airlines. The envoy also assured of taking initiatives to allow direct flights from Pakistan to Beijing and Guangzhou for Pakistani airlines at the earliest. - APP

Pak to export medical professionals to Kuwait

ISLAMABAD: The Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) would export male medical professionals to Kuwait as part of its skilled and unskilled workforce export to gulf states that continues time to time. An official of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development said on Thursday that the Ministry was facilitating all its attached departments to export the skilled and unskilled workforce to different countries and enhance the volume of remittances for the betterment of national economy.

To a question, he said that workforce would be exported to Kuwait on different terms and conditions including provision of free sharing accommodation and transport by the company. He said that applications were received from across the country and all selected candidate would be sent to Kuwait by next month. He said that the government of Kuwait required medical professionals including Internist, General Surgeon, Urologist Surgeon, Cardiologist, Psychiatrist, Otolaryngologist (ENT), Dermatologist, Radiologist, Respirologist, Allergist, Diabetologist, Ophthalmologist, Orthopedics, ER Doctor, Nephrologist, Infectiologist master's degree holders in respective field with 5 years experience with age between 30 and 45 years could apply. Similarly, he told that candidates having age between 24 and 45 years with Bachelor's degrees in Dietitians, Biomedical, Physiatrist, Endodontist, Periodontist, Orthodontist, Prosthodontist, Oral Surgeon, Restorative Dentist, Hematologist, General Practitioner, General Practitioner (Dentist), Physiotherapist with 5 years experience in respective fields could apply. - DNA

Finland closes border to Russian tourists

HELENSKI: Finland is closing its border to Russian tourists from Friday - the last of Moscow's EU neighbours to do so. Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania all closed their borders to Russian tourists earlier this month. But Russians will still be allowed to visit family or for work and study in Finland, the foreign minister said. The decision comes after the number of Russians arriving at the border surged following a call-up of 300,000 military reservists by President Vladimir Putin. Queues have formed at border crossings as people try to flee, including long lines at Russia's border into Georgia, which does not require a visa for travel. - DNA

Millions without power, major flooding in Florida hurricane

President Joe Biden declared a "major disaster" in Florida, a move that frees up federal funding for storm relief. As dawn broke across the state's west coast, residents got their first glimpse at damage

PUNTA GORDA: Hurricane Ian flooded cities, turned out the lights on millions, and left migrants from an overturned boat missing on Thursday as Florida assessed damage from one of the most intense US storms in years. Officials readied a major emergency response to the deluge that laid waste to coastal Florida as the hurricane roared through beachfront towns and horizontal rain pounded communities for hours. The National Hurricane Center (NHC) downgraded Ian to a tropical storm, but said it was causing "catastrophic flooding" and forecast further "life-threatening" floods, storm surge and high winds in Florida as well as Georgia and South Carolina. The US Border Patrol said that a boat carrying migrants sank at sea during the hurricane, leaving 20 missing. Four Cubans swam to shore in the Florida Keys islands and the coast guard rescued three others. Ian also menaced the city of Orlando and the nearby Disney theme parks, which were shuttered Wednesday and Thursday. President Joe Biden declared a "major disaster" in Florida, a move that frees up federal funding for storm relief. As dawn broke

across the state's west coast, residents got their first glimpse at the damage. Ian made landfall as an extremely powerful hurricane just after 3:00 pm Wednesday on the barrier island of Cayo Costa, west of the city of Fort Myers. Dramatic television footage from the coastal city of Naples showed floodwaters surging into beachfront homes, submerging roads and sweeping away vehicles. Pete DiMara, chief of Naples Fire-Rescue, told CNN that a surge of four to six feet (up to two metres) swept through his station, leaving crews unable to respond to emergencies. Many cell towers are down and "the surge has certainly caused a lot of destruction in the area," DiMara said, urging residents to stay home until his crews can reach them. To the north, some neighborhoods in Fort Myers, a city of 83,000, resembled lakes. The NHC said Ian's maximum sustained winds reached 150 miles (240 kilometers) per hour when it landed as a Category 4 hurricane - just shy of the maximum Category 5. As a tropical storm, it had dropped to a maximum 65 miles per hour. Some 2.6 million of Florida's 11 million electricity customers were without power on Thursday, according to the PowerOutage tracking website. Florida's Governor Ron DeSantis said the state should brace for a "nasty, nasty day, two days." The town of Punta Gorda was in near-total darkness overnight after the storm wiped out power, save for the few buildings with generators. Howling winds toppled trees, pulled chunks out of roofs, and turned debris into dangerous projectiles whipping through town. Mandatory evacuation orders had been issued for about 2.5 million people in a dozen coastal Florida counties, with several dozen shelters set up. - APP

