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Human trafficking needs to be crushed at all cost: Shehbaz

Questions why the criminal activities of human smuggling could not be timely stopped

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah to supervise the investigation and formulate necessary legislative proposals regarding the complete prevention of human trafficking. He also directed the investigation committee regarding the Greece shipwreck incident to finalize its proceedings and present its report as soon as possible. A high-level meeting with respect to the Greece boat incident was held here under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Expressing anger over the incident, the prime minister questioned why the criminal activities of human smuggling could not be timely stopped. He asked why concrete preventive measures were not taken despite repeated

PICTURE ON PAGE 7

happenings of such kind of incidents. The prime minister directed the relevant authorities to bring all those responsible for human smuggling to justice as soon as possible. Federal Ministers Rana Sanaullah, Mariyum Aurangzeb, Special Assistant to Prime Minister Tariq Fatimi, DG FIA, Chief Secretary Azad Jammu and Kashmir and other relevant high officials were present in the meeting. On June 14, a boat sank in the Mediterranean Sea near Greece, in which 104 people have been rescued alive, out of which 12 are from Pakistan. So far, a total of 79 bodies have been recovered from the sea. The meeting was told that the coordination cell established in the Ministry of Interior was working 24 hours, where families of missing persons can contact anytime. The meeting was informed that after

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PM arrives in Paris to attend New Global Financing Pact Summit

DNA

PARIS: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday arrived here on an official visit to attend the New Global Financing Pact Summit, on the invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron. As the prime minister landed at the Paris Airport along with his delegation, he was warmly received by Pakistan's ambassador in France and diplomatic officials, besides senior French govt authorities. Federal ministers Sherry Rehman, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Mariyum Aurangzeb, and Special Assistant to the PM Tariq Fatimi are part of the prime minister's entourage. During the visit, the prime minister will attend the New Global Financing Pact Summit being hosted by France and participated by heads of state and delegates from over 50 countries. Prime Minister Shehbaz will also join the world leaders at the dinner reception hosted by the French president for the participating dignitaries. During the visit, the prime minister will also hold bilateral meetings with different heads of state.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif leaves for France. – DNA

Returning home Nawaz seeks advice from party leaders

Big meeting of PML-N likely to be held soon in London on issue



DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif has sought details regarding party candidates for elections. A big meeting of the PML-N is likely to be held soon in London on the issue. The former prime minister has also sought advice from party leaders regarding a date for his return home. Mobilization of a million people to welcome Nawaz Sharif has been proposed. A majority of the PML-N leaders are in favor of Nawaz landing in Lahore. Party workers from all over the country will be assigned

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PTI President Elahi sent to jail

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Parvez Elahi has been sent to jail on judicial remand in a money laundering case after the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) presented him before a local court. The former Punjab chief minister was arrested by FIA officials after finally getting bail in a corruption case.

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Trial by mily courts: nine-member bench takes up case today

Apart from CJ, bench comprises Justice Isa, Justice Tariq, Justice Ijaz, Justice Mansoor, Justice Munib, Justice Yahya, Justice Mazahar and Justice Ayesha

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial has formed a nine-member larger bench led by himself to take up petitions on Thursday against trial of civilians before military courts under Army Act. Apart from the chief justice, the bench comprises Justice Qazi Faez Isa, Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Ayesha Malik. The development comes a day after former chief justice Jawwad S Khawaja challenged the coalition government's decision to hold trials of May 9 rioters in military courts, asking if civilian institutions including the Supreme Court can endorse "militarisation of justice". "This case is also about power flowing from the barrel of a gun. It is about the power of the army. The army controls businesses and land. Historically, it has exercised power and influence over our political dispensation. Its power and reach extend far

Continued on Page 06

Justice Isa appointed next CJP

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday approved the appointment of Justice Qazi Faez Isa as the next Chief Justice of Pakistan. Justice Qazi Faez Isa will assume office on September 17, 2023, following the retirement of the incumbent Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Umar Ata Bandial, a President House statement said. The incumbent chief justice will reach the age of superannuation on September 16, 2023, under Article 179 of the Constitution. The president, who appointed Justice Qazi Faez Isa under Article 175A (3) of the Constitution, would also administer oath of office to him on September 17, 2023.



