



Islamabad POST

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Rishi Sunak 'inadvertently' broke ethics rules

Detailed News On Page-08

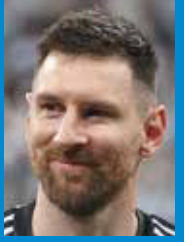
Prigozhin presumed dead in plane crash

Detailed News On Page-07



Lionel Messi into another final to beat Cincinnati

Detailed News On Page-06



Holding of the General Elections President not authorized to fix election date: ECP

President seeks Law Ministry's view after Election Commission's letter



ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: As it was expected, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday responded to President Arif Alvi's letter inviting Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja and stated that the president is no longer empowered to fix an "appropriate" election date. The development comes in a meeting chaired by CEC Raja to ponder over the matter. Dr Arif Alvi, in the letter to the chief election commissioner, said since the National Assembly was dissolved on August 9, 2023, therefore under Article 48 (5) of the Constitution, he (as the president) was obliged to appoint a date not later than 90 days from the date of dissolution for the holding of general election of National Assembly. "Forgoing in view, the Chief Election Commissioner is invited for a meeting with the President today or tomorrow to fix an appropriate date," the letter noted. The Presidential office is of the view that since the President has not signed the election law and had sent back to the Parliament with his observations therefore the law is not valid. Legal experts are also of the view that when the President refers a law back to

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US wants free and fair polls in Pakistan

US Ambassador Blome's Meeting with Chief Election Commissioner Raja

DNA

ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador Donald Blome met Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja Thursday to reaffirm the US support for "free and fair elections", saying it would work to strengthen the US-Pakistan relationship with "whomever the Pakistani people choose". "The United States remains committed to working to broaden and deepen the US-Pakistan relationship with whomever the Pakistani people choose", a statement from the US embassy's spokesperson read. Ambassador Blome's remarks come against a backdrop of uncertainty surrounding the general elections in Pakistan. The then Shehbaz Sharif-led government dissolved the National Assembly

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar embracing survivors of the Battagram chairlift incident, during a ceremony in Islamabad. - DNA

Pakistan, India to replace heads of missions

Saeed Warriach to head Pakistan mission while Geeta Sriwastawa named Indian envoy to Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India have decided to appoint new Charge d Affaires. Foreign Office sources say Pakistan has nominated Saeed Ahmed Warriach to head the Pakistani mission in New Delhi while India has announced appointment of Geeta Sriwastawa to replace the incumbent Charge d Affaires Dr. Suresh Kumar. It may be mentioned here that these are the routine postings and transfers, which have been announced after the respective officials have completed their term.

PM Kakar rejects allegations of 'exceeding mandate'

PM briefed on foreign policy of Pakistan

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Interim Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar on Thursday rejected the impression that he is "exceeding his mandate", reiterating that his government's one and only mandate is to assist the forthcoming general elections.

CAA team in Brussels for EU flight resumption

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: A dedicated team of Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) on Thursday reached Brussels to hold talk with the authorities related to restore Pakistani airlines' operations in European countries. The CAA team's mission is to inform European authorities about the preparations for upcoming technical sessions and address various issues with the European Commission. As per reliable sources, the discussions are expected to play pivotal in the process of revitalizing Pakistani airlines, including Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), in European airspace. The team representing Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) includes top officials, such as the

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Briefs

Nawaz unlikely to return next month

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif on Thursday decided not to return to the country in September. This was decided in a meeting held between former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif and Nawaz Sharif in London. It was decided that Nawaz would delay his return until a later date. Additionally, it has been suggested that Nawaz Sharif might consider returning to Pakistan in either October or November, particularly in light of the upcoming general elections scheduled for February next year.

British HC calls on Tareen

DNA

LAHORE: Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Patron-in-Chief Jahangir Khan Tareen and British High Commissioner Jane Marriott on Thursday expressed their commitment to strengthen the ties between the two countries. According to details, Ms Marriott called on Mr Tareen. On the occasion, Mr Tareen and Ms Marriott exchanged views on the bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. Both leaders expressed their resolve to promote bilateral ties and matters of mutual interest between the two countries. Underscoring the significance of the ties between the two countries, Mr Tareen said.

Toshakhana case SC adjourns Imran's plea till IHC verdict

IHC will take up the petition today at 11:30pm

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday adjourned the hearing on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's plea challenging the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) decision in the Toshakhana case till the latter issues a verdict on the plea seeking the suspension of the sentence in the case. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial heard the case as the IHC was hearing the former prime minister's plea against the Toshakhana verdict. At the start of the hearing, CJP Bandial lauded IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq for his efforts and it would be better if the high court issues its verdict. The top judge then inquired if anyone from the attorney general's office was present in the courtroom as they wanted to know the situation about the condition in which the PTI chief, who was removed from

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PBC stresses apolitical role of courts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The representatives of the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) stressed the need for an apolitical role of the courts. While talking to the media, they said: "The courts should be respected. We do not want the courts to be called with specific names." They added: "The courts should be apolitical. The Supreme Court (SC) should be aware of its position. Favouring someone directly is against its integrity." They stated: "Yesterday,

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PTI wants elections in 90 days

JUI for polls after delimitations; ECP to continue talks

FAIZ CH.

ISLAMABAD: The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) has backed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to hold general elections after the delimitation while the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has urged the electoral watchdog to drop the process and conduct polls with 90 days.

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United States approves new arms sale to Taiwan

Announcement came just hours after Taiwan's President renewed a pledge to strengthen self-defense

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration has approved a \$500 million arms sale to Taiwan as it ramps up military assistance to the island despite fervent objections from China. The State Department said Wednesday it had signed off on the sale of infrared search tracking systems along with related equipment for advanced F-16 fighter jets. The sale includes the infrared systems as well as test support and equipment, computer software and spare parts, it said. Although the deal is modest in comparison to previous weapons sales, the move is likely to draw fierce criticism from Beijing, which regards self-governing Taiwan as a renegade province and refuses to rule out the use of force to reunify it with the mainland. "This proposed sale serves U.S. na-

China vows 'powerful' measures

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: China on Thursday vowed "powerful" measures against the US over a recent sale of defence systems to Taiwan. Urging Washington to cancel the sale to the island nation, which Beijing sees as its own territory, China said it would "safeguard" its national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin called on the US to "stop the dangerous trend of arming the island," Beijing-based daily Global Times reported.

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tional, economic, and security interests by supporting the recipient's continuing efforts to modernize its armed forces and to maintain a credible defensive capability," the State Department said in a statement. "The proposed sale will improve the recipient's capability to meet current and future threats by contributing to the recipient's abilities to defend its airspace, provide regional security, and increase interoperability with the United States through its F-16 program," it said. The announcement came just hours after Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen renewed a pledge to strengthen Taiwan's self-defense as she visited a war memorial from the last time Taiwan and China battled. Tsai, visited the outlying islands of Kinmen where the conflict was fought 65 years ago, commemorated those who died.

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Cultural PATTERNS AND MODERN HUES

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/Bukino 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



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar and others offering dua after planting a tree at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.—DNA

ICCI calls for rationalization of taxes on construction industry

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that many businesses in the construction and real estate sector have already closed due to the increase in taxes and if these taxes are not rationalized, more businesses of this sector could be closed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the construction industry plays a key role in the development of the economy as the growth of business activities of over 70 allied industries is dependent on this industry. However, the levy of new taxes on the construction industry has plunged it into great difficulties due to which unemployment is expected to increase, so the government should rationalize high taxes on this industry to save it from further troubles. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to the under construction J7 Group's Icon five-star hotel Royal Swiss along with a delegation. Fayyaz Awan, Project Director of J7 Group along with his team warmly welcomed the ICCI delegation. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that many businesses in

the construction and real estate sector have already closed due to the increase in taxes and if these taxes are not rationalized, more businesses of this sector could be closed. He said that instead of increasing taxes, the government should consider providing attractive incentives

overall economy. Fayyaz Awan, Project Director, J7 Group, said that if the high taxes imposed on the construction sector are not withdrawn, many investors in this sector would face default. He said that after the announcement of the construction package, investors have

uncertain. He said that the Lahore High Court has issued a stay order against the imposition of tax under Section 7E, so it is the right time for the government to withdraw this tax across the country as it will have disastrous consequences on the property business.

the cost of construction projects has increased manifold and investors are suffering. He said that the withholding tax has also been increased on sale & purchase of property to which business activities in this sector are slowing down. Due to this situation, the country's tax revenue will decrease instead of improving. He strongly demanded that in order to save the construction industry from further difficulties, taxes should be reduced appropriately in consultation with the investors of this sector so that the construction industry can play its active role in driving the economy. Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan needs to build more five-star hotels in major cities including Islamabad to promote tourism in the country. However, with the existing taxes, it is very difficult to promote investment in this sector, so it is better that taxes should be revised in consultation with the stakeholders so that the government's revenue is not affected and

the construction industry achieves better growth. Raja Muhammad Imtiaz, Khalid Chaudhry, Malik Mohsin Khalid, Babar Chaudhry, Nisar Mirza, Nasir Chaudhry and others were in the ICCI delegation.



