



Islamabad POST

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US will not abandon the Middle East: US Gen Mark Milley

Detailed News On Page-07

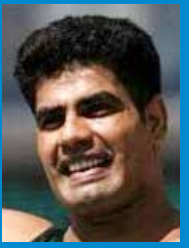
Kremlin denies role in Prigozhin plane crash

Detailed News On Page-08



Nadeem through to Athletics C'ship Final

Detailed News On Page-06



US Ambassador meets Kakar Caretakers to ensure free, fare elections: PM

The Prime Minister said that Pakistan and the US enjoyed longstanding and broad-based relations, rooted in mutual respect, common interests and shared values

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Donald Blome called on the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in Islamabad. Ambassador Blome congratulated the Prime Minister on assuming office and reaffirmed the United States' desire for supporting Pakistan's economic and development agenda. The Prime Minister said that Pakistan and the US enjoyed longstanding and broad-based relations, rooted in mutual respect, common interests and shared values. He expressed satisfaction on the current positive trajectory of bilateral ties and reaffirmed the Government's desire to further strengthening bilateral cooperation in the key areas including trade and investment, energy, security, and climate change. The Prime Minister emphasized that the caretaker Government's main responsibility is to assist the Election Commission of Pakistan in the electoral process and provide constitutional continuity during the period of democratic transition. The Prime Minister appreciated the United States' role in helping Pakistan to stabilize its economy and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to continue the reform agenda for achieving sustainable growth. Noting the role that the U.S. private sector has traditionally played in supporting Pakistan's economic growth, he hoped that that more U.S. companies would explore the investment opportunities, particularly to tap the vast potential for investment in Pakistan's information technology sector. Lauding the important contributions of the Pakistani-American community towards strengthening ties between the two countries, the Prime Minister called for increasing people-to-people contacts between the two countries. Earlier in August 24,

Continued on Page 06

ECP hints at timely polls

PPP wants polls on time: Sherry

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday hinted that general elections might be carried out within the constitutionally mandated period of 90 days as it issued a statement pertaining to the delimitation process. The electoral watchdog said that it has already taken up the tasks involving the updation of voter lists and delimitation of constituencies and that the processes would be completed "simultaneously". "It is being said in some media circles that after the final publication of the constituencies, the ECP will update the election lists and that only after that it will be possible to announce and hold the election schedule," the statement read. "This is not true". "The ECP would like to clarify that the commission has started the delimitations of constituencies and the updation of voter lists and these two tasks will be completed simultaneously," it added. Notably, the clarification has come amidst speculations that the electoral watchdog is

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome called on the caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in Islamabad. - DNA

Nawaz likely to return on Oct 15

Wanted to come in September but chose to delay his return for one month



NEWS DESK

LONDON: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif is expected to return to Pakistan on October 15 this year as per the family discussions, a news channel reported on Friday. According to the sources, the date was discussed between Nawaz, Shehbaz Sharif, and the close family members

Continued on Page 06

LoC violations Pak warns India of consequences

India's landing on the moon is a great scientific feat ISRO deserves praise

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has warned India to desist from violating the ceasefire at Line of Control in Kashmir. During her weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Friday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said this is unacceptable, urging New Delhi to abandon such actions and ensure that the ceasefire understanding continues to hold. The Foreign Office Spokesperson said the UN Special Procedures for human rights have again expressed serious concerns about the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status by the Indian occupation forces and imposition of restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly, and association against civil society actors, human rights defenders, political figures and journalists in IIOJK. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the latest communication by the UN Special Procedures is a comprehensive document, covering multi-faceted human rights abuses in IIOJK, under the cover of counter-terrorism laws. She said it

Continued on Page 06

PMO warns officials of hacking attempts

FAISAL SHEKH

ISLAMABAD: The government on Friday warned government officials of attempts to hack mobile phones to obtain "sensitive information" and asked them to remain vigilant. In a statement, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said, "Security agencies have unearthed an attempt to hack the mobile phones of senior government officials in a bid to obtain sensitive information." It said the elements behind the attempts used phishing methods while posing as senior government officials. "The involved elements, in the name of senior government officials, made the nefarious attempt to obtain sensitive information from state officials and the bureaucracy. "Attempts to obtain information were also made by sending mobile-hacking links on WhatsApp," the PMO added. It further said that

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Omar slams govt for massive power tariff hike

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan lashed out at the caretaker government for the unbridled increase in power tariff and the alarming depreciation of rupees against dollars. PTI Secretary General said that the economy was fast thriving during PTI government and inflation was under control. However, he stated that now the economy was ruined, price hike was skyrocketing, as the government was only busy in detaining and harassing PTI workers and leaders.

Qureshi's remand extended

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A special court in Islamabad Friday extended Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi's physical remand by three days in the cipher case. The development came after FIA sought a nine-day physical remand of the PTI leader for further investigation into cipher case pertaining to the alleged misuse of classified document for political purposes.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday.
- Editor

Toshakhana case Trial court erred, we won't, asserts: IHC CJ Judge Hamayun Dilawar removed from his post and made OSD

COURT REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Aamer Farooq on Friday observed that the trial court, which convicted former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan in Toshakhana case, "did wrong". The judge's remarks came during the hearing of the PTI chief's appeal challenging the Toshakhana verdict, which sentenced him to three-year in prison and imposed a fine of Rs100,000 earlier this month. Two-member IHC bench comprising CJ Farooq and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the plea seeking suspension of Khan's conviction by the trial court's Additional District and Sessions Judge (ADS) Humayun Dilawar. During the hearing today, the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) legal counsel Amjad Parvez did not appear before the bench, citing ill health. His assistant advocate asked the bench for an adjournment saying: "For the last eight months,

Continued on Page 06

Khan's life is in danger: Bushra tells SC

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Bushra Bibi, the wife of former prime minister Imran Khan, claimed in an affidavit submitted to the Supreme Court (SC) Friday that the life of her husband is in danger at Attock jail, where he has been serving a three-year sentence after being convicted in Toshakhana case earlier this month. The former first lady submitted the sworn statement in the apex court through advocate Hamid Khan in a case pertaining to the trial of civilians in a military court. Former PM Khan was jailed earlier in August

Continued on Page 06

Disaster looms amid drop in rupee, reserves

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The rudderless ship of economy is heading towards a disaster owing to the persistent drubbing of the rupee against the dollar in the wake of dwindling foreign exchange reserves and remittances, and the possibility of a sharp rise in inflationary pressures. Now such depreciation of the exchange rate will result in an increase in the POL prices and the same will apply in case of an increase in the fuel price adjustments (FPA) in the wake of furnace oil and imported regassified liquefied natural gas (RLNG) becoming dearer in months ahead.

Continued on Page 06

Better late than never... Denmark finally decides to ban Qur'an desecration

Burning a Quran under the new law would be an act punishable by fines or up to two years in prison

NEWS DESK

COPENHAGEN: The Danish government presented a bill on Friday that could lead to a ban on burning the Quran in public. Denmark's Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen, told Danish radio that the move sends an "important political signal" to the rest of the world. Burning a Quran under the new law would be an act punishable by fines or up to two years in prison. Peter Hummelgaard, the justice minister, explained that the proposed law is intended to be written into the same regulation that currently bans the desecration of other countries' flags. The Danish law would prohibit the "improper treatment of objects of significant religious significance to a religious community", he said. Hummelgaard, speaking at a press conference, said that a spate of recent Quran burnings were "senseless taunts" aimed to incite "discord and hatred", adding that national security was the primary "motivation" for

Continued on Page 06

No one would be allowed to fan extremism: Solangi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Friday that the interim government believed in protecting and promoting the rights of all citizens in accordance with the Constitution and the law. "We will not allow anyone to fan the flames of extremism and lawlessness," he said during a conversation with Maulana Tahir Ashrafi, Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council who met him here. Minorities, especially Christians, played an important role in the establishment of Pakistan, Solangi remarked. The minister said that

Continued on Page 06

Justice Ibrahim Khan takes oath as Chief Justice PHC

DNA

PESHAWAR : Acting Chief Justice, Muhammad Ibrahim Khan on Friday took oath as the regular Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court (PHC) at a ceremony held at Governor House Peshawar. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali administered oath to the new chief justice of Peshawar High Court.

During the ceremony that was also attended by caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Azam Khan, Secretary Law, Shagufta Naveed read out the Presidential Notification of the appointment of Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan as the PHC Chief Justice. Governor KP, Haji Ghulam Ali on the occasion congratulated Chief Justice PHC Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and expressed well wishes for him in discharging his responsibilities.

The oath taking ceremony was also attended by the Supreme Court Judge, Musarat Hilali, former Chief Justice PHC, Justice Qaisar Rasheed, former acting Chief Justice, Justice Ruhul Amin, caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Barrister Feroz Jamal Kakakhel, other ministers, Chief Secretary, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Akhtar Hayat Khan, senior lawyers and administrative officers of various departments.

CS chairs meeting on bolstering economic growth : KP

PESHAWAR : Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry presided over a meeting to bolster economic growth and attract domestic and foreign investment in key sectors of the province. The meeting focused on discussing the province's financial situation and investment prospects, particularly in connection with the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The meeting reviewed investment opportunities across diverse domains, including information technology (IT), tourism, infrastructure, mines and minerals, agriculture and livestock, energy and power, and economic and industrial zones. The chief secretary, caretaker cabinet members and key government officials deliberated on innovative and pragmatic approaches to elevate KP as a prime destination for foreign investment.—APP

PTV to air news, programmes in Khwar language

PESHAWAR : General Manager (GM) Pakistan Television Aurangzeb Afridi on Friday said apart from news in PTV National Peshawar, the television will also start telecasting programmes in the Khwar language soon. He said that besides Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan, there are people who speak and understand Khwar in Central Asia and telecasting programmes in the language will promote the culture of those people.—APP

Pan-Africanism crucial in addressing global challenges

M. ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) to Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula on Thursday highlighted the imperative role of advancing Pan-Africanism as a strategic measure to confront the pressing global dilemmas unfolding in the contemporary time. He stressed on the importance of Pan-Africanism during a meeting with Pakistan-based Ambassadors of all the African countries here at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Embassy in Islamabad. The discussion of African Envoys centered on amplifying Pan-Africanism's influence to effectively tackle challenges including climate change, terrorism, migration, and the complexities of the global economy. During the gathering, H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula underscored the importance of promoting Africa's collective interests on the international stage through a cohesive embrace of pan-African principles. Notably, Ambassador Jemal Beker said the Pretoria Agreement, inked on November 02, 2022, between the FDRE Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front to end the conflict in Ethiopia's northern parts, stood as a vivid manifestation of the advancement of Pan-Africanism. The ambassador eloquently narrated the beginning and suc-

cessful execution of the agreement, characterized by a resolute commitment to "Africa Solutions to African Problems." While extending his heartfelt gratitude,

itarian access to conflict-affected areas. The ambassador further informed the envoys of the subsequent restoration of essential services and the establishment of

servicemen, enabling their holistic capacity development and integration into civilian life. Asserting Ethiopia's steadfast belief in dialogue as the sole viable solution

tainable resolutions can only be achieved through peaceful dialogue, engagement and international cooperation.

On the other hand, the ambassador said the FDRE Government had announced State of Emergency in Amhara region to ensure rule of law and maintain law and order by containing illegally armed groups that disrupted the activities of democratically elected regional government and violet citizens rights. He said the FDRE Government opened to dialogue and had been engaging the entire stakeholders in this regard since it fully believed in resolving the issues through peaceful dialogue and negotiation and that is why the government believes that National Dialogue is the silver bullet to sustainable peace and prosperity. Dean of African Missions in Islamabad and Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco, H.E. Mohamed Karmoune also spoke on the occasion and lauded the unity of African countries for resolving the issues of continent as well as the world. Moreover, he lauded the Ethiopian Government for signing the Pretoria Agreement and implementation in a good faith that ensured peace in the northern parts of Ethiopia. The Ambassador also stressed on taking measures to promote Pan-Africanism for ensuring socio-economic development of the entire Africa. Similarly, all other African countries Head of Missions spoke on the occasion and expressed their commitment to advance the solidarity.