Briefs

PTI issues show cause notice to Khattak

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) issued show cause notice to Pervez Khattak for his reported activities of contacting party members and inciting them to leave the party. PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan on Wednesday issued him the show cause notice and asked him to explain his position in writing within seven days of this notice. The notification reads, "It has come to the notice of the party leadership that you are contacting party members and inciting them to leave the party. In view of these reported activities, you are hereby called to explain yourself in writing within seven days of this notice."

Former aviation minister nabbed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former federal minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan was arrested from Islamabad on Wednesday in connection with May 9 riots. The aviator, who served as the aviation minister in the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-led cabinet, had managed to evade arrest for over a month. He was arrested in the early hours of Wednesday from his friend's residence. Former PTI MNA Mansoor Hayat Khan and former Punjab MPA Ammar Siddique Khan, who were with Sarwar at the time of the raid, were also taken into custody. According to police, a case was registered against Sarwar at Taxila Police Station under sections of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Govt to complete IMF programme

Finance Minister brief the US Ambassador about talks with the fiscal body



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar said here on Wednesday that the government was committed to complete the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme. During a meeting with Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan, Donald Blome who called on the minister, the minister informed him about the progress on the on-going talks with IMF, according to press statement issued by finance ministry. He said Pakistan values the deep rooted historic and durable bilateral relations with the United States on economic and trade fronts. Dar shared the economic policies and priorities of the government to address the challenging economic environment and set the

economy on the path to stability and growth. He informed the US Ambassador about the government's budgetary measures to reduce the fiscal gap in order to meet its national as well as international financial obligations. The two sides also exchanged views about areas of common interest and how the existing bilateral relations between the two countries can be enhanced further. On the occasion, the US Ambassador expressed confidence in the policies and programmes of the government for economic sustainability and socio-economic uplift of the masses. He extended his support to further promote bilateral economic, investment and trade relations between both the countries. Dar thanked the US Ambassador and reiterated the desire of the government to further deepen bilateral trade and investment ties with the USA.

Azerbaijani forces fully prepared to defend motherland

Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov and Defence Attache Colonel Mehman Novruzov host grand Azerbaijani Armed Forces Day reception

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov has said Azerbaijan armed forces were fully prepared to defend their motherland adding victory in the Patriotic War unequivocally showed our forces bravery and commitment to defend its borders come what may. He made these remarks on the occasion of the 105th Anniversary of the Azerbaijan Armed Forces reception. A large number of guests hailing from various walks of life attended the reception. A special musical performance by the Pakistan Army band added color to the event. Air Marshal Irfan Ahmed, Deputy Chief of Air Staff Projects was the chief guest. Ambassador Khazar Farhadov further said, 'today we celebrate the 105th anniversary of the establishment of the Azerbaijan Armed Forces. Undoubtedly, the peak of our warpath of our National Army during this period is the glorious Victory gained in the Patriotic War - Karabakh Victory. There has been no similar Victory in the centuries-old history of our nation'. The Ambassador further said, on



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov presenting a souvenir to Air Marshal Irfan Ahmed, Deputy Chief of Air Staff Projects. – DNA

June 26, 1918, by the decision of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the first regular military unit - the Combined Azerbaijan Corps - was created. The task of creating an army of 25 thousand people was set by the Government. On August 1, 1918, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan was established. The creation of the modern National Army started in 1991 after the restoration of the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan. However, those who led our country in the first years of independence could not cope with the important and responsible task of army building at that time when Armenia occupied our lands. The encroachment of the enemy on our lands was expanding more and more. Azerbaijan faced the threat of losing its independence. At such a difficult time, the Great Leader Heydar Aliyev, who returned to power at the request of the people, eliminated chaos and anarchy, economic and political difficulties in the country and started the process of building a regular army. After the National Leader's return to power,