He said that hike in taxes has pushed up the prices of other construction materials, including concrete and cement, due to which

Chinese companies to import more meat from Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese companies are to import more meat from Pakistan, said Umair Ahmad Khan, representative of Hardoi Livestock and Meat Company. "These days, the volume of meat export is about to go up after China allowed Pakistani meat to be imported. The Chinese government has given some specifications and standard operating procedures for boiled and heat-treated meat," he said at Pakistan's first International Food and Agriculture Exhibition held recently. The event attracted more than 400 delegations from 55 countries,

while China has the largest delegation participating in the Expo. "Many Chinese enterprises want to import meat, chili and other products from Pakistan and are ready to set up industrial units there," said Ghulam Qadir, Commercial Counselor of Pakistan Embassy in Beijing, who led a delegation of around 110 Chinese representatives from Beijing and neighboring provinces to the expo. "China had agreed to import meat from Pakistan, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. He added. At the expo, meat booths attracted a lot of Chinese visitors. "Pakistan is one of the world's leading cattle and buffalo producers. We have the second-largest population

of buffaloes and sixth-largest cattle population in the world. We can produce high-quality buffalo meat," Umair Ahmad Khan, who used to target Gulf States, Middle Eastern states and Central Asian countries as the main market, is now trying to export heat-treated meat, frozen beef and boneless meat to China. Chinese government has recently concluded an agreement that heat-treated meat from Pakistan can be imported to China. We have a big potential market in China if our producers can produce such standard-compliant meat." "About 80 percent of the visitors to the expo were Chinese. Since they also knew that Pakistan had been allowed to export

meat to China, a lot of them took interest in our products," said Mirza Waqas Baig, another meat exhibitor from Organic Meat Company. "China is probably the largest meat consumer in the world. There was no approval in Pakistan to export to China before, now there is approval. We would like to cater to this market and increase our exports there." He added The event witnessed \$410 million worth of deals and the signing of 10 MoUs. Data shows that Pakistan's exports to China are improving gradually. Export of meat is expected to play a key role in achieving Pakistan's export target of USD10 billion to China in the future.

56 FIRs, registered for violating dengue SOPs in 24 hours

RAWALPINDI: District Health Authority (DHA) had lodged 56 FIRs and sealed 18 premises on violations of anti-dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood said that the health department, in collaboration with allied departments, had issued tickets to 12 and imposed a fine of Rs 3,000 on violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours. Presently, the health officer informed that 28 patients having positive symptoms were admitted to different health facilities in the district while the district total tally had reached 124 cases. The health officer informed that eight more patients were reported during the last 24 hours. Among the new cases, three patients had arrived from Potohar town urban area, two of each from Chaklala Cantonment and Municipal Corporation area and one from Potohar rural area. Dr Sajjad further informed that most of the cases were reported from the Rawalpindi Cantonment and Potohar town areas where required response activity was being carried out to eliminate larvae. However, he urged the residents to remove stagnant water, especially after rain in outdoor and household settings to stop mosquitoes from breeding.—APP

Tourist spots substandard food causing stomach diseases

ISLAMABAD: Substandard and poor-quality food is being sold in eateries and tourist spots in twin cities causing many diseases such as food poisoning, pain in the stomach, vomiting, and others. Talking to APP, Sajid Ali, a resident of G-9 visited Lake View Park along with family and said they had purchased and found eating unhygienic and high-risk burgers and channa chat. "Tourists are continuously thronging to various places in twin cities and observing them as health hazards," he added. Amna Ali, a resident of G-11, said that during a visit to the Pakistan Monument, she observed that the eateries were selling unclean, polluted, and adulterated food without any check from relevant authorities. She said, "The vendors are selling food in these eateries at higher rates and their attitude was very pathetic." Amna Ali said that she also observed during a visit to Lake View Park that poor-quality food was being sold at exorbitant rates as compared to the market. She appealed to the relevant authorities including the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) to take prompt and strict actions against such vendors in order to provide healthy and quality food to the domestic and foreign tourists to enjoy their visit at recreational spots. Dr Ruby Rafique urged the visitors to avoid eating food at these eateries.—APP

Public notice regarding dengue fever prevention and control measures, including a table with columns for area, date, and status.

PHED Sukkur region is prominent in Pakistan due to excellent performance

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI

ISLAMABAD : PHED Sukkur region is prominent in Pakistan due to excellent performance. In a remarkable display of dedication to excellence, the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) in Sindh's Sukkur region has emerged as a shining beacon of superior development projects. Spearheaded by the visionary leadership of Chief Engineer Barkat Ali Khawaja, along with

the unwavering commitment of SE Nazir Ahmad Sheikh and SE Abdul Rauf Kalwar, the region has set an unparalleled standard in development endeavors. Under their leadership, the PHED Sukkur region has upheld an unwavering commitment to the highest standards of quality in every facet of their projects. Notably, the construction of water supply and drainage schemes stands as a testament to their diligence. The region's dedication to quality extends to the selection of ma-

terials and equipment used in their projects. The installation of top-of-the-line KSB pumps, Siemens motors, and government-approved pipes underscores their unyielding focus on excellence. By prioritizing such premium components, PHED Sukkur has raised the bar for development projects across the nation. Thanks to their unwavering commitment to excellence, the PHED Sukkur region has rightfully earned its place among Pakistan's most exceptional performing

regions. The remarkable impact of their development projects has not only transformed local infrastructure but has also earned them a distinguished reputation on a national scale. As the Sukkur region continues to set new benchmarks for development, their story serves as an inspiring testament to what can be achieved through visionary leadership, uncompromising standards, and an unwavering dedication to the betterment of communities and the nation at large.

Briefs

ANF recovers 445 kg drugs in seven operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country managed to recover 445 kg of drugs and arrested seven accused including an Afghan national, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that 10.8 kg opium and 36 kg hashish were recovered from an ambulance intercepted near Ring Road Peshawar. During the operation, three accused including an Afghan national, resident of Hangu were also arrested. Over 2.7 kg Ice drug was recovered from the possession of a Qatar-bound passenger netted at Bacha Khan International Airport. The accused, resident of Peshawar was going on flight number QR-601. In another operation, during an operation in Khyber, 5 kg of hashish was recovered from the possession of a local resident. 180 kg of hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted in Chin Ka Qila of Gujranwala area. During the operation, the accused resident of Gujranwala was arrested. On the pointation of the accused, 36 kg of opium was recovered from another vehicle parked in a house. 600 grams of heroin was recovered from a local motorcyclist arrested in Faisalabad. In the seventh operation, 67 kg of opium and 103 kg of morphine concealed for smuggling were recovered near Kuchlak bypass Quetta. Separate cases have been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigation has been started.

Naheed Iqrar's poetry book published

ISLAMABAD: The poetry book titled "Mera Unvaan Tum Ho" written by the famous writer Naheed Iqrar, published on Friday will serve as a treat for literature lovers across the country. The book poetry of Naheed Iqrar has been published by Mavra Publishers Lahore and is ready to capture space in the book shops, according to a news release. Hailing a famous literary family in Pakistan Naheed Iqrar has been writing poetry for the last 40 years and had been editor of her college magazine in the early 80s. She is a popular voice of Radio Pakistan and has been awarded Outstanding Voice status from Radio Pakistan Lahore station. By profession a Radio broadcaster, Naheed did her master's degrees in Urdu literature and Philosophy from Government College Lahore (now known as GCU). According to famous poet Shoaib Bin Aziz, Naheed explains life experiences not as a woman but rather as a human who has to go through phases, and changes and has to face the brunt of life if she wants to stay on the honest and right side of the history. Her book is available at Marva Publishers Lahore. The writer's husband, Agha Iqrar Haroon is also the author of a book titled "How Does Superclass Rules the Nations."—APP

PNCA hosts fantastic show of textile, fiber artists

Ms. Gabrielle Guimond, Cultural Attaché of U.S. Embassy Islamabad graciously inaugurated the exhibition