H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker expressed appreciation to the collaborative efforts of fellow African nations and international partners that contributed to the realization of the Pretoria Agreement. This accord, instrumental in upholding Ethiopia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and constitutional order, facilitated unimpeded human-

an interim governance structure in Ethiopia's northern regions in accordance with the agreement. Drawing attention to the comprehensive approach taken by the FDRE Government, H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker said a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission had been set up essential to train the former

to conflicts, Ambassador Beker highlighted the FDRE Government's collaborative endeavors with United Nations bodies to safeguard the human rights of all its citizens. The commitment of the FDRE Government to these principles remains unwavering, fortified by the understanding that sus-

ISSI hosts delegation from Sichuan University, China

DNA

ISLAMABAD : The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a 4-member delegation from the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), Sichuan University, China. The delegation was led by Associate Professor Dr. Zeng Xiangyu, and included Dr. Gao Liang, Ms. He Xiangyi, and Ms. Li Jialun. The exchange of views covered a wide range of subjects including the rapidly transforming global politics, Pakistan-China relations, the 'Decade of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)', water issues in South Asia, evolving

situation in Afghanistan, and Pakistan's role in the Indian Ocean Region and its maritime strategy. DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his remarks, extended a warm welcome to the visiting scholars from China. He stated that friendship with China was the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy and the time-tested, all-weather Pakistan-China strategic cooperative partnership was a factor of stability in the region and beyond. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor, he added, was pivotal for Pakistan's economic turnaround and for regional connectivity and prosperity. He added that Pakistan fully supported President Xi Jinping's vision to promote peace and

development across the globe through major initiatives including the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Global Development Initiative (GDI), Global Security Initiative (GSI), and Global Civilization Initiative (GCI). Sharing perspective on major-power competition, DG ISSI Amb. Sohail Mahmood stressed that it must be managed responsibly and it should not turn into confrontation. Pakistan would continue to stress that the key drivers of international relations should be peaceful co-existence and cooperation, and not confrontation and conflict. Earlier, Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director CPSC, in his remarks, briefed the visiting Chinese delegation about the structure and

functioning of ISSI. He lauded the efforts made by China for global development, especially the CPEC. He recalled his recent two visits to China and emphasized people-to-people contacts for enhanced connectivity. Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP), in her remarks, discussed the water issues in South Asia. She said that climate change and global warming were exacerbating the water-related issues and underscored the need for collective efforts to minimize such non-traditional threats. Ms. Amina Khan, Director Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA), in her remarks, evaluated the situation in Afghanistan.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi receiving his portrait made by Mr Umer Jarral, an artist with cerebral palsy, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.—DNA

NGO urges resilient response for monsoon flood recovery

DNA

KARACHI : Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Save the Children, an international non-governmental organization, Inger Ashing on Friday emphasized long-term resilient and integrated response for complete recovery from the destruction of monsoon floods of 2022. One year after devastating floods, Ashing visited flood-affected communities in Sindh, reaffirming the organization's commitment to Pakistan's recovery, rehabilitation, and long-term resilience, a news release said. "This week I've listened to children's concerns in Sindh - and now we need to take action," said CEO Ashing, after visiting areas of Sindh that were hit hardest by the catastrophic floods of 2022. The visit marked a year of relentless effort and commitment by Save the Children in the wake of

the disaster, emphasizing the organization's dedication to the long-term recovery and rehabilitation of affected communities. The 2022 floods disproportionately impacted poor and disadvantaged children, exacerbating existing inequalities and vulnerabilities, resulting in mass displacement, loss of livelihoods, food insecurity, health risks as well as impeding access to health and education facilities. An estimated 16 million children have been affected by the floods. Save the Children Pakistan was the first INGO to respond to the 2022 flood emergency and has reached 545,753 people to date, including 265,727 children, with programs addressing children's needs for food security, education, health, nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene. During her visit to the districts of Thatta and Dadu, Inger Ashing met with children.

JI announces 'Aafia Freedom walk' in Lahore on Sep 4

LAHORE : Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Senator Mushtaq Ahmed Khan has said that a peaceful Aafia freedom walk under the flag of Aafia Movement would be held in Lahore from the Lahore Press Club (LPC) to the American consulate on September 4, 2023. Talking to media outside the Islamabad High Court (IHC) where an in-camera hearing was held on the petition of Aafia Movement Pakistan leader and noted neurophysician of the country Dr Fowzia Siddiqui, Mushtaq Ahmed Khan said that Aafia Siddiqui has been put in a hole in the US jail where she is undergoing an inhuman treatment. He said there are some reports about physical and sexual violence on her which is a matter of shame for the government of Pakistan. He said that so many years have passed since Aafia Siddiqui's imprisonment but both civil and military governments in Pakistan during this long time have failed.—APP

Pak-Kyrgyzstan boost trade with expo milestone

ISLAMABAD : The founder chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry, Khurshid Barlas, along with the PAEI delegation including Fahad Barlas, Convener Exhibition, Amin-u-Rahman, Shamraiz Iqbal, EC members met with Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan His Excellency Totuiev Ulanbek Asankulovich at the Embassy of Kyrgyzstan. In the meeting, Chairman Khurshid Barlas briefed the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan about "3rd Pakistan International Property Housing and Construction Exhibition from 17-19 November 2023" at Pakistan China Friendship Center Islamabad. The three-day exhibition will be attended by a large number of prominent builders, developers, allied construction industry from all over the country, including banking projects



and various business community related to the tourism industry. Highlighting the exhibition. To introduce property buyers and investors to their latest property develop-

ments as well as upcoming projects Property Expos have gained popularity in the real estate sector as a means of generating leads and expanding their network. During the con-

versation, Kyrgyz Ambassador Totuiev Ulanbek Asankulovich said that the development of bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan can be a

milestone in regional and global trade integration and linkages. Due to their geo-economic importance, Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan can play an important role in promoting trade links between different regions and global markets. He said that the geographical location of Kyrgyzstan provides many opportunities for trade with Pakistan. Chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas presented a special invitation to the Kyrgyz ambassador to Participate in 3rd Pakistan International Exhibition, which was accepted by the Kyrgyz ambassador and assured that he would ensure his participation in the exhibition. Finally, Chairman PAEI presented shield to the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan, His Excellency Totuiev Ulanbek Asankulovich.—DNA



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The Brewery Company is pleased to invite friends and diplomatic missions to visit us and share the experience. Efforts towards keeping it afloat for over 160 years.

We cordially invite diplomatic missions to visit us on Monday from 10 am to 1:30 pm to enjoy our hospitality and our products tasting. However, since, we are located in a Red Zone / Prohibited area and it will be mandatory to obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs well in advance of the intended visit. We look forward to welcoming you all soon.

For further information please contact the following:

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman
Mobile: 0300 8553342

National Days and Armed Forces Days

August

Aug 01/China
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland
National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Syria
Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Burkina Faso
National Day

Aug 09 /Singapore

Aug 15/DPR Korea
Independence Day

Aug 15/India
Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland
Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia
Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine
Independence Day

Aug 25/Uruguay
Independence Day

Aug 30 /Turkey
Armed Forces Day

Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic
Independence Day

Aug 31/Malaysia
National Day

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122
& Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police...9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations
Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Serena Hotels Raabta panel discussion on breaking silence

“Caring for our mental well-being-conversations for a healthier tomorrow.”

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Raabta Serena Hotels Public Diplomacy initiative has always provided a platform for complex yet much needed discussions. It is time that these issues are identified and addressed head-on. The apparent lack of awareness and proper medically and professionally trained staff, it is has become crucial to bring forth the taint attached to these health problems and start understanding the importance of it. COVID saw a rise in mental stress-related issues in people of all ages, a rise in domestic abuse, suicide, and overall mental health was observed highlighting how important it has become to address this matter immediately.

The curator of Raabta, Ms. Sidra Iqbal, a vocal advocate of social issues related to gender inclusion and diversity, introduced



the diverse lineup of panelists, which included prominent people from the field. The panelists were Mr. Kamran Rizvi a motivational speaker and an expert

in capacity building. Ms. Rukhsar Khurshid is a relationship management professional with expertise in relationship counseling. Dr. Nausheen Kazmi, a

mental health expert at Shifa International Hospital, is one of the most prominent psychiatrists currently in the Capital. The last panelist Ms. Sabahat Bokhari

is the Director of Diversity and Inclusion at Jazz, with a clear mission to cultivate cultures of belonging, ensuring a holistic approach with encompasses

strategic design, cross-cultural facilitation, and leadership development, making her the perfect fit for the event.

The event had people of different strata of society, members of diplomatic missions, government officials, members of corporate sector and academia attending it. The discussion is based on mental health and the importance of recognizing if a loved one requires help to deal with it. The panel also emphasised the importance of reaching out promptly for help to understand and treat it as per the severity as identified by certified professionals. Q & A session followed the discussion where the audience, comprising a variety of people from different strata of society engaged with the panel of experts. The discussion was broadcast live to those unable to attend in person to provide access to the discourse for all wishing to participate.

Anti-drug awareness campaign in ICT from next week

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Professional Training is set to launch an anti-drug awareness campaign next week in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). This was revealed during a briefing by Chairperson PEIRA, Dr. Sayeda Zia Batool with the Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindh on Friday.

This initiative emphasizes not only the commitment of the Ministry and PEIRA to educational excellence but also to the overall well-being and safety of the community. The campaign will serve

as a comprehensive effort to educate the masses about the dangers of drug abuse, reinforcing the collective responsibility to create a healthier society.

In alignment with the directives of Madad Ali Sindh, a concerted focus was placed on the importance of a drug-free Pakistan. This significant meeting marked a shared commitment to reinforce the educational landscape within the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), underscoring both parties' dedication to advancing educational standards in the region.

During the visit, a comprehensive discussion was held on the importance of needs-based scholarships for the deserving and needy in private schools. This was followed by an inquiry by the minister regarding the fee-determina-

tion policy that PEIRA has implemented to keep escalating fees under check in the ICT.

The initiatives by PEIRA for all-inclusive education and teacher training were also reviewed.

Speaking on the occasion, Madad Ali Sindh said, "PEIRA's efforts are vital in nurturing the future of our nation, and the initiatives discussed today are a significant step in the right direction towards accessible and quality education."

Dr. Sayeda Zia Batool further highlighted PEIRA's commitment and remarked, "Inclusion, affordability, and empowerment are at the heart of our mission." "The collaboration with the Federal Ministry reflects our collective dedication to a vibrant and progressive educational environment in the Islamabad Capital Territory", she added.

Weekly inflation slightly up by 0.05 percent

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a nominal increase of 0.05 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on August 24, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 275.71 points as compared to 271.57 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 25.34 percent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 is covering 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, increased by 0.19 percent and went up to 281.19 points from last week's 280.67 points.—APP

United Nations organizes second of 12 dialogues

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations in Pakistan along with the district administration of Multan organized a dialogue with local leaders on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Around 100 local leaders, men and women among the district administration of Multan and United Nations Resident Coordinator participated in the event, according to a press release. The discussions focused on four topics chosen by the participants ahead of the event: the cost of gender-based violence; food insecurity; access to basic social services with a focus on water, sanitation and hygiene; and youth employment. In total, more than 1,000 local leaders living in 12 major cities across six provinces and territories will discuss the development challenges they face, and how they impede economic and social progress in their districts. The dialogues would be held in the different languages spoken across Pakistan in the coming weeks. "These dialogues would help United Nations agencies better understand which development issues local leaders see as their priorities outside of the federal and provincial capitals," said Julien Harnets, UN Resident Coordinator in Pakistan. The 12 dialogues would engage local leaders around development issues such as access to basic social services; gender equality and women's empowerment; climate change; sustainable, inclusive economic growth and decent work; and governance. All are key to Pakistan's progress towards the achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The dialogues will help inform discussions ahead of the global SDG Summit which the UN is organizing to accelerate progress towards the SDGs, halfway of the 2030 deadline.—DNA

APHC urges people to assemble at Gilani's graveyard

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has appealed to the people to march towards Hyderpora, Srinagar in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, on September 1 (Friday) to pay tribute to the icon of Kashmir resistance movement, Syed Ali Gilani, on his 2nd martyrdom anniversary. The APHC leadership in a statement in Srinagar urged the people to assemble at Hyderpora in Srinagar on September 01 to pay tributes to Kashmir's iconic liberation leader Syed Ali Gilani for his pious sacrifice and stance for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute, said a press release here. The leadership, while highlighting the matchless sacrifices of the martyred leader in the Kashmiris' ongoing struggle, said that Syed Ali Gilani was a fearless Kashmiri leader and his lifelong struggle for the Kashmir cause would be written in golden words in the annals of Kashmir's recent history. Urging the people of Kashmir to assemble at Hyderpora in the Srinagar graveyard to pay tributes to the great leader on his anniversary, the leadership said that it was high time that the people remember the heroes who lived and died for the freedom of Kashmir. It also urged ulema, khatibs and people to pay tributes and offer special prayers in mosques for the martyred leader. It is worth mentioning here that Indian forces' personnel had shamelessly snatched away the body of Syed Ali Gilani and buried it at Hyderpora graveyard in the dark of night against his will. Syed Ali Gilani, according to his family, wanted to be buried at the Martyrs' Graveyard at Eidgah in Srinagar.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Syrus Qazi attended the launch ceremony of commemorative coin marking the 75th anniversary of Pak-US diplomatic relations organized by State Bank. The coin signifies historic Pak-US relationship embedded in democratic values, mutual cooperation and common interests.—DNA

Millions of children in Pakistan still need urgent support

ISLAMABAD: Millions of children continue to need humanitarian assistance and access to essential services, one year after historic floods devastated Pakistan where recovery and rehabilitation efforts remain underfunded United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said on Friday. This season's monsoon rains are worsening already challenging conditions for flood-affected communities, tragically claiming the lives of 87 children across the country. UNICEF estimates there are still 8 million people, around half of whom are children, that continue to live without access to safe water in flood-affected areas. Over 1.5 million children require life-saving nutrition interventions in flood-affected districts, while UNICEF's current appeal of US\$173.5 million to provide life-saving support remains only 57 percent funded, according to a report. "Vulnerable children living in flood-affected areas have endured a horrific year," said Abdullah Fadil, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan. "They lost their loved ones, their homes and schools. As the monsoon rains return, the fear of another climate disaster looms large. Recovery efforts continue, but many remain unreachable, and the children of Pakistan risk being forgotten." Last year's floods submerged one third of the country, affecting 33 million people, half of whom were children. Vital infrastructure was damaged or destroyed - including 30,000 schools, 2,000 health facilities and 4,300 water systems. The climate-related disaster deepened pre-existing inequities for children and families in affected districts.—APP

Caretaker Defence Minister visits Naval Headquarters

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Defence Minister Lieutenant General (Retd) Anwar Ali Hyder visited Naval Headquarters Islamabad and called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi. Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters, the visiting dignitary was received by Chief of the Naval Staff and was introduced to the Principal Staff Officers at Naval Headquarters.