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Century-old Sukkur Barrage 6 gates' rehabilitation started

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI/SUKKUR: Following the World Bank funded project, Sindh Barrages Improvement Project (SBIP) has started the modernization and rehabilitation of six main gates among 66 on River Indus in Sindh province. Abdul Fatah Memon, Assistant Engineer Civil of Sindh Barrages Improvement Project at Sukkur Barrage told, national and international media observers and Journalists, while the delegation visit at Sukkur barrage, he added that an old Sukkur Barrage on the River Indus has 6 main gates have been completely changed among 66 and 10 gates are permanently closed due to the rising silt and due to the flow of water issues. Memon, further told that the construction work was started during 1923 and completed in 1932 by the British government. He said the 66 main gates on River Indus and it has seven canals four in the left and rest on the right side. He said these seven canals have around 55 small gates controlling and irrigates more than 88 lacs acres of agri-land of Sindh province. The discharge capaci-

ty of each canal will be increased due to closure of 10 gates. He further said that Sukkur Barrage is 90 years old enormous and historical construction with Landslide Bridge, that has completed its maturity (period). Under the SBIP the modernization and rehabilitation was started to maintain since 2018, after flash floods and natural hazardous. The gate number 39 was slightly cracked which was also examined the experts and since six gates were changed by shipyard Karachi and engineering works he disclosed.

He said that under package S-1, the rehabilitation and upgradation of Sukkur Barrage was started through World Bank funding, it was awarded to China Road and Bridge company joint venture with Hubby Shinzo limited a Chinese Company and they started its work on the ground. He said that to rehabilitate and strengthen of main barrage structures and canal head regulators as well the changing of gates was prime task. He told the silt of up and down stream of Sukkur barrage will also be desilted during the period. According to AE, told that the Rice canal would be desilted under package number S-1, while the contract work was awarded

in February 2023. World Bank funded program under SBIP led by vibrant and struggling Provincial Management Office (PMO) Mr. Ghulam Muhiuddin Mughal and Task Team leader World Bank Mr. Francios Onimus. They continued their visits and assured quality of work and completion. As per details, the contractor camp/residence was already established at the site and Project Implementation Consultant (PIC) and Mott MacDonald Ltd with Mott MacDonald Pakistan (MMP). AE Mr. Fatah Memon further told Guddu barrage gates are also changed under the bulk-head gates, while Sukkur Barrage gates will be changed through the construction of Kaf-dam.

On the occasion, the officials of irrigation and SBIP were among Feroze Ahmed Domki an XEN Sukkur Barrage, Nazir Ahmed Lashari, Resident Engineer of MMP Mott Mac Dnolad Pakistan at Sukkur Barrage, Saeed Ahmed Memon Civil Engineer China Road Bridge Company (CRBC), Mumtaz Ghumro Assistant Engineer of Mechanical Sindh Barrages Improvement Project at PMO Project Management Office were also accompanied the delegation during visit at Sukkur Barrage.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme Ms. Shazia Marri address a Press Conference on 70th Birthday of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi, MOS PA&SS is also present.—APP

IHC seeks registration of case against Islamabad DC

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday instructed the police to register a case against deputy commissioner (DC) Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Irfan Memon and others for illegally detaining a citizen. The court also directed police to register a case against the additional deputy commissioner, Sub-Inspector Police Station Golra Intiaz and a constable Nadir as per the complaint of the citizen. Justice Babar Sattar heard the case filed by a citizen Sherzada into the matter. The court remarked that how the deputy commissioner could detain a citizen forcibly in his office. The petitioner had adopted the stance that he was detained for four hours at the office of DC ICT, adding that his mobile phone was snatched and his chequebook was brought from his house. He said that he was forced to sign the fake deed and the cheque worth Rs 50 million. However, two police personnel were made as witnesses in the deed, he said. He prayed the court to issue directives for registration of a case against the said people. The court said that the conduct of the police was not as per the law and remarked that how the DC ICT could set a court on conflict of two private citizens. After hearing arguments, the court ordered the Islamabad police to register FIR against DC Islamabad and others as per the complaint of the citizen.—APP