Faisal Sheikh

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts hosted a fantastic new exhibition "Tiraz", by 30 textile and fibre artists from all over Pakistan. Ms. Gabrielle Guimond, Cultural Attaché of U.S. Embassy Islamabad graciously inaugurated the exhibition along with M. Ayoub Jamali, Director General PNCA and the participating artists. The curators of the exhibition Mr. Hassan Babar, Maham Imran, Rabia Shaukat and Mariam Ahmed gave Ms. Guimond a guided tour of the exhibition where she appreciated the artists and was deeply inspired by Pakistani Art Scene. The exhibition highlights the versatility and depth of textile art, encompassing a wide range of techniques, styles, and themes. From traditional textile practices to contemporary fiber art, this collection brings together a variety of artworks that explore the intersection of texture, color, form, and concept. The exhibition encompasses a multitude of textile techniques, such as weaving, knitting, embroidery, mixed media,



and textile sculptures. Each technique offers its own unique visual language and tactile experience, creating an immersive and engaging encounter with the artworks. The artists featured in this exhibition draw inspiration from diverse sources, including nature, culture, identity, and social issues. Through their art, they

explore the potential of textiles and fibers to convey narratives, emotions, and ideas. Each artwork invites you to contemplate the power of textiles as a medium of expression. Through the intricate weaving, embroidery, felting, and other fibre manipulation techniques, artists have transformed textiles into captivating works of

art. Each artwork tells a story, reflecting the artist's personal experiences, cultural heritage, or social commentary. From traditional motifs and patterns to contemporary designs, the exhibition offers a visual feast that explores the depth and diversity of textile fibre art. The show was heavily visited by a large number of audi-

ence including artists, students, VIPs, Government officials, press & media etc. A large number of students visited the show and interviewed the artists about their techniques and art practices. PNCA is dedicated to promote Pakistani Art on Local and National scale. Our elevate and unique programs that present the traditional and contemporary art practices we reflect upon the excellence and cultural diversity of Pakistan as well as supports professional development of the artist. PNCA is committed to promoting significant aspects of the country and encourages community participation in gallery activities, fostering curatorial practice to artist's own understanding of their work and encourages a healthy and sustainable local arts industry. PNCA has maintained a range of regionally focused visual arts exhibitions featuring both nationally and internationally recognized artists. The exhibition will continue till 7th September, 2023. Gallery is closed on Saturday. Workshop of Block printing will also organized at PNCA by Visual Arts Division to compliment this exhibition.

Nano loans lead to income generation

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Meher Kashif Younis on Thursday said "Nano" loans lead to income generation at the grassroots level, contributing to economic growth besides generating ample job opportunities across the country. Speaking at a round table conference on the "Impact of Nano loans on economic growth" held under the aegis of Gold Ring Economic Forum, a strategic think tank, he said Nano loans, also known as microloans or small-scale loans, have several positive impacts on the economy world over, said a news release issued here. He said Nano loans have been shown to disproportionately benefit women entrepreneurs, who often face barriers in accessing traditional financing. He said empowering women economically leads to broader benefits and improved gender equality. Effective regulation and protection measures are crucial to ensure the long-term sustainability and positive impact of nano loans on the economy. Nano loans encourage micro-entrepreneurs to start or expand their businesses, he remarked. Meher Kashif Younis said access to credit through nano loans boosts people's spending, leading to increased demand for goods and services, which in turn stimulates economic growth. He said these loans provide access to credit for individuals who are typically excluded from traditional banking systems. This inclusion helps stimulate economic activity and empowers entrepreneurs and small businesses.—APP

Over 1.9 mln accommodated under PBM's initiative

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) Shelter Homes and Roti Sab Key Liye program provided lodging for approximately 1.9 million people between May 2022 to March 2023, an official document revealed on Thursday. Giving a breakup of 1.9 million, the document indicated that Shelter Homes and the Roti Sab Key Liye program facilitated lodging for approximately 0.309 million individuals and provided meal services for around 1.592 million people during the period. "PBM manages 28 Shelter Homes across the country and also has 28 operational Roti Sab Key Liye food vehicles to distribute meals." "Likewise, the Roti Sab Key Liye food vehicles have supplied meals to 1.44 people along diverse routes within prominent cities.—APP

Health expert stresses to control 'Glaucoma increasing cases'

ISLAMABAD: Health expert Thursday stressed public awareness for timely medication and surgical treatment to control 'increasing cases of Glaucoma' (A silent thief of sight) among children which issue has become a growing cause of concern worldwide including in Pakistan where millions are suffering from it. A senior Ophthalmologist Dr Shahzad Saeed talking to the PTV news channel shed light on the need to raise awareness about eye care in various age groups and said 'Prevention is better than cure'. Glaucoma is an eye disease that affects a person's visual field because it damages the eye's optic nerve. This condition occurs when

fluid builds up in the front part of the eye, which increases eye pressure, he mentioned. There are two types of glaucoma open-angle and close-angle (or narrow-angle) glaucoma, he said, adding, that the first one is more common and it happens gradually. The second type is more dangerous because it's sudden and more painful, he added. Glaucoma can affect a patient's reading ability in different ways, depending on its severity, he said, adding, the best way to read with glaucoma is with text to speech technology. Eye specialist further advised the parents to ensure timely eye checkups of their kids, adding, if a child complains of headaches and

watery eyes, there is a high likelihood that he suffers from poor eyesight. He said treatment of glaucoma in children needs specialized medical and surgical care, adding, parents of children suffering from childhood Glaucoma have to face psychological and financial stress. Replying a question, he said that "Glaucoma" is usually symptom-free, until it causes irreparable damage to a person's vision or even blindness. "The risk becomes higher with age. If cases have been ignored for 10 to 15 years", he added. To another question, he explained that Glaucoma is an increase in pressure inside the eye and is a potentially blinding condition in childhood. Glaucoma

has many potential causes. In children, the most common cause of Glaucoma is congenital malformation of these passages during the formation of the eye in the mother's womb, he added. He advised that parents should not delay consultations with a pediatric eye specialist, adding, the effects of diabetes on the eyes and advised patients to have their eye checkups by vitreo-retina specialists. People with glaucoma should not be concerned about the vast majority of activities, and should generally continue to do the things they love. They should make habit to eat vegetables and fruits in their diet plans, he added.—APP

Hi-Tech hybrid seeds combat climate challenges

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) Shahzad Ali Malik on Thursday said the use of Hi-Tech hybrid seeds plays a vital role in mitigating the challenges posed by unpredictable weather patterns and changing climate conditions. Talking to a delegation of progressive farmers led by Dr Muhammad Arshad Javed he said in recent years, the agriculture industry has undergone a transformative shift with the adoption of Hi-Tech hybrid seeds. He said the impact of these seeds on the economy cannot be overstated. He said it increased productivity which directly contributes to food security and stability in prices, ensuring a steady supply of agricultural produce. The utilization of such seeds leads to the development of a diverse range of high-value crops that not only broaden the agricultural product portfolio but also offer farmers the opportunity to tap into lucrative markets for specialized produce, ultimately boosting their income and contributing to rural economic growth, he remarked. Shahzad Ali said the importance of these seeds in the agriculture sector goes beyond just enhancing crop yield; it has a profound impact on the economy at large. By promoting higher productivity, improved resilience, and diversified crops, these seeds contribute to food security, economic growth, and employment opportunities, he added. He said it is crucial that we continue to invest in research, education, and infrastructure to maximize the benefits that Hi-Tech hybrid seeds offer to both the agriculture sector and the overall economy. Shahzad Ali Malik Sitara-Imtiaz said the adoption of Hi-Tech hybrid seeds also translates into increased employment opportunities within the agricultural sector. As farmers transition to these advanced seeds, there is a growing demand for skilled labour, ranging from crop management and pest control to agricultural technology experts, he added. He said this influx of jobs can help alleviate unemployment pressures, particularly in rural areas where agriculture forms the backbone of the economy. Leader of the delegation Dr Muhammad Arshad Javed said these seeds are the result of meticulous cross-breeding.—APP

IICR and CSC launch book on CPEC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR), in collaboration with the China Study Center at COMSATS University, proudly unveiled IICR's latest literary endeavor, "Journey of Connectivity: 10th Anniversary on CPEC and Its Moving Stories." This momentous book launch event was attended by a diverse gathering of professionals, diplomats, and experts who share a keen interest in the profound impact of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on the landscape of Pakistan. The book, meticulously crafted through a collaborative effort, embarks on a remarkable journey to chronicle the transformative story of CPEC over the past decade.