During the meeting, matters pertaining to Regional Maritime Security milieu and operational readiness of Pakistan Navy were discussed. Naval Chief apprised the Defence Minister on roles, capabilities and future modernization plans of Pakistan Navy. He briefed the caretaker minister on recent acquisitions of state-of-the-art platforms and

equipment to ensure an invincible seaward defence of the country. Naval Chief underscored Pakistan Navy's initiative of Regional Maritime Security Patrol and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief missions. Chief of the Naval Staff also briefed the Defence Minister on contemporary training being imparted to officers and men to keep them abreast with modern trends of naval warfare.

The caretaker Defence Minister commended the role of Pakistan Navy in safeguarding maritime interests of the country. He appreciated the dedication of PN officers and men for their unwavering commitment in performance of duties and remaining at forefront during natural calamities. Lieutenant General (Retd) Anwar Ali Hyder expressed his confidence in Pakistan Navy's operational readiness.



RAWALPINDI, Aug 25

(APP):Police have arrested three bike lifters and robbers, and recovered 10 stolen motorcycles, a Mehran car, Rs 130,000 cash, and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, a team under the supervision of SHO, New Town Police Station managed to net three bike lifters and robbers named Muhammad Imran, the ringleader, Ali Haider, and Sabahat Shah, and recovered valuable items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused, while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police Rawal Faisal Saleem said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars. He said that the operations against the lawbreakers would be accelerated further.—APP

3 bike lifters arrested; ten stolen motorcycles recovered

Briefs

Heritage Ministry, CDA to revitalize national heritage

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In order to upgrade and revitalize cultural infrastructure in the capital city, Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah on Friday discussed the proposed plan with Chairman CDA to re-energize and revamp the cultural infrastructure built by the civic body. During a meeting with Chairman, Capital Development Authority (CDA) Capt Retired Anwar-ul-Haq, the Minister said that Bagh-e-Shuhada would be inaugurated on 6th September in a graceful ceremony, followed by a musical concert aiming to pay tribute to the Martyrs and Art Exhibition at Islamabad Art Gallery. Jamal Shah opined that cultural sites should be upgraded and revamped which not only give a new look to the federal capital but also promote country cultural heritage. They agreed to continue work together on the said proposals and also practically visit the cultural sites for devising an upgrade and revamping plan. They also discussed the modalities for establishing Cinemas in Federal Territory. The concept of Art City or "Huner Gaon" for creative contribution was also discussed which will offer specially designed residence studios workshops and display places will be offered to Artisans writer, adding that plots should be allocated, particularly for establishing Cinemas in the federal capital. Jamal Shah desired to establish an Art City and specially housing society for creative contributors by the Ministry and its attached departments offering residential, studio, workshops, shops and gallery plots of different categories to visual and performing artists, artisans and writers. The Art city will be sponsored by all attached institution of Ministry of National Heritage & Cultural landmark and important visiting point of tourist.

Death anniversary of Ahmed Faraz observed

ISLAMABAD: The 15th death anniversary of renowned and progressive Urdu poet Ahmed Faraz was observed on Friday. Born on January 12, 1931 in Kohat, as Syed Ahmed Shah, he adopted pen name of Faraz. He moved to Peshawar with his family, where he received Masters's in Urdu and Persian from Peshawar University. He started his career as a script-writer with Radio Pakistan Peshawar and later joined Peshawar University as a lecturer. "Tanha Tanha", "Janan Janan", "Be-awaz Gali Kuchon main", "Sab Awazain Meri" and "Shabe-Khoon" are among his literary works. He was a member of the Progressive Writers Movement. The great Urdu poet was decorated with a number of national and international awards including the Nigar Award, Sitara-e-Imtiaz and Hilal-e-Imtiaz.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Jamal Shah and Chairman CDA Capt R Anwar Ul Haq visiting the site of "Bagh e Shuhada" to be inaugurated on 6th on Friday.—DNA

IRC, UNICEF jointly roll out Child protection unit

Under the auspices of the International Rescue Committee's project, "Strengthening Response Services to Child Protection Cases by Setting Up Case Management and Case Referral System," the Child Protection Unit has been established with the aim of providing an effective and coordinated response to cases of child rights violations, abuse, neglect, and exploitation

ISLAMABAD: The International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the United Nations International Fund for Children (UNICEF) in a joint effort in collaboration with the Government of Punjab on Friday inaugurated the Child Protection Unit (CPU) in Rajanpur. This initiative, a collaborative endeavor led by UNICEF, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Child Protection Welfare Bureau (CPWB), and the Government of Punjab, marked a crucial step towards ensuring the safety and well-being of children in Punjab, said a news release issued here.

Under the auspices of the International Rescue Committee's project, "Strengthening Response Services to Child Protection Cases by Setting Up Case Management and Case Referral System," the Child Protection Unit has been established with the aim of providing an effective and coordinated response to cases of child rights violations, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This district-based setup, modeled after Child Protection Units (CPUs), operates within the framework of the Child Protection Welfare Bureau and the Department of Social Welfare, with subsidiary

sub-desks in key departments including Education, Health, Police, Judiciary, and Rescue1122. The initiative fosters a seamless coordination mechanism through an Inter-Agency Coordination protocol, connecting various departments to ensure a comprehensive response to child rights violations. Zahida Manzoor from UNICEF, in her welcome speech, expressed the significance of the collaborative effort in strengthening the child protection system. The keynote speech by Director General Child Protection Welfare Bureau, Aftab Ahmad shed light

on the collective commitment to safeguarding children's rights. The event concluded with closing remarks from Shabnam Baloch, Country Director of the International Rescue Committee, reaffirming the organization's dedication to this noble cause. This initiative is bolstered by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between IRC, CPWB, and the Social Welfare Department at the provincial level, ensuring a trickle-down effect of cooperation and collaboration at the district level. The coordinated efforts between these key

stakeholders will play a pivotal role in upholding the rights and protection of children in the region. As this CPU commences its operations, it heralds a new era of safeguarding children's rights and creating an environment where they can thrive without fear. The collaboration between UNICEF, IRC, CPWB, and the Government of Punjab sets a remarkable precedent for effective child protection measures that will undoubtedly serve as a beacon of hope for children and families across the region.—Agencies

FICS '23 concludes at NUST

ISLAMABAD: The grand finale and prize distribution ceremony of the NUST's flagship international entrepreneurial programme 'Finding Innovative and Creative Solutions (FICS 2023)' was held at the university's main campus on Friday. FICS is Pakistan's largest startup competition being annually held at NUST since 2013 where all projects pitched in the competition are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The latest edition of the competition witnessed a remarkable collaboration between Turkey and Pakistan. NUST partnered with Gazi University in Ankara, and conducted the international chapter of FICS 2023 earlier this year, wherein teams from 20 universities of Turkey competed for the top slot.

The winners of this event qualified for the Grand Finale of FICS '23. This year, there were over 700 project submissions from multiple national and international institutions. A total of 100+

finalist teams of FICS '23 demonstrated their prototypes of technology-based innovative solutions to a panel of over 30 industry judges. The overall National Winner of FICS '23 was Team "Solar Panel Cleaning System" from U.S.-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Energy (USPCAS-E) NUST. Their project offers a simple, cost-effective, and efficient solution for cleaning of Solar PV panels. An international team's project "Recycling of silicon based solar panels" from Gazi University Turkey secured first position amongst the international contestants, and was awarded a Global Champion Award of USD 5000. FICS '23 sponsors and partners included Net-Sol Technologies, TetraPak Pakistan, National Radio and Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC), Central Asian Cellular Forum (CACF), and Alfoze Technologies Pvt. Ltd. An overwhelming number of dignitaries, particularly

Ambassadors from Germany, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Malaysia, and Deputy Ambassadors from Palestine, Indonesia and Turkey graced the occasion with their presence. Engr Javed Mahmood Bukhari, Rector NUST, presented souvenirs to the dignitaries. Multiple recorded messages of international dignitaries and participants were also played at the event. These included FICS 2022 International Winner from Egypt, the Vice Rector from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) and Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Mr Munir Akram. Mr Akram emphasised the role of universities, like NUST in supporting Pakistan towards achieving the SDGs, and, in so doing, improving the lives of communities at large. The chief guest at the ceremony was Federal Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Mr Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry.—APP

PIAF greets Misbah on becoming Founders Group Chairman

DNA

ISLAMABAD The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has greeted the noted businessman and LCCI former president Mian Misbahur Rehman on becoming the Chairman of the Founders Group unopposed. In a press release issued here on Friday, PIAF Chairman Fahimur Rehman Saigol, Senior Vice Chairman Nasrullah Mughal, Vice Chairman Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary, former Chairman of PIAF and former presidents of Lahore Chamber Mian Anjum Nisar, Muhammad Ali Mian, Abuzar Shad, FPCCI President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh and other senior members of PIAF congratulated Mian Misbahur Rehman to get this slot of so importance and becoming the head of such prestigious of business community.—APP

Export started from SEZ Allama Iqbal Industrial City

ISLAMABAD: Export has started from the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) called Allama Iqbal Industrial City (AIC) in Punjab. Chinese Company Green Crockery blazed the trail by exporting crockery valuing Rs. 10 million to the UK. Talking to Gwadar Pro, Green Crockery CEO Zhang Qi said that using top-notch international technology fused with traditional Chinese techniques, a variety of crockery stuff is being manufactured in the industrial unit established in 2022 at AIC. The production was started nine months ago, he added. Green Crockery Export Manager Shaikat Abbass Maken said "on the heel of exporting crockery to the UK, two more exports are set to begin in the first month of September." "We have received another order from another big company. After samples are approved, it might be a mega export order," he added. Spreading over 10 acres, he said, Green Crockery has been providing job opportunities to more than 1,500 workforce. Chinese professional and technicians, he said, are working with Pakistani workers in crockery-making business. With this combination, Chinese experts have been training Pakistan's human resource and transferring technology to the local people, he added.—DNA

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DC Islamabad directs operations against societal issues

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Friday issued a decisive directive to Assistant Commissioners for curbing various societal issues in their respective jurisdictions. These officials have been entrusted with the task of orchestrating rigorous operations to curb price gouging, dismantle encroachments and address the plight of professional beggars within their respective jurisdictions. Under the watchful eye of the ICT spokesperson, the Assistant Commissioners embarked on an extensive inspection of 105 locations to combat the menace of price hikes. This resulted in the imposition of fines amounting to Rs. 26,000 on errant businesses, while stringent measures led to the closure of one establishment. Moreover, displaying an unwavering commitment to societal welfare, authorities took 30 professional beggars into custody, subsequently transferring them to police custody. The crackdown against encroachments exhibited no leniency, as five individuals were apprehended and handed over to law enforcement for violating public space. The operation, carried out in tandem with efforts to tackle inflation, also yielded the confiscation of over 6 kilograms of environmentally hazardous polythene bags. The purview of these commendable efforts extended to addressing irregularities in business practices as well, with illegal petrol filling agencies and an unauthorized LPG filling station facing the full brunt of legal action. It is worth noting that the battle against encroachments, price gouging, and professional begging continues unabated, reaffirming the authorities' steadfast commitment to fostering a more just and equitable society.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar called on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in Islamabad.—DNA

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Putin couldn't trust him

DESPITE the viscerally shocking nature of images of a tumbling aircraft, and of the conflagration that followed, Yevgeny Prigozhin's reported death in a plane crash on Wednesday was one of the least surprising developments of the last 18 months. Russian aviation officials listed the Wagner group chief and senior commander, Dmitry Utkin, among the 10 onboard the jet, all of whom died. Ever since he led the mutiny by his Wagner group of mercenaries two months ago, Prigozhin's death was assumed by many to be imminent. Though he denounced military leaders rather than his patron, the challenge to Vladimir Putin was unprecedented, and the Russian president called him a traitor. That the mutiny was not decisively suppressed but ended with a deal looked more humiliating. William Burns, the CIA chief, suggested last month that for Russians used to seeing their president in control, "the question was 'Does the emperor have no clothes?' or at least 'Why is it taking him so long for him to get dressed?'" Though wild speculation about Prigozhin's fate is rife, the plane crash looked to most like the answer: a deliberately spectacular restatement of Mr Putin's power. "Absolutely clear signal to all the elites," wrote the Russian journalist Ksenia Sobchak. But even if it did have another cause, the assumption that it was retaliation is in the Kremlin's interests. The nationalist right saw this violent and brutal man as one of their own, and in many cases shared his contempt for Russian military leadership. But even sympathisers saw the mutiny as a step too far. And if some see this death as a betrayal, fewer than ever will dare to speak out. It came as Sergei Surovkin, a close ally of Prigozhin, was removed as commander of aerospace forces. Igor Girkin, a prominent pro-war critic of the president, was detained last month on extremism charges. The message is clear: no challenge will be brooked from any quarter. That warning, of course, is not new. There is a long roll call of Putin enemies who have met conspicuous demises. But while the crash strengthens the Russian president's grip, it also underlines the serial failures of his invasion of Ukraine. Prigozhin's death is unlikely to make much difference on the battlefield, given that Wagner fighters had already withdrawn, and it may have silenced widespread anger with the top brass – but it hasn't ended it. Wagner now appears to have been essentially dismembered. It grew from Prigozhin's ability to forge connections with unsavoury figures, and was united largely by his charisma. Its military capabilities were often less significant than its bogeyman status. Other private companies will probably take up some of its work. But Mr Putin will not make the same mistake of allowing them untrammelled growth and largely free rein. In any case, Wagner may have served its purpose. Plausible deniability is now less important. Last year's full-scale invasion of Ukraine replaced covert intervention in its east. Wagner has left a grim trail in places such as Central African Republic, but Russia is now more upfront about its role in Africa – and more ambitious, wooing US allies such as Kenya. The head of Russian military intelligence's offensive operations unit was present at last month's Russia-Africa summit. At home and abroad, Mr Putin's intentions now appear clearer than ever.