CM Punjab Parvez Elahi lauds UAE's help for flood victims

The investment companies of the United Arab Emirates would be welcomed in Punjab, he added. The UAE's co-op in the development of Pakistan was worthy of praise

LAHORE: The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi met Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi at his office and discussed matters of mutual interest. They also discussed bolstering bilateral relations and investment opportunities as it was agreed to start work on Mubarak Center on Ferozepur Road in Lahore soon. The CM thanked the UAE leadership and ambassador for their support to the flood victims and said that he was grateful for the relief goods. The rehabilitation of flood-hit people was going on and special medical camps had been set up to prevent epidemics, he said and added that the rehabilitation of flood affecteds was being monitored. He said, "We welcome the Dhabi Group's investment in Mubarak Center and are deeply grateful to

Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of the United Arab Emirates." The project also included a 7-star hotel, which would accommodate international players, he noted and added that the Mubarak Center and Gaddafi Stadium would be linked. The plan would greatly facilitate international players to come and go to Gaddafi Stadium. During the tournaments, traffic jams would be relieved and traffic will continue to flow, he further said. Parvez Elahi mentioned that the government would speed up this project and this avant-garde project would increase commercial and economic activities. He said Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates enjoyed brotherly relations, and asked the UAE investors to take advantage of the immense op-

portunities for investment in Punjab. The investment companies of the United Arab Emirates would be welcomed in Punjab, he added. The UAE's cooperation in the development of Pakistan was worthy of praise. "We value the cooperation of the United Arab Emirates for the improvement of education, health and other sectors," he stated. The UAE ambassador invited Parvez Elahi to visit the United Arab Emirates and added that the Mubarak Center would further promote cooperation between the two countries. "Pakistan is our second home. It is our duty to help the flood victims in their hour of difficulty and we are present to help our Pakistani brothers. Chief Secretary, secretary irrigation, secretary finance and others were also present. - APP

Nord Stream 'sabotage' likely to be state-sponsored

MOSCOW: Russia said on Thursday leaks spewing gas into the sea from pipelines to Germany appeared to be the result of state-sponsored "terrorism", as an EU official said the incident had fundamentally changed the nature of the conflict in Ukraine. The European Union is investigating the cause of the leaks in the Gazprom-led (GAZP. MM) Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines under the Baltic Sea and has said it suspects sabotage. Advertisement • Scroll to continue It remains unclear who might be behind any deliberate attack on the pipelines that Russia and European partners spent billions of dollars building. "This looks like an act of terrorism, possibly on a state level," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"It is very difficult to imagine that such an act of a terrorism could have happen without the involvement of a state of some kind," Peskov said. "This is a very dangerous situation which requires an urgent investigation." U.S. news channel CNN, citing three sources, reported that European security officials had observed Russian navy support ships and submarines not far from the sites of the leaks. Asked to comment on the CNN report, Peskov said there had been a much larger NATO presence in the area. - Agencies

BBC to cut hundreds of jobs at World Service

LONDON: Nearly 400 staff at BBC World Service will lose their jobs as part of a cost-cutting programme and move to digital platforms, the broadcaster announced on Thursday, pairing down its Iranian-language service among others. The BBC, which marks its centenary next month, said its international services needed to make savings of £28.5 million (\$31 million) as part of wider reductions of £500 million, which unions blamed on the UK government. In July the broadcaster detailed plans to merge BBC World News television and its domestic UK equivalent into a single channel to launch in April next year. BBC World Service - one of the UK's most recognisable global brands - currently operates in 41 languages around the world with a weekly audience of some 364 million people. - APP

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