As Pakistan and its global partners celebrate the 10th anniversary of this monumental initiative, "Journey of Connectivity" embarks on a literary expedition that delves into the untold stories, triumphant achievements, and poignant narratives that have unfolded as a consequence of this monumental partnership between China and Pakistan. At its core, the book aspires to offer readers an encompassing account of the remarkable milestones achieved by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Through a collection of diverse perspectives, ranging from individuals to communities and businesses intricately woven into the fabric of this transformative project, the Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution aims to furnish its readers

with a profound and nuanced comprehension of the multifaceted impacts of CPEC on an array of sectors. These sectors encompass not only the tangible dimensions like infrastructure development, energy, agriculture, and education but also extend to the intangible realms of cultural exchanges, tourism, and socio-economic growth. The book launch event served as a gathering ground for luminaries from various walks of life, who were drawn by the shared intrigue in the interwoven tales of CPEC's impact. Professionals, diplomats, and experts converged to engage in stimulating discussions and thoughtful exchanges, enriching the discourse surrounding CPEC and its enduring implications for Pakistan and its allies.

Won't allow conspirators to damage country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interiors Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti on Thursday stated that the interim government would not allow any conspirators to damage the country and if anyone tried to take the law into their own hands would be dealt with iron hands. "The law will take its course as it is the responsibility of the state to maintain law and order", he said while talking to a private news channel. He said that for a better future for Pakistan, the federation, provinces, and all political parties should unite against terrorism, adding, that we would not rest until terrorism is eradicated and will try to control terrorism despite the many challenges facing the country.

High level US delegation meets Chairman Senate

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: - A delegation from the United States including; Darin LaHood (Republican), US Ambassador in Pakistan H.E Donald Blome accompanied by Adam Howard, John Lauffer, Rocco DiCicco held a meeting with Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani here in Islamabad followed by a dinner hosted in honour of the US delegates. Touching upon the various topics of mutual interest, the meeting focused on strengthening bilateral ties between Pakistan and the United States. The discussions revolved around a wide range of topics, including regional security, economic cooperation, trade partnerships, and people-to-people exchanges. During the meeting, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani underscored


the importance of continued dialogue between the two nations to address common challenges and promote peace and stability in the region. He emphasized the need for enhanced trade relations and cooperation in the fields of education, healthcare, and technology. Chairman Senate accentuated that the Government and people of Pakistan consider the US as a friend and important partner in our socio-economic progress as well as regional peace and security. The US delegation commended Pakistan's efforts in maintaining regional stability and reiterated the United States' commitment to supporting Pakistan's development goals. Both sides expressed their determination to further deepen the existing ties between the two nations and work collaboratively on issues of mutual interest. The Chairman Senate said that Pakistan desires




peace in Afghanistan. We have suffered because of terrorism and we condemn terrorism in all forms and manifestations. He underscored the need to work together for peace and development. Both US and Pakistan have suffered losses due to terrorism, he stated. The Chairman Senate also highlighted the Kashmir is-

sue saying that it needs to be resolved in accordance with UN resolution. Innocent Kashmiris are being subjected to violence and torture by the Indian forces occupying the valley illegally. USA being the biggest proponent of Human Rights does raise voice for the innocent Kashmiris of IIOK. Chairman Senate fur-

ther said that Pakistan and specially Balochistan provinces is blessed with natural resources and minerals. He urged the US investors to come forward and invest in mining sector. He also extended invitation to his US counterparts to visit Pakistan and emphasized the significance of high level exchanges.



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BRICS an important building bloc

ACTING on the group's spirit of openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation, the members of BRICS are taking the opportunity of their first offline summit in more than three years to build consensus on important development issues and discuss a potential expansion of the group that will further boost its global influence. Seventeen years on from its inception, BRICS is being increasingly looked upon to be a voice of the developing world, a locomotive for the development of the Global South and a promoter of a fairer international order. With a combined population of over 3.2 billion people, the bloc accounts for some 40 percent of the world's population, one-fourth of the global GDP and 17 percent of world trade. As President Xi Jinping rightly pointed out, it is an essential driving force for global growth and democratic international relations. Today, more than 40 countries, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Argentina and Bangladesh, are knocking on the door of BRICS, highlighting the mechanism's vitality and appeal. The formation of a "BRICS Plus" would create a more inclusive and representative platform for cooperation and collaboration among countries of the Global South, enhancing their collective bargaining power, increasing global economic integration and more effectively promoting a multipolar world order.

While achieving meaningful cooperation and consensus among a larger group may be challenging, those skeptical that an enlarged BRICS is feasible underestimate the willingness and ability of the member countries, as well as prospective newcomers, to navigate their differences and find common ground on important issues. By ensuring that the benefits of membership are felt by all members and playing an effective role in shaping fairer global governance, BRICS can prove its worth as an inclusive and representative platform for cooperation and collaboration. China stands ready to work with its fellow BRICS partners to welcome future new members so that an enlarged group can play a greater role in global governance and contribute to building a truly democratic, fair and just world.

Given the undoubted attractiveness of BRICS, its potential enlargement is perceived by the West as being an intended counterforce. But the formation of "BRICS Plus" is not intended as a challenge to the West. It is the group's adherence to openness and inclusiveness that makes it an attractive alternative to the Western-dominated groupings that are either exclusively self-serving or have been hijacked by Cold War thinking. As Xi said, rather than asking countries to take sides or creating bloc confrontation, the BRICS countries, and those hoping to join them, are seeking to make the group an architect for peace and development. BRICS is not a challenge to the Western-led order, it is part of the evolution toward a holistic global order.



Sincerity key to improve China-US relations

THE visit to China by US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, starting Sunday, is being welcomed as another step toward improving relations between the two countries which have been strained in recent years due to the confrontational approach of the previous and current US administrations. The four-day trip, which comes after previous visits by senior US officials to the country over the past two months, is being viewed as an opportunity to discuss, and ideally resolve, some of the trade differences that have been causing friction between the two sides. "Secretary Raimondo looks forward to constructive discussions on issues relating to the US-China commercial relationship, challenges faced by US businesses, and areas for potential cooperation," the US Department of Commerce said in a statement. The US is also hoping the visit will provide an opportunity for dialogue and engagement that yields progress on what it considers to be critical areas of concern, such as intellectual property rights protection, technology transfer, and market competition. In what appears to be a goodwill gesture aimed at creating a favorable atmosphere for the visit, the US Commerce Department removed 27 Chinese companies from its "Unverified List" on Monday, exempting them from export control restrictions. Companies are put on the list if the US cannot complete on-site visits to determine whether they can be trusted to receive sensitive US technology exports.

Adding to the positive momentum generated by the recent spate of visits, the authorities of the two sides agreed this month to approve twice the number of passenger flights between the two countries. Yet despite this, optimism about an improvement in Sino-US relations needs to be tempered in light of the Joe Biden administration having never stopped tightening the noose around China, especially in the high-tech and geopolitical sectors. Just this month, US President Joe Biden signed an executive order to restrict US high-tech investment in China targeting advanced computer chips, quantum technologies and artificial intelligence. And the recent Camp David summit between the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea was widely believed to be aimed at consolidating trilateral relations into a bloc with which to better confront China. The sinking boat of Sino-US relations will definitely go nowhere if Washington, while seemingly trying to scoop water out of it, keeps drilling holes in it at the same time. To effectively stabilize bilateral relations, the Biden administration must stop trying to suppress China's development, and refrain from constantly challenging its redlines. China sees Raimondo's visit as a further opportunity to engage in dialogue with the Biden administration, which it hopes will be positive. If Washington is sincere about working with Beijing to manage Sino-US relations, it should seize the opportunity to explore ways to resolve some of the long-festering trade differences, strengthen economic ties and explore new opportunities for trade and investment between the two countries. Doing so will help build bridges and trust between the two sides, fostering a more stable and cooperative relationship between the two economies.

India conquered the Moon..

Qamar Bashir



One of ISRO's major successes was the Mars Orbiter Mission (Mangalyaan) in 2013, making India the first Asian country to reach Martian orbit and the fourth space agency in the world to do so. Another milestone was the Chandrayaan-1 mission in 2008, which made India discover water molecules on the Moon's surface. Chandrayaan-2 was launched by ISRO with the goal of exploring the Moon's south pole region aimed to study the lunar surface, search for water ice, and understand the Moon's geology. Chandrayaan-2 was launched on July 22, 2019...