Pacific island countries won't take sides

AS Western powers push the Pacific island nations to take their side in their attempts to counter alleged Chinese influence in the South Pacific, countries in the region are pushing back. As Leonard Louma, director-general of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, an intergovernmental organization dedicated to independence for Indigenous Melanesian groups, has pointed out, taking sides under the pressure of geopolitical competition won't help protect regional countries' interests. On the contrary, third-party pressure is preventing countries in the region from choosing partners of their own choice while pursuing development. The Pacific island countries were largely forgotten by the West. They had not been back on the Western radar until very recently, when the United States and its allies started viewing China as a rival. All of a sudden, the region has become an area of interest on their geopolitical chessboard. Senior officials from the United States, Australia and Japan have made trips to countries in the region, trying hard to make sure the countries concerned give a cold shoulder to China. For all their promises of aid and cooperation, everything is ultimately tied to "security", which has been a non-issue for long. During his visit to Tonga in late July, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told his host the US doesn't ask South Pacific island countries to take sides. But he admonished the latter for giving in to "economic coercion" by China. The US defense secretary, who visited Papua New Guinea about the same time, highlighted alleged security risks from collaborating with China. By and large, in the Western countries' present narrative, the growing Chinese presence in the region, which has so far predominantly centered on economic development, heralds a dangerous new future where China rewrites the international rules and reshapes the world order in its own favor. Yet one can see none of that in the Beijing-proposed global initiatives on development, security and civilization, as well as its call for countries to build a community with a shared future for humanity. A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson responded to Western allegations in late July, saying the Pacific islands are no country's "backyard" and China has no interest in competing with any country for influence in the region or seeking a so-called geopolitical presence or sphere of influence. While the Western visitors clearly see the emerging Chinese involvement in regional affairs through the prism of rivalry, countries in the region know best what their dealings with China mean. More important, they don't want to see their region become a playground for major power confrontation. At their two-day meeting in Vanuatu on Wednesday and Thursday, the leaders of Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Fiji, and New Caledonia's ruling FLNKS party, along with members of the Melanesian Spearhead Group indicated that they don't want to be pieces in the West's game, emphasizing that they want the region to be one of peace and neutrality.

President vs ECP; The country is the victim

Qamar Bashir



IN the aftermath of the president's tweet regarding the Army Amendment Act 2023 and the Official Secrets Amendment Act 2023, there was a profound upheaval in the nation's legal and political realms, sparking extensive discussions, debates, and passionate reactions. Some individuals praised the president as a heroic figure for speaking out against the suspected tampering of the controversial bills, recognizing the broad implications these actions held for the current and future well-being of the Pakistani populace. On the other hand, there were those who criticized the president's leadership abilities, characterizing him as ineffective and lacking the necessary administrative prowess to effectively manage his team of subordinates. This group called for his immediate resignation. Hardly a day after, the President created another huge tide in the fragile political and legal environment of the country when he wrote a letter to the election commission directing him to appear in the president house and discuss with him the date for holding the next general election within 90 days. The tone of the president's letter conveyed a sense of disregard for the amendment made in section 57 of the Election Amendment Act 2023, which had vested the authority to set election dates in the election commission. The president was within his right to term the Election Act amendment as potentially violating the constitution, arguing that alterations to the subordinate legislation of the Election Law cannot supersede the explicit constitutional provisions. Conversely, there are those who firmly assert the legality and appropriateness of the amendment. With such opposing viewpoints, it seems inevitable that we are heading towards a significant legal confrontation. On one side stands the president, and on the other, the current government and the election commission. Typically, the president is known for his flexibility, not taking rigid positions on trivial matters, and avoiding unnecessary unrefusing the feathers. Possessing wisdom and a profound grasp of complex issues, he is skilled at facilitating resolutions agreeable to all stakeholders. But on matters which he thinks are important he is also known to take a stand until either he is convinced and he convinces the others.

Yesterday, I watched a talk show where former Secretary of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Mr. Kanwar Dilshad criticized the President's letter. He argued that the ECP wouldn't follow the President's order, wouldn't meet with the President to discuss election dates stating that the Election Act amendment in 2023 removed this power from the President. Two other well-known constitutional lawyers strongly disagreed with him. They argued that no subordinate legislation could alter the constitution, and any amendments conflicting with constitutional provisions would be invalid and revealed that a constitutional petition had already been filed in Pakistan's Supreme Court to overturn this law. As anticipated, Mr. Kanwar Dilshad's statements were proven correct. The ECP wrote a letter to the President today (24.08.2023), declining to attend the meeting saying that under section 57 of the Election Amendment act, the authority to announce election date rests with the Election Commission. Now, before delving into the President's remaining options to enforce his directive to the ECP, let's pause and consider another scenario involving PTI lawyers, particularly Barrister Zafar. In a recent interaction with the Election Commission, Barrister Zafar presented extensive arguments that warrant discussion. During a hearing before the ECP, Barrister Zafar presented compelling arguments regarding the delimitation process based on the latest census. He stated that the ECP lacked the authority to conduct delimitation for two significant reasons. Firstly, any alteration in the allocation of seats to national and provinces assemblies would necessitate an amendment to Section 51 of the constitution. However, this amendment couldn't take place since the parliament was not in session. According to Barrister Zafar, election laws demanded that PTI should be granted a level playing field to conduct its campaign activities just like other political parties. The Election Commission patiently listened to these submissions, informed that they were engaged with party leaders to gather input for setting election dates, and stated that no decision had been reached yet, keeping their options open. Let us analyze Barrister's arguments in the light of provisions of the constitution related to seats and the census. Article 51(1) stipulates, "There shall be [three hundred and thirty-six] seats for members in the National Assembly, including seats reserved for women and non-Muslims." Article 51(3) states, "The seats in the National Assembly referred to in clause (1), except as provided in clause (4), shall be allocated to each Province and the Federal Capital as under."

General Seats	Women	Seats	Total Seats
Balochistan	16	04	20
KP	45	10	55
Punjab	141	32	173
Sindh	61	14	75
Federal Capital	03	-	03
Total	266	60	326

Section 51(5) specifies that the allocation of seats in the National Assembly is determined by the population based

on the last preceding census officially published. Upon careful examination of these articles, it's evident that altering the number of seats in the provinces or the federation requires an amendment to Article 51(1) and 51(3) of the constitution. However, due to the dissolution of the national assembly, such an amendment isn't possible. This casts doubt on the legitimacy of the previous government's hasty approval of the census through the CCI. Mr. Zafar's second objection pertains to the formation of the Council of Common Interests (CCI), as governed by Article 153 of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973. The article states, "there shall be a Council of Common Interests, to be appointed by the President. The Council shall consist of:"

- The Prime Minister of Pakistan, who shall be the Chairman of the Council;
- The Chief Ministers of all the Provinces;
- The Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan;
- The President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir; and
- Three members from the Federal Government to be nominated by the Prime Minister from time to time."

The Constitution explicitly outlines the membership of the Council of Common Interests (CCI), and the absence of the term "caretaker Chief Minister" in these provisions suggests that decisions made by the CCI with such members may lack validity and legal consequences. Having addressed critical factors related to holding elections within the prescribed timeline, let's continue with argument with regards to options available with the President to enforce compliance of his letter issued to the Election Commission. To enforce the implementation of Articles 48(1) and (2), read in conjunction with Article 224(1) and (2), the President is empowered to announce the date of the elections. Article 48(1) mandates that the President must act in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet or the Prime Minister when exercising their functions. Article 48(5) outlines that if the President dissolves the National Assembly, he must appoint a date for a general election to the Assembly within ninety days from the date of dissolution. Article 224 outlines the timelines for holding general elections. Article 224(1) stipulates that a general election to the National Assembly or a Provincial Assembly must occur within sixty days following the expiration of the Assembly's term, unless it was dissolved earlier. Article 224(2) states that when the National Assembly or a Provincial Assembly is dissolved, a general election must be held within a ninety-day period after the dissolution, and the election results should be declared within fourteen days after the polls conclude. Since the assemblies were dissolved two days before the completion of their regular tenure based on the Prime Minister's advice, the provisions of Article 48(1), (2), and Article 224(2) are applicable. In all of these provisions, the authority to announce election dates rests with the President. Without amending Articles 48(1), (2),

and Article 224(2), it's not conceivable for this authority to be transferred to the Election Commission. In democracies, when laws are passed that are against constitutional provisions, there are a few general principles that are often followed to address the situation: Courts play a crucial role in interpreting the constitution and determining the constitutionality of laws. They can declare laws that violate the constitution as null and void. For example, in the United States, the Supreme Court case of Marbury v. Madison (1803) established the principle of judicial review. The judiciary can strike down any law which is against the basic constitutional structure. For example the Indian Supreme Court has used this principle to strike down laws that violate the basic structure of the Constitution. If a law contradicts the constitution, the legislative body might work to amend the constitution to bring it in line with the new law which is not possible in this case. When laws violate constitutional principles, public outcry and activism can play a significant role in pressuring the government to reconsider or amend such laws. This might involve protests, petitions, or civil society initiatives. In the current context, options 1 and 2 appear to be more applicable. According to Article 186 of the Constitution of Pakistan, the President has the authority to refer questions of law to the Supreme Court. This article specifies that the President can seek the Supreme Court's opinion on matters of public importance. My interpretation is that the President may have intentionally engaged with the Election Commission by sending a letter, requesting a meeting to discuss the upcoming general election date. This action could have been anticipated to prompt the Election Commission's response, asserting that under section 57 of the Election Amendment Act 2023, they possess the authority to determine election dates, not the President. It is most likely that if the supreme court takes up the matter it would be decided in favor of the constitution. It's unfortunate that even after more than 75 years of existence and collective wisdom, our nation struggles to address basic issues that other countries have resolved. Instead of moving forward to create wealth, progress, and prosperity, we often revisit problems due to vested interests, neglecting broader national goals. While other countries make remarkable discoveries, we seem to repeatedly reinvent the wheel and hinder growth. The ongoing disputes will likely exacerbate our persistent confusion, controversies, and conflicts, breeding more uncertainty and internal unrest. The upcoming legal battles are likely to amplify our well-known and persistent confusion, controversies, and conflicts. These issues have proven stubborn and resistant to resolution. As a consequence, the increased uncertainty could foster even more chaos and unrest within our nation. It is important for institutions and individuals to prioritize the greater good and work towards resolving disputes with transparency and a commitment to upholding democratic values. This allows for a more stable and harmonious environment that benefits the entire nation.