Marri vows to uphold Shaheed Benazir mission

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Shazia Marri Wednesday said Pakistan People's Party (PPP) will always stand with the people of the country and fight against poverty, inflation and unemployment, following the mission of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. Paying tribute to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on her 70th birth anniversary, Shazia Marri said, "Her contributions to the restoration of democracy in the country will be remembered forever". Addressing a news conference along with Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi, the federal minister said that the PPP

leadership and its workers have rendered great sacrifices for upholding democratic values in the country. Benazir Bhutto was not only the first woman Prime Minister of the country but of the entire Muslim Ummah giving a new perspective to the country's politics. She took a number of unprecedented initiatives for empowering women including establishing Women Police Stations, and First Women Bank as well as launching the Lady Health Workers project. The Ghazi Barotha and Neelum Power Projects were also launched in her tenure of electricity generation. The federal minister said that oil and gas production increased during the tenure of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto while Pakistan's relations with foreign countries were also significantly improved. Referring

to the Thar Coal project which Shaheed Benazir Bhutto once termed as 'black gold', Shazia Marri said that the Thar coal project is now the biggest cheap source of generating electricity for the country. Being a woman, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto never considered herself weak but changed the dynamics of politics by empowering women in the country. "Shaheed Benazir Bhutto always fought for the rights of people of the country especially downtrodden segments at every forum and became the voice of the voiceless," she said. She advocated the policy of reconciliation in front of the country's political forces through the Charter of Democracy and was of the view that "Instead of fighting with each other, we have to fight with those who are against progress and democracy in Pakistan".



Greek Shipwreck Incident

Red Crescent extends support to grief-stricken families

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Expressing deep sadness over the tragic shipwreck incident in Greece and the resulting loss of precious lives, Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari stated that the PRCS stands in solidarity with the affected families during this challenging period. The Restoring Family Link (RFL) Program of the National Society is actively

engaged in providing psychological support and all possible assistance to these families. The Chairman further emphasized that the loss of valuable lives was a heart-wrenching tragedy, and he extended condolences to the bereaved families. The dedicated staff and volunteers of the Restoring Family Link program at the Pakistan Red Crescent Society are maintaining regular communication with the affected families who have sought assistance from the

Red Crescent. To date, the Red Crescent has received 35 requests for tracing missing individuals, and the relevant information has been shared with the Hellenic Red Cross. Approximately 70 families affected by the incident are in continuous contact with the staff and volunteers of the Pakistan Red Crescent. These families have unfortunately lost contact with their loved ones as a result of this incident. Chairman Sar-

dar Shahid Ahmed Laghari urged all the affected families who have lost contact with their family members in the incident, to reach out to the Red Crescent's helpline number, 1030, for further assistance. He reiterated the commitment of PRCS to provide ongoing support to the affected families and collaborate with relevant authorities to ensure their well-being and facilitate any necessary reunification processes.

Senate chairman address convocation at GIK Institute

PESHAWAR: Chairman Senate, Sadiq Sanjarani here Wednesday stressed upon students to focus on innovative trends to compete in the existing scenario of science and technology and added that the culture of innovations would help us to achieve goals of progress and development. He was addressing the 27th Convocation in Ghulam Ishaq Khan (GIK) Institute of Science and Technology at Topi, district Swabi. The convocation was attended by ambassadors, parliamentarians, educationists, vice-chancellors and parents of students.—APP



LAHORE: A delegation of Indian Sikh pilgrims are coming to Pakistan via Wagah borde to join the death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh.— APP