Dr. Vikram Sarabhai is widely regarded as the father of India's space program. His visionary leadership set India on a path of space exploration and technological advancement. He recognized the potential of space technology for India's development and was instrumental in creating the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) dedicated to space research and applications. He emphasized the importance of using space technology for practical applications in agriculture, communication, meteorology, and education and aligned the space research with India's socio-economic needs. He also recognized the need to cultivate a skilled workforce for space research at established institutions like the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) to provide quality education and training in space science and engineering. Knowing that India cannot do it alone he fostered collaborations with other countries and space agencies, helping India benefit from global advancements in space technology and finally launched India's first satellite marked a significant achievement in space technology self-reliance which transformed into Indian National Satellite System (INSAT), which revolutionized telecommunications, broadcasting, and meteorology in India.

Under Dr. Sarabhai's guidance, ISRO successfully launched its first satellite, Aryabhata, in 1975 marking India's entry into space technology and laid the groundwork for subsequent satellite missions. The man who translated Dr. Sarabhai's vision into reality was none other than Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, often referred to as the "Missile Man of India." He played a pivotal role in the development of ballistic missile and space launch vehicle technologies. Due to my deep interest in space technology, I read the book "Agni; the Wing of Fire" authored by Dr. Abdul Kalam. The book is now available free on the internet. I would recommend that everyone who has a little interest in developing space technology, wants to know the leadership qualities needed and the ability to raise successful institutions should read this book. In his book, AK explains his childhood, how he was helped mostly by his Hindu teachers to develop and refine his mathematics and engineering skills and how he was awarded with scholarships to pursue his advanced studies. He explained in detail how Dr. Sarabhai discovered him and put him in charge of India's satellite and missile program which finally made history when the Agni missile was fired successfully and made India one of the few countries who possessed the ability to launch ballistic missiles. This technology was later used to develop the India Space program.

I was amazed by the trust reposed by the Indian govern-

ment on a tan Muslim of Gujarat by making him in charge of India's first satellite vehicle, SLV-3 program, which successfully launched the Rohini Satellite RS-1 into orbit in 1980, marking India's entry into the space age. He was also made the chief architect of India's Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP) which aimed to develop a range of indigenous missile systems. The program led to the development of missiles like Prithvi, Agni, Trishul, and Akash.

For a poor country like India during those times, it was not a smooth ride but it faced multiple challenges which included limited financial resources, technological constraints, and the need to build expertise in various areas. Despite these challenges, ISRO achieved significant successes. In 1975, India launched its first satellite, Aryabhata, marking its entry into space technology. Over the years, ISRO developed its satellite launch vehicles like the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV), making it a reliable option for commercial satellite launches.

One of ISRO's major successes was the Mars Orbiter Mission (Mangalyaan) in 2013, making India the first Asian country to reach Martian orbit and the fourth space agency in the world to do so. Another milestone was the Chandrayaan-1 mission in 2008, which made India discover water molecules on the Moon's surface. Chandrayaan-2 was launched by ISRO with the goal of exploring the Moon's south pole region aimed to study the lunar surface, search for water ice, and understand the Moon's geology. Chandrayaan-2 was launched on July 22, 2019 using the GSLV Mk III-M1 launch vehicle, also known as "Bahubali," which is ISRO's heaviest and most powerful launch vehicle. After launch, the GSLV Mk III-M1 inserted Chandrayaan-2 into a temporary Earth orbit, known as an "Earth parking orbit. Chandrayaan-2's onboard propulsion system was used to perform a Trans-Lunar Injection maneuver involving firing the spacecraft's engines to give it the necessary velocity to break free from Earth's gravitational influence and head towards the Moon.

After a journey of several days, Chandrayaan-2 entered the Moon's gravitational sphere. The spacecraft performed a series of maneuvers to gradually reduce its velocity and be captured by the Moon's gravity, thus entering lunar orbit. The Vikram lander was intended to make a soft landing on the Moon's surface. It separated from the orbiter and began its descent towards the lunar surface but it did not go well and lost communication with ISRO during its final stages of descent. Despite the challenges faced during the landing phase, the mission's achievements have contributed significantly to the understanding of Earth's celestial neighbor. Undeterred

by the failure, India immediately set the launch of Chandrayaan-3 (C-3) mission in motion. Learning from the previous experience, C-3 used a new navigation system that helped the lander to land precisely on the Moon's surface. A new braking system was deployed that helped to slow down the lander and prevent it from crashing. It also used a new communication system that allowed the lander to stay in contact with the ground control station during the landing. Launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on 14th July, 2023, C-3 followed the same trajectory as of Chandrayaan-2 and successfully landed on the Moon's south pole on August 23, 2023. The lander, called Vikram, successfully touched down on the Moon's surface at 1:45 am IST (10:15 pm UTC). The rover, called Pragyan, will be deployed from the lander and will explore the surrounding area for one lunar day (around 14 Earth days).

The C-3 will help scientists to learn more about the presence of water ice on the Moon, a valuable resource that could be used for drinking, growing crops, and producing fuel. The Moon's southern pole receives nearly continuous sunlight due to its location near the lunar south pole, making it an ideal spot for solar power generation. The craters in the polar regions are believed to be "cold traps" where material from asteroids and comets might have accumulated over billions of years which could provide insights into the history of the solar system and the Moon's geology. It is also believed that the southern pole hosts besides water, such as carbon dioxide and methane which could reveal more about the Moon's evolution and its interaction with the space environment. The presence of water ice and the favorable lighting conditions make the southern pole a potential site for future lunar bases which could serve as research outposts, launching points for deeper space missions, or even stepping stones for human missions to Mars.

The other programs in line of India's space program are; the Gaganyaan mission aims to send Indian astronauts (Gagannauts) into space, fostering human spaceflight capabilities, the Aditya-L1 mission will study the Sun, and the proposed Venus mission aims to explore our neighboring planet. Moreover, ISRO remains a prominent player in the global commercial satellite launch market. India's space program has come a long way since its inception, overcoming challenges and achieving remarkable successes. The pursuit of exploration, technological advancement, and international collaboration defines ISRO's aspirations as it continues to shape the country's space endeavors.

- The writer is the Former Press Secretary to the President Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France Former MD, SRBC

Saudi Arabia and Iran are eager to reduce bilateral and regional tension

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The latest round of talks has given rise to renewed hope, but there is still a long way to go. Yemen has been a major bone of contention between the two sides. Both countries are supporting opposing sides in the conflict. The protracted war has badly affected the lives of ordinary Yemenis. Yemen's dire humanitarian crisis, plagued by widespread...

Saudi Arabia and Iran are two regional powers and a major member of the Muslim world but have strained relations. The geopolitical conflict between them dates back at least to the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Both states follow different interpretations of Islam and are engaged in a struggle for regional dominance. Both have different views on various regional and international issues as well. The two countries have different geopolitical interests, with Saudi Arabia aligned more closely with Western powers, while Iran has sought to challenge the existing order and project its power in the region. This has led to a struggle for influence and control, with both sides pursuing policies that often clash. Sectarianism plays a significant role in the Saudi-Iranian rivalry, with Saudi Arabia being predominantly Sunni Muslim and Iran being Shia Muslim. This has led to a proxy war between the two countries in several regional conflicts, such as in Yemen and Syria, where they support opposing sides.

The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran has been exacerbated by the involvement of other regional and international powers, who have sought to exploit the situation for their own interests. This has contributed to a complex web of alliances and tensions that have made the situation even more difficult to resolve. Despite these challenges, there have been recent efforts by both Saudi Arabia and Iran to reduce bilateral and regional tensions, through diplomatic channels and dialogue. These efforts have the potential to create more stability and security in the region, but they will require sustained commitment and goodwill from all parties involved. Diplomatic relations between the two were severed in 2016 when Iranian protesters stormed the Saudi embassy in Tehran in response to the execution of prominent Saudi Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr by Saudi authorities. In Yemen, the Iranian-backed Houthi militia launched attacks on the land of Saudi Arabia, which further escalated the tension. However, since President Biden took office, Saudi regional policy has changed and the United States has

shifted its focus from the Middle East. Relations between Saudi Arabia and America are not as pleasant as before. Citing a shift in US policy, Saudi Arabia is keen to engage regional rivals, particularly Iran. Iranian officials have also emphasized on regional peace and reconciliation on various occasions. In this regard, there were three rounds of negotiations with Saudi Arabia under the leadership of former Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. After taking office, the new president Ibrahim Raisi also expressed his willingness to reconcile. During his first press conference, he said: "I say that there is no obstacle in the negotiations with Saudi Arabia and relations with all countries. We are ready to reopen the embassies. There have been five rounds of Iraqi-sponsored and mediated talks so far, with Oman also reportedly playing a constructive role in holding the latest round. This fifth round of direct negotiations was held in Baghdad in April this year. The Iranian delegation was led by Deputy Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran, Saeed Irani, while the Saudi delegation was led by the head of Saudi intelligence, Khalid Bin Ali Hamidan. Both sides expressed hope that the talks could lead to a reduction in bilateral and regional tensions, but also lowered expectations of any progress. The only outcome of the talks so far has been the reopening of Iran's representative office in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Jeddah.