Israel's struggle for judicial independence and democratic values

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



ISRAEL has been ruled by the most right-wing coalition in its history. Its prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, remains on trial, since March 2020, on multiple corruption charges. These two are interconnected. The composition and behavior of Netanyahu's current coalition is largely dictated by his desire to avoid sentencing or to quash his trial altogether. In previous coalitions he has led, Netanyahu has made efforts to include centrist parties, and has been generally successful in doing so. But these parties are no longer willing to join his government, due to the corruption charges he faces and the way he dealt with his former centrist coalition partner Benny Gantz in 2020-2021. Now Netanyahu prefers to associate with parties to his right that support his goal of reforming the judiciary. Some in his coalition have more far-reaching aspirations than Netanyahu, who is most interested in three specific legal changes that could tip the judicial process in his favour. Of the three changes Netanyahu is interested in, two have been approved by the Knesset as a bill, each one in the final days of the Knesset session: "Unsuitable for indictment" was passed in March 2023, while the related "criterion of reasonableness" was passed. The bill passed in July 2023. It is no coincidence that of the judicial reform package initially presented by Justice Minister Yariv Levin in early January 2023, the only two bills to pass were those essential to Netanyahu's trial. This underscores the fact that Netanyahu controls the legislative process and his coalition partners, even if it is often convenient for him to create the perception that they are holding him

back politically. The Knesset is currently in recess until after the Jewish holidays in mid-October. Until then, there will be no new legislation, but once it meets again, Netanyahu's third priority (changing the composition of the committee to select judges) will emerge, along with a bill that would formally exempt the ultra-Orthodox. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court must decide if and how it will intervene with respect to the two laws that have already been approved. It may be the first time in Israel's history that a Basic Law has been overturned, and the crucial hearing in mid-September on the "standard of reasonableness" bill will include all 15 Supreme Court justices, another first for the country. On the "invalid for office" bill, the Supreme Court will debate at the end of September whether to postpone its implementation until after the next elections, to avoid it being a customs bill, tailored to Netanyahu's needs. Time and time again, Netanyahu has refused to say he will accept a Supreme Court ruling overturning the new legislation. Instead, his ministers are trying to delegitimize the court, saying it has no mandate to change Knesset decisions on basic laws, while the justices clearly say the opposite, and by publicly attacking the judges and their motives. In early August, far-right Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu said that if the Supreme Court struck down a basic law, it should not be respected and would suggest that judges "break the law in trials." In parallel with judicial reform, the government is steadily pushing its ideological agenda in other areas. Take drastic measures to increase its control over the media, civil society, schools, universities, and more; restriction of freedoms there; and increasing tensions with the Palestinians. The recent decision by Education Minister Yoav Kish to ban the Israeli-Palestinian Forum for Grieving Families, a grassroots peace group, from schools is just one example. From day one of the current government, Israelis have taken steps to protect their democracy. After several weeks of on and off work, led mostly by concerned citizens from all walks of life (rather than by major political parties or NGOs), a broad pro-democracy movement began to take hold and has steadily grown and evolved ever since. For more than 30 consecutive weeks, protests have taken place every Saturday night across Israel. At least a quarter of a million people regularly takes part in the protests, and in some cases many more. Similar protests

have been held in cities around the world by Israelis and Jews residing there. The scope and scale of the protests are unprecedented in the country's history and an inspiration in Israel and abroad. Besides the usual weekly protests, additional resistance demonstrations and activities were organized around key events, such as the spontaneous overnight opposition to Netanyahu's attempt to fire Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in March and the massive pro-democracy rally from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in July. . . Such events mobilize and engage Israelis of different backgrounds—left and right, secular and religious—and include many who were not previously politically active and who now fear for the future of their country. This process creates new alliances that transcend former dividing lines in Israeli society. This is perhaps most evident in the various weekly protests that take place in Jerusalem, in front of the President's House, where a unique mix of Israelis congregate and take the stage. But these same events are also leading to dramatic polarization between those who support and oppose the government's actions, and have already led to violence against pro-democracy protesters. While Netanyahu seeks to downplay legislation already passed, the pro-democracy camp highlights just how dramatic the changes really are. As a result, large numbers of IDF reservists stopped volunteering for service. High-tech companies are gradually moving their business elsewhere; Clinicians collectively and individually research resettlement options; consumer boycotts are gaining momentum; Foreign investment is declining, and more. The protest movement, decentralized in nature, has given rise to new leaders with unusual backgrounds. For example, Professor Chikma Pressler, a physicist at the Weizmann Institute, has become a prominent figure (and was profiled recently by The New York Times). Others, including those in the high-tech sector, have risen to the occasion and altered their lives and career plans to help protect democracy. This will eventually lead to a political renewal in the Israeli liberal camp, the first signs of which will be evident in the next municipal elections, which will be held in October. In parallel to their domestic work, pro-democracy Israelis also seek international support. They are learning from their peers in Hungary, Poland and Turkey, who have experienced gradual but dramatic democratic decline. They warn against the "Lebanonization" of Israel, seek to raise awareness

abroad of domestic developments, work to create joint liberal networks with like-minded partners in other countries, and mobilize international politicians and leaders to express concern and take action. The struggle in the international arena has already achieved tangible results. For example, after a long campaign by Israelis in the United States, Arthur Danczyk, the main benefactor of the right-wing Kohelt Forum, decided to stop funding the think tank that had spurred judicial reform. Everything that has happened in recent months inside Israel and in its troubled relations with the Palestinians also affects Israel's relations abroad. In response to the new Israeli government, the United States initially invested its energy in seeking détente between the Israelis and the Palestinians, especially around Ramadan and Passover. He has held two regional summits in Jordan and Egypt, and has expressed his concern and opposition to settler violence and settlement expansion. Over time, President Joe Biden has become increasingly critical of the judicial changes in Israel. He did so while highlighting his commitment and friendship to Israel, as evidenced by President Isaac Herzog's visit to Washington. Efforts are underway to advance the implementation of previously agreed upon projects, such as the water and electricity exchange agreement between Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan. It seems that some Arab countries are ready to move forward with Israel, even in the current circumstances, as long as its main demands are met. This is the case of Morocco, regarding Israel's acceptance of its position with regard to the Western Sahara, and this seems to be the case of Saudi Arabia as well, in the case of the American nuclear program, and in the event of an Israeli government willing to make some concessions on the Palestinian issue. In short, Israel is in uncharted territory and the crisis is likely to continue for months to come. The government is eager to continue its judicial reform, and pro-democracy Israelis are determined not to let that happen. This could lead to several possible options, ranging from an unprecedented constitutional crisis with deep social polarization to a change in the composition of the government due to internal chaos, a major security escalation with the Palestinians or Hezbollah, or a diplomatic breakthrough with Saudi Arabia. It is difficult to predict political events in Israel in normal times.

Briefs

Caretakers to ensure...

FROM PAGE 01
the US Ambassador had also met with the Chief Election Commissioner and discussed with his matters of mutual interest. The US Ambassador, during the meeting, had wished the Election Commission shall hold free and fair elections.

ECP hints at timely polls

FROM PAGE 01
adopting a deliberate stance in refraining from promptly announcing a schedule for the upcoming general election. Meanwhile, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Central Executive Committee (CEC) has decided to advocate the organisation of the general elections in 90 days. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari chaired the session of the PPP CEC to make key decisions including general elections and consultations with ECP.

Denmark finally...

FROM PAGE 01
the ban. The United States and United Kingdom governments recently announced that authorities in Denmark had disrupted a number of planned "terror" attacks and made arrests following the Quran burnings. "We can't continue to stand by with our arms crossed while several individuals do everything they can to provoke violent reactions," Hummelgaard said. The bill would make it a criminal offence to burn the Muslim holy book, the Bible or the Torah publicly. It remains unclear when the proposal will be presented to the 179-seat Danish Parliament.

Disaster looms...

FROM PAGE 01
Headline inflation as well as core inflation is expected to further go up so the policy rate would also be increased under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditions. A doomsday scenario is looming large with the possibility of heading towards steep "stagflation" on account of lowering GDP growth and an upsurge in CPI-based inflation in months ahead. Its ultimate victim would be the poor segments of the society because stagflation would push up poverty and unemployment. Persistent decline in the exchange rate has crossed the mark of Rs300 against the US dollar in the interbank rate owing to the increased demand for dollars for clearance of imports, payment of dividends, and materializing structural benchmark condition of the IMF under \$3 billion Standby Arrangement (SBA) for keeping the difference between interbank and open market not more than 1.25%.

Nawaz likely to return...

FROM PAGE 01
In London to decide that PML-N supremo will return to Pakistan in mid-October. Previously, media reported that Nawaz will return to Pakistan by mid-September; however, there has been a change of plan in the last few days after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announced that elections are not possible within 90 days. The sources said that Nawaz's return has been delayed till mid-October, not because of the ECP announcement but over the advice of party loyalists that September is too hot and severe for large-scale political gatherings, making mid-October a better time for return. The decision to return around mid-October was taken after Shehbaz held two meetings with the PML-N supremo in London. Shehbaz arrived in London last Sunday after handing over the reins to Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar. "It's the severity of weather that is being kept in mind in deciding the return date of Nawaz Sharif. There could be a further change but for now, the date of 15th October is final, and further discussions will take place around it," shared the trusted source.



KASHMIR: Tourist are enjoying at the beautiful Patlian lake of the Neelum Valleys as the kashmir is the best tourist attraction in Pakistan. – DNA

Nadeem qualifies for World Athletics Championship final

Pakistani javelin ace Arshad Nadeem made his mark on Friday by securing a spot in both final of World Athletics Championships (WAC) and Paris Olympics 2024

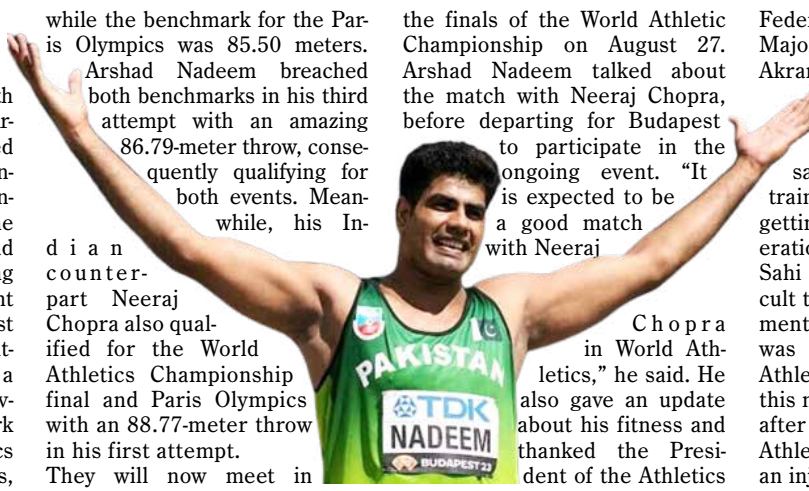
SPORTS DESK

BUDAPEST: Commonwealth Games (CWG) Gold medalist Arshad Nadeem on Friday secured his place for the final of the ongoing World Athletics Championship in Budapest, as well as, the Paris Olympics in 2024. Arshad Nadeem started off the qualifying round of the javelin throw event with a 70.63m throw in his first attempt, while in his second attempt, he threw his javelin at a distance of 81.53 meters. However, the Automatic qualifying mark for the final of the World Athletics Championship was 83 meters,

while the benchmark for the Paris Olympics was 85.50 meters. Arshad Nadeem breached both benchmarks in his third attempt with an amazing 86.79-meter throw, consequently qualifying for both events. Meanwhile, his Indian counterpart Neeraj Chopra also qualified for the World Athletics Championship final and Paris Olympics with an 88.77-meter throw in his first attempt. They will now meet in

the finals of the World Athletic Championship on August 27. Arshad Nadeem talked about the match with Neeraj Chopra, before departing for Budapest to participate in the ongoing event. "It is expected to be a good match with Neeraj Chopra in World Athletics," he said. He also gave an update about his fitness and thanked the President of the Athletics

Federation of Pakistan (AFP) Major General (Rtd) Muhammad Akram Sahi for supporting him while he was nursing his injury. "I am fully fit and will try to perform well," said Arshad Nadeem. "I have trained hard for the event after getting fit," "I am grateful to Federation President General Akram Sahi for supporting me in difficult times," he added. It is worth mentioning that Arshad Nadeem was declared fit for the World Athletics Championship earlier this month by the medical board, after being ruled out of the Asian Athletics Championship, due to an injury to his left knee.