UNHCR, Government of Pakistan pay tribute to resilience of displaced people

ISLAMABAD: UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and the Government of Pakistan on Wednesday marked World Refugee Day by paying tribute to the resilience and courage of people who are displaced due to conflict or persecution across the world. According to UNHCR's flagship annual report, the number of people displaced by war, persecution, violence, and human rights abuses stood at a record 108.4 million, up 19.1 million from a year earlier, which was the biggest ever increase. The trend witnessed an increase in displacement in 2023, pushing the global total to an estimated 110 million by May 2023. More than 1 in 74 people worldwide remained forcibly displaced. The number of refugees

hosted in Asia and the Pacific region rose from 4.2 million in 2021 to 6.8 million by the end of 2022, nearly 20 percent of the global total. Over 90 percent of all refugees in the region are hosted in just three countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. This year's theme is "Hope away from home". In Islamabad, government officials, heads of diplomatic missions NGOs and UN agencies, partners' staff, and many refugees joined UNHCR in marking World Refugee Day. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar was the chief guest on the occasion. Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugee Mr. Abbas Khan was also present on the occasion.


Speaking at the occasion, UNHCR's Representative in Pakistan, Ms. Noriko Yoshida paid rich tribute to the resilience of refugees and the generosity of host communities that provides shelter, and protection for refugees as well as giving them access to education and healthcare. "World Refugee Day is a time to recognize the generosity of host countries who have kept their borders and hearts open to people in need of protection," she said, adding Pakistan's solidarity for over four decades, is an example of commitment to protecting the rights of 1.3 million Afghan and other refugees and giving hope away from home. "We hope that Pakistan will continue to show its generosity and hospitality towards the

families in Afghanistan so that the return is sustainable. Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees Mr. Abbas Khan, UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan, Mr. Julien Harneis also spoke on the occasion. At the event, Afghan refugee children presented a cultural performance. An art exhibition and handmade products made by refugees were also put on display. In Balochistan, UNHCR arranged several activities to raise awareness about refugees. An event was organized in Quetta, which was attended by representatives from the UN, the government and other partners. Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Kakar was the chief guest at the occasion.—APP

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Briefs

Moscow issues warning over 'nuclear winter'

DNA

MOSCOW: Global arms control is mired in an unprecedented crisis, triggered primarily by the actions of the West, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov claimed on Tuesday. Speaking at the PIR Center, a Russian think tank specializing in nuclear non-proliferation, Ryabkov argued that the issue had been building for some time, and had been exacerbated by US and Western attempts to "actively use coercion and violence in unsuccessful attempts to strengthen their global positions." Those actions could be exemplified by the bombing campaign against the former Yugoslavia, the US invasion of Iraq, and NATO's "destabilizing" eastward expansion, the diplomat said. At the same time, Washington and NATO "categorically refused" Russia's proposals to create a comprehensive security framework in Europe, Ryabkov insisted. Instead, they embraced a course seeking to "deliberately and maliciously" fan the Ukraine conflict and inflict a "strategic defeat" on Moscow - all of which affected areas of contact with the West, including regarding arms control, he added.

N. Korea slams Blinken's recent China visit

PYONGYANG: North Korea has ridiculed US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's recent visit to China as a "disgraceful begging trip," further slamming it as a failure of policy aimed at exerting pressure on Beijing. The rare visit was aimed at begging for the relaxation of tensions as the "attempt to press and restrain China may become a boomerang striking a fatal blow to the US economy," said North Korean international affairs analyst Jong Yong in a column published by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on Wednesday. "In a word, the US state secretary's recent junket can never be judged otherwise than a disgraceful begging trip of the provoker admitting the failure of the policy of putting pressure on China," he then added. The analyst further blamed Washington for escalating regional tensions with "anti-China complexes" such as the so-called Quad strategic security group, which includes Japan, Australia, India, and the United States, as well as the Australia-UK-US security deal known as AUK-US. - Agencies

PPP suspends basic membership of Aitzaz, Khosa



DNA

LAHORE: The PPP on Wednesday abruptly suspended the basic membership of its senior leaders Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan and Barrister Sardar Latif Khosa reportedly for violating the party's discipline. Talking to a private news channel PPP Central Punjab chapter President Rana Farooq Saeed confirmed that the basic membership of the duo has been suspended. It was suggested to the party leadership to suspend the basic membership of Khosa and Ahsan. "Final decision about expelling the leaders from the party is expected during the party's upcoming CEC meeting." It is pertinent to mention here that Ahsan and Khosa are also the members of PPP's CEC. Earlier today, the PPP inaugurated a "Wall of Shame" at the party's Central Punjab Secretariat.