The latest round of talks has given rise to renewed hope, but there is still a long way to go. Yemen has been a major bone of contention between the two sides. Both countries are supporting opposing sides in the conflict. The protracted war has badly affected the lives of ordinary Yemenis. Yemen's dire humanitarian crisis, plagued by widespread hunger, disease and insecurity, is expected to worsen in the coming months if urgent action is not taken. The United Nations (UN) brokered a two-month ceasefire between the Iranian-backed Houthis and the Saudi-backed Yemeni government in Yemen, which took effect on April 2 and ended on June 2, and was extended for another two months. The ceasefire reflects

the willingness of both countries to enter into a broader de-escalation agreement.

The situation in Syria tells a similar story: Iran supports the current government of Bashar al-Assad, while Saudi Arabia supports various local rebel groups against the Assad regime. Similarly, the race for supremacy between the two regional powers continues in Lebanon and Bahrain, which are relatively peaceful, but the warring parties (Saudi vs. Iranian) continue to struggle for power. Bahrain's Saudi-backed government was able to crush the rebellion, which was allegedly backed by Iran. Lebanon is facing a similar situation where the political landscape is dominated by Iran-backed Hezbollah, but Saudi Arabia also has considerable influence. The two regional powers have been at loggerheads for decades, but talks could usher in a new era of peace and cooperation between them. Discussions should focus on resolving outstanding issues and promoting recognition, representation and cooperation as the security and well-being of the entire Middle East region depends on the standoff between these two countries. If Saudi Arabia and Iran focus on their common interests, regional countries can do the same.

The recent developments indicate that both Saudi Arabia and Iran are showing signs of eagerness to reduce bilateral and regional tension. Through diplomatic channels, both countries have expressed a willingness to engage in talks and find common ground to resolve their differences. The theory of balance of power reminds us that any perceived threat by a regional power will result in other powers rushing to balance it out. It is therefore in the interest of all parties involved to work towards a peaceful resolution of their differences. Ultimately, the reduction of tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran will not only benefit these two countries but also the entire region and the international community at large. It is hoped that both nations will continue to make progress in their efforts towards reducing tensions and achieving a more stable and peaceful middle east.

Briefs

President not Authorized to fix election...

FROM PAGE 01
the Parliament then it has to be again passed by in the joint sitting of the parliament and sent back to the President. In that case if the President does not act within 10 days then the bill becomes law. But in this case since there is no parliament in place therefore the election bill has not become the law. Experts say the matter shall ultimately land in the Supreme Court because after CEC unwillingness to meet the President, the President is likely to announce a date for the elections, as he did in the case of elections in the Punjab and KP. If the President does so, the Election Commission certainly shall not follow the Presidential decree therefore the matter shall reach the apex court.

US wants free and fair polls in Pak

FROM PAGE 01
on August 9, while Sindh and Balochistan assemblies were also prematurely dissolved to allow the electoral authority to hold elections in the country within 90 days instead of 60 days if the legislature completed its constitutional tenure. However, the ECP may not be able to hold the polls within the stipulated time as the Council of Common Interest (CCI), days before the dissolution of the assemblies, approved the 7th Population and Housing Census 2023. The move led to concerns from several quarters, including the Pakistan Peoples Party, which was part of the coalition government that ratified the census. During the meeting today, the US ambassador reiterated that choosing Pakistan's future leaders is for the Pakistani people to decide, the statement added. Blome also reaffirmed that America would back transparent elections "conducted in accordance with Pakistan's laws and constitution".

PTI wants elections in 90 days

FROM PAGE 01
Both parties made their position clear when ECP officials met them as part of its consultations with major political parties on the election roadmap. The electoral watchdog in a statement said that the PTI representatives emphasised that the elections should be held within 90 days and contested that there was "no need for delimitation at this time". The Imran Khan-led party also called for the immediate release of its arrested leaders and workers and urged the ECP to give permission to hold political rallies and an equal political environment to all parties. On the other hand, the JUI-F representatives clarified that holding elections is a constitutional requirement and informed the electoral authority that as the census results have come the delimitation should be done first. The election commission told both parties that it would hold the upcoming polls as soon as possible and all parties would get a level playing field. The statement also added that the process of consultation with major political parties will continue in the coming days. Earlier this week it was reported that ECP has decided to consult all major political parties, including the PTI, regarding the date of general elections that are expected early next year, sources had told Geo News.

CAA team in Brussels...

FROM PAGE 01
Deputy Director-General and Director of Airworthiness. Their visit aims to foster cooperation and understanding between Pakistani authorities and European counterparts. One of the central themes of the discussions will revolve around measures for flight safety and the examination of pilot licenses, addressing the concerns raised by European aviation authorities.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of The Naval Army Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Performs The Ground Breaking of Bahria Foundation College at Chakwal. – DNA

Lionel Messi into another final to beat Cincinnati

Messi's compatriot Luciano Acosta put Cincinnati ahead in the 18th minute and American striker Brandon Vazquez doubled the home side's lead with a fine strike from the edge of the box in the 53rd minute

SPORTS DESK

MIAMI: Lionel Messi inspired Inter Miami to come back from two goals down to beat Cincinnati 5-4 on penalties after their thrilling US Open Cup semifinal ended 3-3 after extra time. Miami, who won the Leagues Cup on penalties against Nashville on Saturday, are now one win away from their second trophy since Messi joined the club last month. The US Open Cup is American soccer's oldest and most important knockout competition, dating back more than a century to 1914 and is similar to England's FA Cup or Spain's Copa del Rey. Miami will face the winners of Wednesday's other semifinal between Houston Dynamo and Real Salt Lake in the final on Sept. 27. A month ago Cincinnati, who are top of Major

League Soccer's standings while Miami are bottom, would have been clear favorites in this game but the Florida team are now a very different side to the one which was winless in their 11 league games before the arrival of the Argentine. But in the intense heat, with temperatures over 100 degrees celsius at kick-off, Miami's unbeaten run since the signing of Messi and Spanish pair Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba, looked to be coming to an end in Ohio against an impressive Cincinnati side. Inter trailed 2-0 with 22 minutes remaining before the Argentine delivered two perfect assists to striker Leonardo Campana to take the game into extra time. Messi's compatriot Luciano Acosta put Cincinnati ahead in the 18th minute and American striker Brandon Vazquez doubled the



home side's lead with a fine strike from the edge of the box in the 53rd minute. Messi looked tired and disjointed and the change of

personnel and formation adopted by coach Gerardo 'Tata' Martino left the team lacking their usual fluency. But in the 68th minute, Messi whipped in a free kick from the left which was headed home by Campana to breathe some life into what had been a tired display from Gerardo Martino's side. Cincinnati thought that they had made 3-1 but Yuga Kubo's effort was ruled out for handball and then the Japanese forward was denied by a fine save from Miami keeper Drake Callender who also denied Santiago Arias. Then in the seventh minute of stoppage time Messi, from deep on the left, swung in a ball to Campana at the back post again and the Ecuadoran forward angled home his header to force extra time. Miami went ahead in the first period with Benjamin Cremaschi sliding an excellent pass into the path of Josef Martinez and the Venezuelan made no mistake with a clinical finish. But Cincinnati bounced

back in the second period with Japanese winger Kubo firing a right-foot shot into the far corner past the diving Drake Callender. The teams were at 4-4 in the shootout when Callender saved Nick Hagglund's penalty for Cincinnati and Cremaschi converted to book Miami's place in the final. The 18-year-old Miami-born Cremaschi, whose parents are Argentine, was congratulated by Messi after his match-winning spot kick. "I'm living a huge dream," he told CBS Sports, "Sometimes I sit down and really think about the position that I'm in and it's incredible, I never believed I was going to be in the spot I am in now," he said. There was a more sober view from Martino whose team must now begin their 12-game attempt to climb from last in the Eastern Conference to the playoff positions.

Laporte leaves Manchester City to join Al Nassr

Coach Pep Guardiola opted to use defenders Manuel Akanji and Nathan Ake more often, and City spent £77m to bring in Croatia defender Josko Gvardiol earlier this month.