World Blind Games Pakistan thump England to register fourth consecutive victory

Wicketkeeper LJ Sugg top-scored with 25 runs, while, opening batter M Dean scored 13 runs

BIRMINGHAM: Pakistan blind cricket team on Thursday, registered their fourth consecutive victory in the ongoing International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) World Blind Games with a thumping six-wicket victory over hosts England in their final group stage game. England, after opting to bat first, bundled out at a meagre 103 runs in 18 overs. Wicketkeeper LJ Sugg top-scored with 25 runs, while, opening batter M Dean scored 13 runs. Except for these two, none of the batters managed to reach double figures, while three batters went back to the pavilion without opening their accounts. Shahzaib Haider topped the bowling charts for Pakistan with four wickets, while Mohammad Shahzaib picked up two wickets. Pakistan got off to a strong start in their chase, thanks to a solid 59-run opening stand between Matiullah and captain Nisar Ali before England blind team sent the captain back to the pavilion in the fifth over. Nisar Ali top scored with 35 runs in 17 balls, with the help of four boundaries. England picked two wickets, including Matiullah in the next over to reduce Pakistan to 66-3. Matiullah managed 22 runs off 12 balls. However, they only managed to pick one more wicket before Pakistan blind team chased down the total in the 10th over. Prior to this match, Pakistan blind cricket team on Wednesday, booked their spot in the final of the tournament with a resounding six-wicket victory over Australia. Notably, Pakistan kick-started their World Blind Games campaign with an 18-run victory over arch-rivals India before handing a seven-wicket thrashing to Bangladesh on Tuesday. – Agencies

Klopp denies speculation linking Salah to Saudi

RIYADH: Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp dismissed suggestions on Friday that Mohamed Salah could become the latest star name to depart European football for Saudi Arabia. According to reports, Al-Ittihad are trying to lure the Egyptian to the Gulf state with a huge salary offer that would rival the deals that enticed Cristiano Ronaldo and Neymar to the Gulf kingdom. Salah signed a three-year contract extension at Anfield just over 12 months ago and his agent has previously poured cold water on speculation of a move. "If we considered leaving LFC this

year, we wouldn't have renewed the contract last summer. Mohamed [Salah] remains committed to LFC," Rami Abbas posted on X, formerly Twitter, earlier this month. Liverpool's plans for the transfer window have already been thrown into chaos by the loss of midfielders Fabinho and Jordan Henderson to Saudi clubs and Klopp said the club would not consider any offers for Salah. "Talk about media stories," Klopp said at his pre-match press conference ahead of Sunday's trip to Newcastle. "Nothing to talk about from my point of view – Mo Salah is a Liverpool player. "He is an essential player, was

and will be. There is nothing there. If there was, the answer would be no." Japan captain Wataru Endo could make his first start for the Reds at St. James' Park after the defensive midfielder appeared as a substitute in last week-end's 3-1 win over Bournemouth. Liverpool's failure to beat Chelsea to the signature of Moises Caicedo or Romeo Lavia before turning to Endo has attracted criticism of their business in the transfer window and Klopp recognised he may need more reinforcements in the final week of the window – or luck with injuries – to get by in the coming months. – Agencies

Babar contract with ILT20 fails

The Bangladesh Premier League is likely to begin on January 10th, with several Pakistani players including Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan participating during their free days

ABU DHABI: The second edition of the International League T20 (ILT20) will take place from January 19 to February 18. In the previous year's event, no Pakistan cricketer was allowed to participate. However, this time Shaheen Afridi, Shadab Khan, and Azam Khan will be seen in action for the Desert Vipers. It was reported that the captain, Ba-

bar Azam, was also offered a contract worth Rs150 million. He was also being considered as an ambassador for the league. While certain aspects of the deals were finalized, the payment terms and image couldn't be settled upon. The Bangladesh Premier League is likely to begin on January 10th, with several Pakistani players including Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan participating during their free days. Shaheen Afridi has signed a yearly contract with ILT20 worth \$400,000, and he will receive additional payment for image rights. This way, he can earn nearly 150 million rupees each year. – Agencies



Pakistan U-16 football team honoured by Candyland

PFF NC Chairman HMalik expressed that Football possesses the remarkable ability to unite the world. This power of football has gathered immensely talented U-16 players

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan U-16 Football team, set to compete in Bhutan, was bestowed with an honor by Candyland, a valued coalition partner of the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF). The recognition ceremony took place at a local hotel, where the young athletes were celebrated for their dedication and potential. PFF Normalisation Committee Chairman Haroon Malik graced the occasion as chief guest, while other notables present on the occasion were former PFF senior official Col (R) Mujahid Tareen, cricket coach Manzoor Elahi, PCB executive committee member Amir Nawab, Ajmal Sabir, Basalat Mirza from Candyland, players, football lovers and a good number of media persons.

Speaking on the occasion, PFF NC Chairman Haroon Malik expressed, "Football possesses the remarkable ability to unite the world. This power of football has gathered immensely talented U-16 players from every nook and cranny of our nation. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Candyland for their remarkable joint initiative. It's heartening to see their dedication not for personal publicity, but purely for the advancement of grassroots football in Pakistan. This will undoubtedly benefit Pakistani football for years to come." Malik continued, "Pakistan's sporting landscape, particularly in football, is profoundly blessed to have individuals

and organizations like Candyland. Their earnest desire to elevate Pakistan's standing on the international football stage reflects a genuine passion for the sport. With their unwavering support, we have the opportunity to enhance our grassroots football and propel it to unprecedented heights. Strengthening grassroots football serves as the bedrock for flourishing at higher levels. Once again, I extend my gratitude to Ismail Industries and its proprietors, Muhammad Ismail and Miftah Ismail, for their magnanimous commitment to the advancement of football in Pakistan." Former PFF senior official Col (R) Mujahid Tareen shared his insights, saying, "The col-

laborative initiative of PFF and Candyland is praiseworthy and much-needed. This is the essence required in every sport, particularly in football. Candyland, in its steadfast commitment to fostering football from the grassroots, not only facilitated nationwide trials in collaboration with the PFF Normalization Committee but also meticulously curated a well-balanced U-16 squad for the Bhutan event. These comprehensive trials drew participants from every corner of Pakistan, including remote areas brimming with untapped talent, leading to the identification of 200 remarkably gifted players. Out of this pool, 50 players were selected for the national U-16 training camp in Abbottabad. As August draws to a close, the team is set to embark on their journey to Bhutan.



No one would be...

FROM PAGE 01
caretaker Prime Minister had strongly condemned Jaranwala incident, adding "the government will not tolerate such behavior." The process of construction and rehabilitation of the affected churches and the houses of the affected citizens was in progress, the minister told Ashrafi. The Maulana congratulated Murtaza Solangi on assuming the responsibilities as caretaker Minister. Tahir Ashrafi paid tributes to Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar for taking immediate legal action against those involved in the Jaranwala tragedy. He said that Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Naqvi's immediate actions in that regard were commendable.

Trial court erred, we...

FROM PAGE 01
we never sought adjournment." He said that doctors had suggested Parvez bed rest. At this, the IHC chief justice said: "The request for suspension of sentence is now at a critical stage." He added that arguments would have been completed in fifteen to twenty minutes. He further said: "We can also do what the trial court did, but we will not." The PTI has criticised the trial court's verdict saying that the decision was announced in haste in the absence of the party chief and his lawyer. The court then adjourned the hearing till Monday. "We adjourn the case till Monday, and even if no one comes, we will announce our decision," Justice Ferooz said, adding that what the trial court had done was wrong.

Khan's life is in danger...

FROM PAGE 01
after the court sentenced him to three years in prison in the Toshakhana case related to the sale of state gifts that he received as prime minister from foreign dignitaries during his 2018-22 tenure. Consequently, he was also barred from politics for five years. According to the affidavit submitted today, Bushra Bibi was allowed to meet Khan in Attock Jail on August 22 after many difficulties and problems, "[The] PTI chairman's arm muscles have also become very weak," she stated in the affidavit. "It is dangerous at the age of 70. It is life-threatening."

Pak warns India of...

FROM PAGE 01
indicts India on its human rights record and the grave situation in IIOJK. The spokesperson urged India to bring an end to its repression of the Kashmiri people so that they are able to exercise their right to self-determination in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions. Responding to a number of questions about BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, she said Pakistan has not made any formal request to join BRICS group of nations. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan will examine the latest developments and make a determination about its future engagement with the group.

PMO warns officials...

FROM PAGE 01
the government has instructed all state officials to remain vigilant and ignore any such messages. The officials have also been told to immediately alert the Cabinet Division upon receiving such a message. "Pakistan's security agencies are fully alert on this matter," the PMO statement added. Earlier in July, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) had directed the interior ministry to conduct a joint investigation into a data breach as it expressed apprehensions over the data leak of citizens, especially of military authorities, from the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). In September last year, a slew of audio recordings of conversations between key government figures – including then-premier Shehbaz Sharif, PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz and some members of the federal cabinet – were released.

Briefs

88 UK deaths linked to Canada 'poison seller'

LONDON : Dozens of people in the UK died after buying a poisonous substance from a seller in Canada, who is accused of helping people to take their own lives. The National Crime Agency (NCA) could not confirm the chemical was the direct cause of the 88 deaths but has launched a criminal investigation. British police have been making welfare visits to hundreds of addresses to trace buyers across the country. Kenneth Law was arrested in May, accused of assisting suicide. The 57-year-old is thought to have run a number of websites selling equipment to assist suicide. Canadian authorities believe he sent 1,200 packages to customers in more than 40 countries, though it is not known how many included the poisonous substance. BBC News is not naming the chemical allegedly sold by Mr Law. Peel Regional Police said they began investigating the case in April following the sudden death of an adult in the Toronto area. Alleged links between Mr Law and deaths in the UK first surfaced in an undercover investigation by The Times the same month. Since Mr Law's arrest, police forces across the UK have been making welfare checks on everyone who ordered the substance. The NCA, which was coordinating the checks, said that 272 people in the UK had been identified as buying from Mr Law over a two-year period. The NCA says 88 of them later died, but at this stage there are no confirmed links between the items purchased from the websites and cause of death. —APP

Sudan's people support army

ANKARA : People are supporting the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in their "tragic war" with the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) because they believe it is a "dignity battle," the country's diplomat in Türkiye said. Nadir Yousef Eltayeb, the ambassador of Sudan to Ankara, told Anadolu in an exclusive interview that the "tragic war" has a silver lining in that the Sudanese people are standing by the army in unity and support "because they feel that this is a dignity battle for them... to be or not to be." "That is why, all the people regardless of tribe, ethnic origin, or political affiliation, everyone is united behind the army. The war now is for the army to prove that it is the main controller of security and to provide security for the people of Sudan as a whole," according to the ambassador. The RSF does not represent any regional or even political dimension as they are merely a small clan that believes "they can rule the country by force," Eltayeb said. There is no political affiliation from other parts of Sudan to this group, and no support from even western Sudan, Darfur, where they belong, and their own tribe, he said, pointing out: "I don't think this rebel movement has any chance or any opportunity to have any political role in the future, which is why I feel that Sudan will come out of this more strong and more united." —Agencies

Flood emergency alert issued in China

ISTANBUL: China on Friday activated a level-4 emergency plan to address expected flooding in at least 13 provinces. The country's Water Resources Ministry said the top-level emergency alert has been issued in eastern Jiangsu and Anhui provinces, as well as Chongqing and Guizhou in southwestern China, along with Gansu and Shaanxi in the northwest of the country, Beijing-based daily Global Times reported. These areas are expected to experience intense rainfall from Friday until Sunday. Several typhoons and floods have hit China in recent days, bringing devastation and killing dozens of people. In northwest China, a 10-day heat wave is forecast to begin on Friday, with temperatures reaching 40C (104F) in some areas. —APP

OIP discusses Indonesia's rise as a middle power, global leadership

DNA

JAKARTA: "The emergence of Indonesia as a 'Middle Power' in the Indo-Pacific is an excellent example of proactive diplomacy marked by constant attempts to improve collaboration, maintain peace, and promote multilateralism while upholding democratic values and human rights". This was stated by Spica A. Tutuhunewa, Director of Center for Foreign Policy Strategy for America and European Region, Foreign Policy Strategy Agency, MOFA Jakarta, when giving his lecture on the topic of Indonesia's Rise as Middle Power and its Global Leadership. She was speaking at the 11th session of the OIP which is being jointly organized by the Indonesian Embassy and the Bahria University, Islamabad. At the session, the participants gained knowledge about Indonesia's foreign policy strategies as middle power driven by its resource availability and strategic environment among other leading by example on specific issues, acting as a bridge builder, and building coalitions beyond regional diplomacy to

strengthen multilateralism. "We were living in a world where changes occur much more often than before and require continuous analysis and evaluation, we are not able to unambiguously predict and prioritize factors that may influence the situation, the information is difficult to interpret unequivocally and the past experiences were not applicable to explain new events" she said while sharing her insight on the current global challenges. The speaker highlighted the challenges faced by the Southeast Asian region (SEA) including unemployment, economic recession, climate change, frequent weather events, socio-economic gaps, income disparity, and military tensions. She also highlighted the growing complexity of the Indo Pacific region, with flash points like Taiwan Straits, South China Sea, and Korean peninsula. Discussing Indonesian diplomacy and leadership she said that as a middle power Indonesia was bridge builder and net contributor to peace and stability. Geography, demographic dividend, democracy and economic capabilities were its strategic assets and the country was capitalizing on these



strategic trust with reviving multilateralism and respect for international law and principles. She also informed that Indonesia was the chair of ASEAN and MIKTA in 2023 while it had G-20 Presidency in 2022. She informed that new indicators measuring patterns of diplomatic engagement show the country of 270 million to be among the region's most diplomatically active players. "Free and Active Policy was not necessarily neutral because no country could live in isolation.