Pak-Azerbaijan LNG deal will end gas crises soon

The government has also devised a plan to attract investment from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik Wednesday assured that Pakistan's a liquefied natural gas (LNG) purchase agreement framework with Azerbaijan would end gas crises and domestic consumers will not face any gas shortage in the next winter season. Azerbaijan will supply an LNG cargo every month to Pakistan at a "cheaper price," he said while talking to a private news channel. While giving details of LNG Cargo, he said under Pak-Azerbaijan long-term agreement in the current year we will have 9 to 10 cargo factories in the country, adding, Azerbaijan would help Pakistan to fulfill its energy needs through cooperation in

the fields of oil and gas. Replying to a question about the shortage of gas, he said in winter, we would be able to control the gas shortage. In some specific areas in Karachi's, he said that we have been facing infrastructure issues that will be solved on a priority basis.



He said that the government hoped to give more relief to domestic consumers in coming winters which will ensure gas supplies to residential consumers at three times. To another question, he explained that the government has also devised a plan to attract investment

from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries as part of the 'Economic Revival Plan', adding, these billion of investments in the country would create jobs and livelihoods for the youth and women. In responding to another query about IMF, he said Pakistan has met all the conditions set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a staff-level agreement and we are still very hopeful that the IMF programme will materialize soon. Talking about the senate chairman's additional benefits, he strongly condemned and said that these certain privileges as well as allowances at a time when the country has been going through a severe financial crunch is unacceptable. He said that as a Senator, "I will play my due role and raise objections for these special privileges".

Hunt for missing Titanic sub continues

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The US Coast Guard Wednesday diverted its robotic undersea search operations to the area where sounds, likely from the missing OceanGate Expeditions submersible, originated from. Search teams, as reported by the Coast Guard, detected underwater sounds as they scanned the North Atlantic to search for the tourist vessel that embarked on a journey to explore the century-old Titanic ruins in the Canadian seas, according to Reuters. The submersible, the sounds of which were detected by a Canadian aircraft on the third day of the search, vanished with five passengers, including crew members, aboard during their deep-sea expedition.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State Hina Rabbani Khar received Ambassador of Embassy of Switzerland in Pakistan today & discussed bilateral ties & cooperation. MoS stressed the need to create international partnerships especially in disaster management, climate change, tourism & vocational training. - DNA

EU agree on a new package of sanctions against Russia

NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: European Union countries on Wednesday agreed on a new package of sanctions against Russia for its war against Ukraine aimed at countering sanctions circumvention through third countries and businesses. The EU had previously imposed 10 rounds of sanctions on Russia since President Vladimir Putin ordered his forces into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. Banks, companies and markets have been hit - even parts of the sensitive energy sector. More than 1,000 officials are subject to asset freezes and travel bans. Much work in the latest batch of sanctions has involved closing loopholes so that goods vital to Putin's war effort don't get through via nations that trade with the EU and have maintained a business-as-usual relationship with Moscow. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, the head of the EU's executive arm, said the new package will "deal a further blow to Putin's war machine with tightened export restrictions, targeting entities supporting the Kremlin." "Our anti-circumvention tool will prevent Russia from getting its hands on sanctioned goods," she added. It is the first time that plans have been announced to target trade via other countries, apart from sanctions against Iranians alleged to be supplying drones to Russia. It also prohibits the transit via Russia of products and technologies which might help boost its defense and security sector.