RIYADH: Spain defender Aymeric Laporte has left Manchester City to join Saudi Pro League side Al Nassr in a deal worth 27.5m euros (£23.6m). The 29-year-old joined City from Athletic Bilbao in January 2018 for a then club record £57m. He helped City win 12 major honours but made just 24 appearances as the Blues won the Treble last season. In a goodbye message on social media, Laporte thanked fans and team-mates for an "unforgettable" time at the club. "It has lasted five-and-a-half unforgettable years. Plenty of memories that I will keep forever close to my heart," said Laporte. "From trophies to setbacks, victories to injuries, it's all been part of my journey, and I'm grateful for absolutely every moment that shaped me into who I am today. "It was an honour and a pleasure to wear these colours and I hope you will remember me in a good way. Thank you for everything, I wish you the best of luck for the future and I will always keep an eye on you guys." Laporte made 180 appearances for City in total, scoring 12 goals, but he found opportunities limited last season. Coach Pep Guardiola opted to use defenders Manuel Akanji and Nathan Ake more often, and City spent £77m to bring in Croatia defender Josko Gvardiol earlier this month. In 2021 Laporte switched his international allegiance from France to Spain and already has 22 caps, helping them win the Uefa Nations League final in June. Laporte is the latest high profile player to move to Al Nassr, joining Cristiano Ronaldo, Sadio Mane, Marcelo Brozovic, Alex Telles and Seko Fofana at the club. They are one of four Saudi Pro League clubs to be taken over by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) in June, the others being Al-Ittihad, Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli. Last month, former City team-mate Riyad Mahrez joined Al-Ahli in a deal worth up to £30m, while Karim Benzema, N'Golo Kante, Ruben Neves and Neymar are among other footballers to move to Saudi Arabia this summer. – Agencies

Mickey Arthur links up Pakistan squad in SL

HAMBANTOTA: Mickey Arthur, Director of Pakistan's men's cricket team, has joined the Pakistan squad in Sri Lanka. He will stay with the team for the remaining games of the ongoing ODI series against Afghanistan, until the much-anticipated Asia Cup match against arch-rivals India in Kandy on September 2. The former head coach will also be a part of the coaching setup for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 in India next month. Pakistan's head coach Grant Bradburn, before departing for Sri Lanka last week, showed his excitement to have Mickey Arthur with the team in Sri Lanka. "Mickey Arthur and I have been very good coaching associates and friends for a very long time. – Agencies

Warholm saves Norway's honor, Ingebrigtsen denied in 1500m again

BUDAPEST: Norway's Karsten Warholm produced a fighting performance to regain his 400m hurdles title but teammate Jakob Ingebrigtsen once again fell short in the 1500m on a pulsating night at the world championships on Wednesday. Warholm declared "that is what we do best, us Vikings" after holding off the field to win his third world title. The two women's finals were polar opposites of each other. Marileidy Paulino of the Dominican Republic finally secured her first global title in the 400m after settling for silver at the Tokyo Olympics and last year's world championships, timing a national record of 48.76sec. The pole vault, though, was a back and forth duel between Olympic champion Katie Moon of the US and Australian Nina Kennedy. In the end they shared a hug and the gold medal on a mark of 4.90m instead of holding a jump-off, echoing the men's high jump at the Tokyo Olympics when Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim and Gianmarco Tamberi of Italy agreed to share the honors. In the 400m hurdles, Warholm pulled away down the finishing straight after being pressured by perennial rival Raj Benjamin on the final bend, to time 46.89sec. Having won in London in 2017 and in Doha in 2019 he could only finish seventh in Eugene last year after returning from injury prematurely. "I feel like the gold medal is back where it belongs," said Warholm. – Agencies

Pak Shaheens squad for Asian Games announced

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board on Thursday, announced Pakistan Shaheens squad for the 19th Asian Games, set to take place in Hangzhou, China, from 28 September to 7 October. Young all-rounder Qasim Akram will lead Pakistan Shaheens in the tournament, to be played in T20 format. 20-year-old Qasim, has till date featured in 20 first-class matches and 40 T20 matches and also captained Pakistan U19 in the ICC U19 World Cup in 2022. In the 15-member squad, there are eight players who have already represented the Pakistan men's team at the international level. The players who have represented Pakistan at the international level are Aamir Jamal (2 T20Is), Arshad Iqbal (1 T20I), Asif Ali (21 ODIs, 55 T20Is), Haider Ali (2 ODIs, 33 T20Is), Khushdil Shah (10 ODIs, 24 T20Is), Mohammad Hasnain (9 ODIs, 11 T20Is), Shah Nawaz Dahani (2 ODIs, 11 T20Is) and Usman Qadir (1 ODI, 23 T20Is). Also, eight players in the 15-member squad, Aamir Jamal, Arafat Minhas, Arshad Iqbal, Omair Bin Yousuf, Qasim Akram, Ro-

hail Nazir, Shah Nawaz Dahani and Sufiyan Muqem have been associated with the Shaheens side recently. Since May 2023, Pakistan Shaheens have toured Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka and Australia. In Zimbabwe, Shaheens whitewashed Zimbabwe A in the

two four-dayers, but lost 4-2 in the 50-over matches to Zimbabwe Select. Shaheens later won the ACC Men's Emerging Asia Cup in Sri Lanka in July, beating India A by 108 runs in the final. However, they finished as runners-up in the six-team Top End T20 Se-

ries in Darwin, Australia earlier this month. As per the tournament's rule, Shaheens will feature in the event from the quarter-finals stage scheduled to take place on 3 and 4 October. The semi-finals will be played on 6 October, while the final will take place on 7 October. The match for Bronze medal will also take place on Saturday, 7 October. Pakistan men's team won a bronze medal in their maiden and only appearance in the Asian Games held in Guangzhou, China, in 2010.

Pakistan Shaheens squad:

Qasim Akram (captain), Omair Bin Yousuf (vice-captain), Aamir Jamal, Arafat Minhas, Arshad Iqbal, Asif Ali, Haider Ali, Khushdil Shah, Mirza Tahir Baig, Mohammad Hasnain, Muhammad Akhlaq (wk), Rohail Nazir, Shah Nawaz Dahani, Sufiyan Muqem and Usman Qadir. Non-travelling reserves – Abdul Wahid Bangalzai, Mehran Mumtaz, Mohammad Imran Jnr, Muhammad Irfan Khan Niazi and Mubasir Khan. Player Support Personnel – Shahid Aslam (head coach-cum-manager), Umar Rashid (bowling coach), Hanif Malik (batting and fielding coach) and Hafiz Naeem ul Rasool (physiotherapist).



United States approves...

FROM PAGE 01
Wednesday's State Department announcement also follows an angry Chinese reaction to the transit through the United States of Taiwanese Vice President William Lai on his way to and from an official visit in Paraguay last week. In recent years, China has stepped up its military activity in the waters and skies around Taiwan, sending fighter jets and navy vessels near the island or to encircle it.

China vows 'powerful'...

FROM PAGE 01
The US State Department approved the potential sale of F-16 Infrared Search and Track (IRST) systems and related equipment to Taiwan at an estimated cost of \$500 million, the Pentagon said on Wednesday. Beijing "will take resolute, powerful measures to safeguard its national sovereignty and territorial integrity," Wang said. The US Congress was notified earlier in the day of the possible sale, Pentagon said in a statement. "The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region," said the statement.

PM Kakar rejects...

FROM PAGE 01
with the right to express my opinion," he said. Reflecting on a recent tragedy in which six Pakistan Army soldiers were martyred during a skirmish in South Waziristan, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar warned elements attempting to impose their ideologies through force and intimidation, reminding them that the country was in the safe hands of "very capable people". Highlighting the urgency of the situation, warned the elements attempting to stop the state from fulfilling its prime responsibilities. "Our way of life, our manner of speech, and our culture will remain steadfast against such forces. Our home is here, and we are not going anywhere. The governance is in the hands of empowered and competent people," he assured.

PBC stresses...

FROM PAGE 01
it seemed that a direction took place in the case. Earlier, the courts were called Sharif courts. The PTI chairman's appeal was not fixed yesterday, not even today." PBC Executive Committee Chairman Hassan Raza Pasha said that the main appeal against Imran Khan's conviction was not fixed before the SC. "But yesterday's remarks by the SC which we saw and heard, it seemed as if the whole appeal was decided, and we saw criminal jurisprudence changing," he said. "It seems as if there is no trust left in the honourable high court judges. They are also equally honourable and respectable judges, and are passing verdicts according to their conscience ... it amounts to interference in the smooth functioning of the high court, appellate court," Pasha said. "What decision will the high court make?" he asked. He noted that the lawyers of a certain political party, an apparent reference to the PTI, were saying that the SC's observations had

SC adjourns simran's...