While describing the Indonesian foreign policy, the speaker said that Indonesia has (4+1) priorities namely Economic Diplomacy, Protection of Indonesian abroad, sovereignty, regional and global contribution and leadership and strengthening diplomatic infrastructure, she emphasized. "Indonesia's geo-strategic position and extensive diplomatic networking with neighboring and extra-regional powers make Indonesia an important contributor to dealing with challenging global

issues" the speaker pointed out. According to the Lowy Institute Power Index 2023, Indonesia is one of only six Asian countries to have had an increase in its overall index of exerting influence in international politics. These strong credentials make Indonesia an important global player with significant influence at international Forums. Indonesia, a historically non-alignment nation faces tough challenge because of the increasing geopolitical tension between the US and China. It emphasizes the importance of ASEAN and multilateral institutions like the G20 and UN in navigating geopolitical tensions. During the G20 summit, Indonesia provided a platform for US, Chinese, and Russian leaders to interact and mediate their conflicts, allowing it to play a strategic role. In the Q&A session the speaker informed the participants that, since 1998, Indonesia has implemented democratic reforms, eradicating corruption, and limiting presidential terms to 10 years. As of April 2023, it ranks 8th in UN peacekeeping missions which is also mandated by its 1945 Constitution.

\$20b increase in exports can address issues of economy



ISLAMABAD Former Prime Minister of Pakistan and senior leader of PML(N) Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said that if exports are increased by 20 billion dollars, the economy can get out of difficulties. In order to boost industrialization, the government should provide free land on lease to the industry. Free and fair elections are vital to stabilize the economy, 3 times free and fair elections would address all issues of the country and put it on sustainable development. To steer Pakistan out of the

current crisis, the entire leadership of the country has to sit together and take tough decisions for the better economic future, otherwise the inter-institutions fight will prove disastrous for the country. It is difficult to promote investment in Pakistan in the presence of NAB because investors are reluctant to invest in Pakistan due to NAB's actions. If local investors will not invest in Pakistan, then who will come and invest here, so if favorable conditions are created for local investors first, foreign investment will follow. Foreign ambassadors in Pakistan are promoting the business of their countries

through trade diplomacy, but Pakistani ambassadors in foreign countries do not understand trade diplomacy. He expressed these views while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the economy of Pakistan is currently facing serious challenges due to which businesses are also suffering. The dollar flight, high electricity, gas and oil prices have increased the cost of doing business many times and if this trend continues,

many businesses will close down. Therefore, the government should focus on creating conducive environment for businesses in consultation with the private sector so that the economy recovers. All loss-making SOEs should be privatized as the government is spending huge amounts of about PKR 1000 to keep them afloat, which is a huge burden on the national exchequer. He said that the ICCI wants to establish an industrial estate in the region so Shahid Khaqan Abbasi should support the Chamber in these efforts. He said that all political parties should agree on a charter of economy to ensure long-term economic policies.

Turkish foreign minister meets with Ukrainian president

Ankara frequently voices support for the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and does not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea

ISTANBUL : Türkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on Friday met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the capital Kyiv, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said. Fidan also held talks with Andriy Yermak, the head of the Ukrainian Presidential Office, and Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal. He is later expected to meet his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba. Zelenskyy said in a statement on Telegram that he discussed with Fidan many important issues, including the peace formula he proposed at the latest G-20 summit in Indonesia, preparations for the Global Peace Summit and "risks posed by the Russian blockade of the Black Sea grain corridor." "I am grateful to Türkiye for its continued and consistent support of Ukraine!" he added. Last month, Russia suspended its participation in the Black Sea grain deal, brokered by Türkiye and the UN, to resume grain exports from three Ukrainian Black Sea ports that were paused after the Ukraine war in February 2022. Moscow has repeatedly complained West has not met its obligations regarding Russia's own grain exports. It says restrictions on payments, logistics and insurance have been a barrier to its shipments. Ankara has been carrying out intense efforts for the restoration of the July 2022 deal, and has also called on Kyiv and Moscow to end the war through negotiations. Türkiye recognized Ukraine's independence in 1991, and bilateral relations gained the status of strategic partnership in 2011. Ankara frequently voices support for the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and does not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea. —DNA

EU tech companies to better police

BRUSSELS : The world's major tech titans must crack down on illegal content and keep European users safe online from Friday, when far-reaching EU rules force digital firms to fall into line. The landmark Digital Services Act (DSA) compels tech companies to better police content to protect European users against disinformation and hate speech. And it also demands the firms are more transparent about their services, algorithms and how ads are targeted. The first phase of the regulation came into force on Friday, affecting 19 "very large" digital platforms including social media networks, websites and online retailers with at least 45 million monthly active users in the European Union. They are: Alibaba AliExpress, Amazon Store, Apple AppStore, Booking.com, Meta-owned Facebook and Instagram, Google's Maps, Play, and Shopping, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter (rebranded as X), Wikipedia, YouTube and Zalando as well as Bing and Google Search. Many inside and outside of the EU hope the DSA will be a beacon for other countries to take similar action and bring more regulatory oversight of big tech worldwide. "These systemic platforms play a very, very important role in our daily life and it is really the time now for Europe, for us, to set our own rules," the EU's top tech enforcer, industry commissioner Thierry Breton, said in a video posted online. —Agencies

History of Rohingya refugee crisis

ANKARA : Six years after being uprooted from Myanmar through a campaign of targeted violence by the military junta, more than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims fled to neighboring Bangladesh, joining thousands of others who had fled earlier episodes of violence. More than a million of them live in Bangladesh's Cox Bazar alone, making it the largest refugee settlement in the world. Many took to the sea to reach Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Thailand to escape from persecution. Their future looks as uncertain as ever. Uncertainty persists that the Rohingya are especially vulnerable as stateless people, long denied citizenship in Myanmar. With no official refugee status in Bangladesh, the Rohingya have little access to employment or education and remain dependent on humanitarian aid. Human Rights Watch says recently that about 600,000 Rohingya remain in Myanmar, effectively detained by junta authorities under a system of apartheid. "Rohingya on both sides of the Myanmar-Bangladesh border are trapped in stateless purgatory, denied their most basic rights, awaiting justice and the chance to go home," said Shayna Baucher, Asia researcher at Human Rights Watch. "Instead of addressing these issues head-on, UN Security Council inaction and government aid cutbacks are leaving Rohingya in even more desperate straits." —DNA

Milan records hottest day since 1763

MILAN : the northern city of Italy, experienced a scorching heatwave as temperatures soared to a new record high average of 33 degrees Celsius (91.4 degrees Fahrenheit) on Wednesday, according to the regional environmental protection agency (ARPA). This marked the hottest day since temperature recordings began at the Milano Brera weather station in 1763, surpassing the previous record of 32.8 degrees Celsius set on 11th August, 2003. The heatwave, which started in mid-August, has affected much of southern Europe, leading to extreme weather conditions, wildfires, health warnings, and disruptions to tourists' holidays. In July, the Italian capital, Rome, faced its own heat record with a peak temperature of 41.8 degrees Celsius. The entire Lombardy region surrounding Milan experienced the hottest days of the summer on 23rd and 24th August, with several towns reporting temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius. —APP

'Help heal wounds of Jaranwala violence victims'

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, told pastors and Christian leaders of Atlanta, the capital of US state of Georgia, on Thursday that the Pakistani government is moving swiftly to bring to book those behind the deadly violence in Jaranwala that traumatized the town's residents. "The actions of August 16 do not represent our society or our religion, which is a religion of peace for humanity," the ambassador said during a virtual meeting with the clergymen. Organized by the Pakistani-American Friends of Atlanta Team (PAFA), the meeting was joined, among others, by Gloria Joseph, Sharon Farhat, Solomon Luke, Jonathan Massey, Flavia Bharadwaj, David Cecil, Dr. Nasir Sohra, Javed Stephen Massey, Cyril Benjamin and Rev. Younis Farhat. "Ours was and will continue to be an inclusive society and the actions of August 16 are beyond condemnation," he said. "It was a dark day for Pakistan - innocent people were traumatized and churches were burnt and desecrated. Pakistan's leadership, civil society, and the heads of religious parties across the spectrum have condemned the incident," he pointed out. The Ambassador said that Pakistanis have lived together as a society and "we were proud of the contribution made by our Christian brethren towards the socio-economic development of the country." —APP

Philippines seeks of continuation joint military drills

Amid current geopolitical climate, Filipino President Marcos to discuss military exercises with Premier Albanese next month

ISTANBUL : Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Friday he will discuss with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese the continuation of joint military drills between the two nations to "strengthen armed forces capabilities." Marcos made the comments while watching joint war games by Filipino, Australian and American forces. The dialogue will encompass broader common concerns amid the current geopolitical climate, the Philippines' Presidential Communication Office said in a statement. The two leaders are scheduled to meet



in the first Amphibious and Land Operations of the Indo-Pacific Endeavor 2023 (ALON) at Naval

Station Leovigildo Gantioqui, Camp Artemio Ricarte, President Marcos said: "I think we would be discussing for sure also the continuation of this kind of joint exercise to increase the capabilities again of our (forces)." He further stressed: "That's certainly going to be part of the discussion that I will be having with the Prime Minister when he comes ... to visit us here in the Philippines." The first ALON war games in northwestern Zambales province of the Philippines aimed at enhancing the capa-

bilities of the Marine Amphibious Ready Unit and strengthening the nation's coastal defense capabilities in collaboration with allies. Around 2,200 troops from both nations participated in the joint exercises held in San Antonio, Zambales. The exercise involved military hardware such as the Australian Air Force F-35A Lightning-II, naval support vessels, Australian M1A1 Abrams tanks, US Marine Corps plane V-22 Osprey, and Philippine Marine Corps amphibious assault vehicles. —APP

US will not abandon the Middle East

US troops will remain in Syria and Iraq to work for enduring defeat of Daesh/ISIS, says General Mark Milley



WASHINGTON: The US will not "walk away" from the Middle East, a top general said Thursday, emphasizing the region's critical role in the country's national security priorities. During an inter-

view with Jordan's Al-Mamlaka TV, Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the region is "very important and very significant to the United States for a lot of reasons." "We have very close friendships and partnerships. And we want to make sure that the region is stable. Obviously, the region is a primary source of oil and energy resources for other parts of the world," he said. Milley noted that the longstanding relationship with the Middle East will continue. "I can't imagine that the United States would ever walk away from the Middle East. I think we'll remain committed for many, many

years and decades to come," he said. Syria, Iraq Asked whether the US is considering increasing the number of troops in the region, Milley said it rises and falls depending on "the threat at the moment in time." Turning to Daesh/ISIS, he recalled that the terrorist group was destroyed but the movement is not dead yet. "The ideology is not yet dead, and there are some ISIS terrorists that are still roaming the deserts of Syria and somewhat into Iraq, so that presents a threat." He maintained that US troops will remain in both countries to work for the group's enduring defeat. "There are still fighters in small groups

in and around Syria and around Iraq...and if we were to somehow suddenly withdraw, those forces could reconstruct themselves. So the situation is much, much better than it was. But it still requires a level of commitment. So we've got some modest amount of forces in Syria and we've got forces in Iraq," he added. Asked if the US will leave Syria when the terrorist group is wiped out, Milley said the decision will fall on President Joe Biden and the US government. Ukraine Turning to the war in Ukraine waged by Russia, Milley said it was illegal and unprovoked. Ukrainian forces are carrying out a counter-offensive against Rus-

sian troops in an effort to take back territories, but it has been "bloody" and "slow." "It's frankly too early to say whether it's succeeded or failed. It clearly is a partial success to date. Now the speed at which the offensive is being undertaken is slower than the planners had thought," he said. He also said that efforts to help train Ukrainian F-16 pilots are moving forward, adding a training program is in place and the Ukrainians will receive the fighter jets soon. Meanwhile, the Pentagon said Thursday that the training of Ukrainian pilots will start in October in the US state of Arizona.

Briefs

British HC meets Maryam

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz on Friday met British High Commissioner Jane Marriott in Raiwind. Maryam congratulated Jean Marriott on her diplomatic responsibilities in Pakistan and discussed matters of mutual interest during the meeting held in Lahore. Maryam said Marriott's appointment would strengthen the relations between both the countries. The PML-N leader appreciated and thanked for the much needed assistance by the UK government in educating the flood-hit girls. The British High Commissioner also thanked Maryam for expressing her good wishes.