Biden calls China's Xi a 'dictator'

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden has labeled his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, a "dictator," claiming Beijing was humiliated after one of its weather balloons accidentally strayed into American airspace earlier this year. Biden discussed the row over the balloon at a fundraiser in California on Tuesday, suggesting the incursion was unintentional, even while stating that the craft was designed for espionage. He said the mishap blindsided Chinese officials, including Xi. "The reason why Xi Jinping got very upset, in terms of when I shot that balloon down with two box cars full of spy equipment in it, was he didn't know it was there," Biden said. "That's a great embarrassment for dictators. When they didn't know what happened. That wasn't supposed to be going where it was. It was blown off course." The Chinese balloon floated into US airspace in February and, after several days, was shot down by a fighter jet. While Washington has repeatedly described the device as a "spy balloon," Beijing maintains it was a civilian airship used to gather meteorological data, and that it floated off course by mistake. The balloon triggered anxiety for US officials, with the military firing on several other objects spotted in American skies soon after the first incident.

China hits back at Biden's remarks

DNA

BEIJING: Beijing has pushed back against remarks by US President Joe Biden referring to Chinese leader Xi Jinping as "a dictator," claiming that the statements are outright offensive. Speaking on Tuesday at a fundraiser in California, Biden addressed the controversy surrounding a Chinese balloon that entered US airspace earlier this year, suggesting that Xi did not know the vessel was even there. "That's a great embarrassment for dictators. When they didn't know what happened. That [balloon] wasn't supposed to be going where it was. It was blown off course," he said at the time. On Wednesday, speaking at a regular press conference, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning described the remarks as "extremely absurd," adding that they "seriously violated China's political dignity." She said that such statements also violate diplomatic etiquette and contradict basic facts. "It is an open political provocation," Mao stressed.

Gen Sahir holds meetings with Chinese leadership

DNA

RAWALPINDI: General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), is on an official visit to China from 18-22 June 2023 as head of delegation for Pakistan-China Defence and Security Talks. During the visit, CJCS met Chinese Chief of Joint Staff Department, General Liu Zhenli. During the meeting both sides reviewed ongoing bilateral defence cooperation between China and Pakistan. CJCS reiterated that Pakistan-China friendship is highly valued and deeply

rooted in the hearts and minds of Pakistani people. He also said that not only have the military relations of the two countries withstood test of time, but also high-level cooperation in defense and training has progressed well.

CJCS also held wide-ranging bilateral meetings with high ranking civil and military dignitaries including Mr Qin Gang, Chinese State Councilor, Foreign Minister, Mr. Chen Wenqing and other key military & government officials. Both sides re-affirmed commitment; that being "Iron Brothers" and "All Weather Friends", Pakistan and China would continue to forge deeper strategic ties.



NEWS DESK

GOLAN HEIGHTS: Dozens of people have been injured after Israeli military forces attacked the residents of the Golan Heights opposed to the Tel Aviv regime's plan to install wind turbines in the occupied Syrian territory. On Wednesday, hundreds of people staged a protest in the Hafayer area for the second consecutive day to defend their farmlands from the wind turbine project and confronted Israeli troops. According to Lebanon's al-Mayadeen television news network, Israeli soldiers disproportionately used rubber bullets and tear gas canisters against the unarmed protesters in order to disperse the crowd. Syria's official news agency SANA reported that dozens of people were injured as a result. Several were listed in serious and critical condition. Israeli forces also arrested more than 10 young protesters and prevented medical staff as well as ambulances from reaching those injured during the skirmishes. Local sources added that the Israeli army called in large reinforcements and

Dozens injured as Israeli forces attack Syrian protesters

sealed off all roads leading to the Hafayer area. Videos shared online on Tuesday showed residents confronting Israeli forces and blocking roads by burning tires. "Today they [Israeli troops] entered the lands of the Golan Heights by force, against the will of the people, which led to clashes," Sheikh Salman Awad, a local resident, said. Awad added that Israeli forces had turned the area into a military zone and the situation was tense.

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