US to train Ukrainian pilots to fly F-16s

WASHINGTON: The United States has said it will start training Ukrainian pilots on F-16 fighters from next month, joining other allies working to strengthen Ukraine's air defences some 18 months since Russia's invasion. The pilots will be brought to the US in September where they will first learn English before starting their training on how to fly the advanced fighter. Speaking in Washington, DC, on Thursday, Pentagon spokesman Pat Ryder said the training in Texas and Arizona would involve "several" pilots and "dozens" of personnel to maintain the aircraft. US President Joe Biden and his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy discussed the training programme in a call on Thursday, the White House said. "President Biden reiterated the US commitment to support Ukraine's defence against Russian aggression for as long as it takes, and to hold Russia accountable for its actions," it said in a statement. - Agencies

Greece wildfires: 79 arrested for arson

ATHENS: Greece has called out "arsonist scum" after police made 79 arson arrests over wildfires ravaging the country. Civil Protection Minister Vassilis Kikilias said there had been several attempts by arsonists to start new fires on Mount Parnitha, north-west of Athens. The blaze is one of hundreds in the nation where wildfires have already killed at least 20 people this week. "You are committing a crime against the country," Mr Kikilias said. "Arsonist scum are setting fires that threaten forests, property and, most of all, human lives," Mr Kikilias told Greeks during a televised emergency briefing on Thursday. "You will not get away with it, we will find you, you will be held accountable." Summer wildfires are common in Greece and scientists have linked the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, including heatwaves, to climate change. - Agencies

Palestine lambasts Israeli minister for his racist remarks

The State of Palestine recalls that Israel, the occupying Power, its officials, occupying forces, and settler militias, have no sovereignty or right to any part of Palestine

NEWS DESK

RAMALLAH: The State of Palestine condemns in the strongest terms the racist and heinous remarks made by Israel's fascist Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, which only confirms Israel's apartheid regime of Jewish supremacy and racial terror against the Palestinian people. Ben-Gvir's racist remarks and continued incitement against the Palestinian people are the inevitable culmination of 75 years of Israeli hate-mongering, rooted in the Nakba and sustained by Israel's illegal occupation and oppression which institutionally dehumanizes and relegates the Palestinian people to an inhuman status. The State of Palestine recalls that Israel, the occupying Power, its officials, occupying forces, and settler militias, have no sovereignty or right to any part of Palestine. The rights of the Palestinian people to live as free and independent people in their homeland, in dignity, in peace and security, are universally recognized and enshrined. Israel's systematic hate speech, provocative rhetoric, violence and dehumanization of the Palestinian people across decades are fomenting mass violence at unprecedented levels. Ben-Gvir and Israeli officials must be sanctioned and held accountable for inciting violence and destruction and knowingly leading and contributing to the mass persecution of the Palestinian people. On the Friday US has condemned Israel's National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir for claiming his rights in the occupied West Bank are more important than those

of Palestinians. The state department said it strongly condemned the "inflammatory comments" and "all racist rhetoric". His remarks on Israeli TV sparked a storm of criticism online. Mr Ben Gvir has since called the coverage "fake news" and attacked the "radical left" for "misquoting" him. On X, the platform previously known as Twitter, Mr Ben Gvir on Friday also launched a scathing attack on the Palestinian-American model Bella Hadid for reposting a clip of his comments, calling her an "Israel hater" who made him look "racist and dark". Ms Hadid had reposted the video on Instagram where she has 60 million followers, adding the comment: "In no place, no time... should one life be more valuable than another's." Mr Ben Gvir leads the ultranationalist Otzma Yehudit or "Jewish Power" party which espouses racist, anti-Arab policies. He has previous convictions for inciting racism and supporting terrorism. In December he was made a top minister by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who gave him a seat in his security cabinet and put him in charge of the domestic police, as well as Israel's militarised border police force that operates in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank. His comments on Wednesday came amid spiralling violence in which Palestinian gunmen killed three Israelis in separate attacks, including one close to the West Bank city of Hebron, where Mr Ben Gvir lives in a Jewish settlement. It led to even further restrictions on movement for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians as Israeli forces searched for the gunmen. Palestinians face checkpoints

across the West Bank, which Israel says are needed for security "My right, my wife's, my children's, to roam the roads of Judea and Samaria are more important than the right of movement of the Arabs," said Mr Ben Gvir, using a biblical term for the West Bank. He then addressed Mohammad Magadli, an Arab Israeli journalist in the studio, saying: "Sorry Mohammad, but this is the reality, that's the truth. My right for life comes before their right to movement." A video clip of the comments went viral online and sparked a backlash, including from Palestinians and Israeli opposition figures. The Palestinian Authority leadership condemned "in the strongest terms the racist and heinous remarks by Israel's fascist minister Itamar Ben Gvir, which only confirms Israel's apartheid regime of Jewish supremacy and racial terror against the Palestinian people". It called for Mr Ben Gvir and other Israeli officials to be "sanctioned and held accountable". Karine Elharrar, an Israeli MP in the opposition YeshAtid party, described the minister as "the authentic representative of the most racist, messianic and Kahanist government we've ever had". Mr Ben Gvir's political background lies in Kahanism - a violently racist movement that supports the expulsion of Palestinians from their lands. Pressed by Israeli journalists for a response, a US state department spokesman on Thursday night said: "We strongly condemn Israeli minister Ben Gvir's inflammatory comments on the freedom of movement of Palestinian residents in the West Bank." "We condemn all racist rhetoric; as such messages are par-

ticularly damaging when amplified by those in leadership positions and are incongruent with advancing respect for human rights for all." Later on Friday, the EU also "strongly condemned" Mr Ben Gvir's comments, saying "the values of democracy and respect for human rights stand central to the EU-Israel partnership, including as regards the people living under occupation in the Palestinian territory". Palestinians in the West Bank already endure severe restrictions on the right to movement, including being unable without permits to freely travel to Jerusalem or their ancestral lands inside Israel. The Israeli authorities say this is done for security reasons. Parties representing Arab Israelis, or Palestinian citizens of Israel, as well as Israeli anti-occupation groups condemned Mr Ben Gvir but argued that he was simply articulating longstanding realities in the West Bank. Addressing the US state department response, Arab Israeli MP Ahmed Tibi said: "Ben Gvir... described bluntly, as a top Israeli minister, the general and sweeping Israeli policy since 1967. Why are you crying out following the description of racist apartheid reality, and not... the reality as it is?" B'tselem, an Israeli non-governmental organisation which provides support for Palestinians living under Israel's military occupation, said: "This is the reality we see on the ground, every day, for five decades. The rights of the Jews are more important than the rights of the Arabs, this is what apartheid looks like." In a likely nod to the global response to his comments, Mr Ben Gvir posted a statement in English on Thursday blaming the "Israeli radical left" for "selectively" misquoting him.

Trump mugshot released after arrest in Atlanta

DNA



GEORGIA: Donald Trump has surrendered in Georgia on charges of plotting to overturn the state's 2020 election results in an arrest that saw the first ever mugshot of a former US president. Mr Trump had to pay a bail bond of \$200,000 (£160,000) to be released from the Atlanta jail while he awaits trial. Afterwards, he described the case as "a travesty of justice". It was his fourth arrest in five months in a criminal case, but this was his first police booking photo. Mr Trump later posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, for the first time since January 2021. He shared the address of his website and the mugshot with an all-capital letters caption: "Election interference. Never surrender!" He joins the ranks of American public figures who have had arrest booking photos, including Frank Sinatra, Al Capone and Dr Martin Luther King Jr.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Wada Mitsuhiro, called on FM Jalil Abbas Jillani. They had a fruitful exchange of views on further strengthening bilateral ties, charting future bilateral benchmarks, and paving the way for enhanced collaboration in various domains. - DNA

Protests erupt over ever soaring electricity bills

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Protests are being held against heavy electricity bills in major cities and towns of the country including Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar. After the hefty increase in electricity prices across the country, heavy bills and taxes have forced the people to take to the streets. Demonstrations are being held by businessmen in most of the small and big cities of the country against the expensive electricity, demanding the government to reduce the additional tax included in the electricity bills and the ever-increasing cost of electricity. Large-scale protest demonstrations were held by business organisations against heavy electricity bills and taxes in Karachi. The public protests were held against K-Electric in front of the Jama Cloth Market. The business community also participated in the protest where the protesters held banners, posters and placards against K Electric in their hands. The protesters shouted slogans against K Electric. In different areas of the provincial capital, Lahore, fierce protests were held by the citizens against the rise in the prices of

electricity bills. The protesters raised slogans against the heavy taxes in the bills and demanded an immediate reduction in the electricity bills from the authorities. People of Peshawar also protested against expensive electricity and heavy bills, residents of Gulbahar and other areas protested in Anam Sanam Chowk. The protesters burnt electricity bills and said that unannounced loadshedding and excessive taxes in the bills are intolerable. Citizens protested against heavy electricity bills near Liaquat Bagh in Rawalpindi. The protesters were carrying electricity bills in their hands. The protesters said the increase in electricity bills and taxes would not be accepted under any circumstances. The government should end the electricity taxes or else they would start a movement. Expensive electricity also affected the citizens of Kasur. The citizens burnt the electricity bills near Masjid Noor Chowk, during the protest and a large number of citizens were holding pamphlets against electricity bills and inflation in their hands. The protesters blocked the road for several hours and shouted slogans. They said electricity bills were no less than a bomb on the poor.

Sudan war could tip region into catastrophe

NEW YORK: Hunger, disease and displacement are threatening to totally destroy Sudan, the UN says. Image caption: Hunger, disease and displacement are threatening to totally destroy Sudan, the UN says. The UN says the war in Sudan is having a devastating impact on the whole country and could tip the entire region into a humanitarian catastrophe. Fighting between the army and a paramilitary force began in April and is spreading. The UN says hundreds of thousands of children are severely malnourished and are at imminent risk of death if left untreated. The UN's Humanitarian Co-ordinator says hunger, disease and displacement are threatening to totally destroy Sudan. There have been many grim reports about the impact of the war but Martin Griffiths is suggesting that if the fighting between the army and the Rapid Support Forces continues, the whole region will face dire consequences. This week the charity Save The Children said because of the violence it had been forced to close down dozens of its nutrition facilities. It said more than 30,000 children were missing out on treatment and as a result close to 500 had died. - Agencies

Kremlin denies role in Prigozhin's plane crash

MOSCOW: The Kremlin on Friday rejected allegations it was behind a plane crash that is presumed to have killed mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin, whose brutal fighters were feared in Ukraine, Africa and Syria and conducted a brief but shocking mutiny in Russia two months ago. Prigozhin, who was listed among those on board the plane, was eulogized Thursday by President Vladimir Putin, even as suspicions grew that the Russian leader was behind a crash that many saw as an assassination. A preliminary U.S. intelligence assessment concluded the plane was downed Wednesday by an intentional explosion. One of the U.S. and Western officials who described the initial U.S. assessment said it determined that Prigozhin was "very likely" targeted and that the explosion falls in line with Putin's "long history of trying to silence his critics." The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment, did not offer any details on what caused the explosion, which was widely believed to be vengeance for the mutiny in June that posed the biggest challenge to Putin's 23-year rule. But Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov flatly rejected the allegations. "Right now, of course, there are lots of speculations around this plane crash and the tragic deaths of the passengers of the plane, including Yevgeny Prigozhin," Peskov told reporters during a conference call. "Of course, in the West those speculations are put out under a certain angle, and all of it is a complete lie." Asked by The Associated Press whether the Kremlin has received an official confirmation of Prigozhin's death, Peskov referenced Putin's remarks from a day earlier: "He said that right now all the necessary forensic analyses, including genetic testing, will be carried out. Once some kind of official conclusions are ready to be released, they will be released." Britain's Defense Ministry said the presumed death of Prigozhin could destabilize his Wagner Group of private military contractors. "The demise of Prigozhin almost certainly would have a deeply destabilizing effect on the Wagner Group. His personal attributes of hyperactivity, exceptional audacity, a drive for results and extreme brutality permeated Wagner and are unlikely to be matched by any successor," ministry said in a statement. - Agencies

BRICS membership enhances Iran's political power

TEHRAN: President Ebrahim-Raeisi says Iran's accession to the BRICS group of leading developing countries will boost the country's political clout and economy. Speaking upon his return from a visit to South Africa, where he participated in BRICS 15th annual summit, Raeisi hailed as "significant" Iran's accession to the organization. The Iranian president said BRICS and similar organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are against unilateralism and work to promote convergence among nations to boost their level of prosperity. "One of the advantages of membership in BRICS is that it enhances the country's political power because increased interaction with global and regional organizations will contribute to bolstering both the political and economic power of our nation," he said. The president said BRICS plays a big role in global economic and trade cooperation, and contacts with its members can help Iran grow economically. "Although imperialism seeks to hamper our economic growth, this growth lies in linking with independent economies in the region that can help realize resistance economy in the country," he said, referring to a set of principles set by Iran's Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei to make Iran's economy sanction-proof. Raeisi said Iran's accession to BRICS didn't happen by chance. Rather, it was the result of a policy chosen by his administration and months-long quiet efforts by the cabinet. Iran was invited to join BRICS on Thursday, along with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Ethiopia, Argentina and Egypt. Iran applied for full membership in the bloc in June 2022, days after Raeisi was invited to address the BRICS Plus summit. - Agencies

Pakacting as bulwark against terrorism

Harvard University students meet General Syed Asim Munir



DNA

RAWALPINDI: A group of 38 students from Harvard University, USA hailing from 9 different countries met General Syed Asim Munir, COAS at GHQ today as part of their visit to Pakistan. During interactive session, COAS

talked about regional security issues and Pakistan Army's contributions to promote peace and stability in the region. COAS highlighted about the rich potential of Pakistan and urged the participants to perceive Pakistan based on their experiences during their stay in Pakistan. COAS underscored that Pakistan is acting as bulwark against terror-

ism and international community must realize the immense sacrifices given by Pakistan. COAS also highlighted the human suffering and atrocities being committed in IJOK and efforts to change the demographic realities. Students appreciated the COAS for providing the opportunity for a constructive interaction.

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