FROM PAGE 01
the prime minister's office via a vote of no-confidence in April last year, was kept in jail. He also directed the authorities to submit a report on the facilities provided to the PTI chief in jail. On this point, Khan's lawyer Sardar Latif Khosa told the court that they just presented their arguments before the IHC. CJP Bandial responded that your objection was that you were not being heard now all your arguments have been heard. "Hope from the high court that it gives a decision based on your points," remarked CJP Bandial. Moving on, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail inquired about what was the result of the IHC hearing. To which Khosa responded that he was not a politician so he could not say much.

Briefs
SBP-held FX reserves fall below \$8bn

DNA
KARACHI: Foreign exchange reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) decreased by \$125 million on a weekly basis, clocking in at \$7.93 billion as of August 18, data released on Thursday showed. Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country stood at \$13.25 billion. Net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at \$5.32 billion. The central bank cited debt repayments as the reason for the decrease in the foreign currency reserves. "During the week ended August 18, 2023, SBP's reserves decreased by \$125 million to \$7,930.3 million on account of debt repayments," it said. Last week, foreign exchange reserves held by the SBP increased by \$12 million. The central bank reserves saw a decline after gaining a little in the week earlier. Before, it had declined for three straight weeks, mainly due to debt repayments. In July, reserves held by the SBP got a boost as Pakistan received the first tranche of about \$1.2 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after its lender approved a new \$3-billion Stand-By Arrangement. However, the central bank reserves are now under pressure on the back of debt repayments after ease in restrictions, and lack of fresh inflows. After reporting a surplus for four successive months, Pakistan's current account posted a deficit of \$809 million in July, the highest since October 2022.

N. Korea's spy satellite launch fails

PYONGYANG: North Korea's second attempt to put a spy satellite into space has failed, three months after its first launch crashed into the sea. The attempt on Thursday morning failed during the third stage of its flight, state media said. For North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, a spy satellite is a coveted prize, as it would let him monitor incoming attacks and plot his own more accurately. Pyongyang's space agency has said it will try again in October. South Korea said it detected the launch of the rocket at around 03:50 local time (18:50 GMT), and that it had flown through international airspace over the Yellow Sea between mainland China and the Korean peninsula. The launch prompted an emergency warning in Japan's southernmost Okinawa prefecture minutes later, urging residents to take cover indoors. The alert was lifted after about 20 minutes. Condemning the launch, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said: "Behaviour like this goes against the UN resolutions and we're already firmly protesting." The UN urged North Korea to refrain from "further threatening activity" and called on Pyongyang to engage in serious diplomacy. But although Thursday's failure will have been disappointing for Pyongyang, it appears they've made progress. - Agencies

BRICS to admit six new members next year

All the countries invited had already expressed an interest in joining. The group currently includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa

NEWS DESK

JOHANNESBURG: Oil powers Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have been invited to become members of the BRICS group of developing nations in its first expansion in over a decade. Also joining next year will be Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia and Argentina, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said Thursday as he wrapped up the annual summit of the group in Johannesburg. All the countries invited had already expressed an interest in joining. The group currently includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. "The membership will take effect from the first of January, 2024," Ramaphosa said. In a video message, Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated the new BRICS members, adding that the bloc's global influence would continue to grow. "I would like to congratulate the new members who will work in a full-scale format next year," Putin said. "And I would like to assure all our colleagues that we will continue the work that we started today on expanding the influence of BRICS in the world," the Russian president added. China's President Xi Jinping called the bloc's expansion "historic," reflecting its determination to "unite and cooperate with developing countries." "[It will] inject new impetus into the BRICS cooperation mechanism and further strengthen the power of world peace and development," Jinping said. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said that "the special, strategic relations with the BRICS nations promotes common principles, most importantly the firm belief in the principle of respect for sovereignty, independence and non-interference in internal affairs." **Bottom of Form:** The kingdom will continue to be a "secure and reliable energy provider," he told a BRICS conference Thursday. Total bilateral trade between Saudi Arabia and BRICS nations exceeded \$160 billion in 2022, the Saudi



BRICS agreed to make Argentina, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates full members from January 1. - DNA

Arabia at odds with its ally, the United States. The bloc's expansion raises the question of potential de-dollarization, a process by which members would gradually switch to using currencies other than the US dollar to conduct trade. The BRICS countries have also been talking about a common currency, an idea analysts have described as unworkable and "unlikely" in the near future. Putin said the issue of a common currency was a "difficult question" but added "we will move towards solving these problems." The expansion takes place at a time when some BRICS members, namely Russia and China, are locked into rising tensions with the West. Experts have said that choosing to include countries that are openly antagonistic toward the West, such as Iran, could swing the group further toward becoming an anti-Western bloc. Built off a term originally coined by former Goldman Sachs economist Jim O'Neill to describe key emerging markets, the group has persisted despite deep differences in political and economic systems among its members. "Economically, not many of the countries that are applying to join are particularly large," O'Neill told Bloomberg earlier this week. Existing BRICS members have "had enough difficulty trying to agree just between the five of them," he added. "So beyond the admittedly hugely powerful symbolism, I'm not quite sure what having a lot more countries in there is going to achieve." BRICS held its first summit in 2009 with four members and then added South Africa the following year. It launched its New Development Bank in 2015. The United Arab Emirates President Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan said on X, formerly Twitter: "We appreciate the inclusion of the UAE as a member to this important group." Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi said that his country looks forward to joining BRICS to strengthen economic cooperation among its members, as well as "raise the voice of the Global South," according to the presidential spokesperson.

China retaliates as Japan releases Fukushima water

TOKYO: Japan has begun its controversial discharge of treated waste water from the Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean, sparking protests in the region and retaliation from Beijing. China is the biggest buyer of seafood from Japan, and on Thursday it said it would block all such imports. Japan says the water is safe, and many scientists agree. The UN's nuclear watchdog has also approved the plan. But critics say more studies need to be done and the release should be halted. More than a million tonnes of water stored at the nuclear plant will be discharged over the next 30 years. China, which has been the most vocal of opponents since the plan was announced two years ago, called the water discharge an "extremely selfish and irresponsible act" and said Japan was "passing an open wound onto the future generations of humanity". Shortly afterwards, China's customs office announced that an existing ban on seafood imports from Fukushima and some prefectures would be immediately extended to cover the whole of Japan to "protect the health of Chinese consumers". - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Ambassador-designate to Iran Muhammad Mudassir Tipu called on Caretaker FM Jilani Abbas Jilani. FM underlined the importance accorded by Pakistan to its relations with Iran. - DNA

Imaan, Wazir sent to jail on 14-day judicial remand

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad anti-terrorism court (ATC) sent human rights lawyer Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) leader Ali Wazir to Adiala Jail on 14-day judicial remand on Thursday in a sedition case related to the controversial speech against the state institutions. On August 19, two first information reports (FIR) were registered against Imaan and Wazir at the Tarnol police station and Counter-Terrorism Department police station, following a rally of the PTM in the federal capital. Both were booked on the charges of sedition, preventing government officials from carrying out their duties and damaging public property. During today's proceedings, Imaan and Wazir were produced before ATC Judge AbdulHasn Zulqarnain after a three-day physical remand. "Voice matching and photogrammetry of Imaan Mazari and Ali Wazir have been completed," said Prosecutor Raja Naveed and sought an extension in their physical remand. The investigating officer prayed to the court that Imaan was given a piece of paper from which she made the speech. "She needs to be interrogated who gave her that piece of paper." ATC Judge Zulqarnain said that the decision would be made based on justice only. Every possible due relief would be given, he added. Imaan's counsel Safa Zainab Anjum prayed to the court to hear her client's bail plea today. To this, the ATC judge remarked that the bail plea could not be heard today; however, he issued a notice of a hearing for the day after tomorrow. ATC judge allowed Imaan to meet her mother, former human rights minister Shireen Mazari, in the courtroom and summoned parties on August 26 on Imaan's bail application. A district and sessions court in Islamabad on Tuesday granted bail and sent Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) leader Ali Wazir to jail on a 14-day judicial in a different case related to "interference in state affairs" and damaging the public property registered after PTM held its rally in Islamabad. - DNA

Taliban stops 100 girls from travelling to Dubai for studies

KABUL: In another act of suppression, the Taliban stopped the young girls who were eager to embark on their education journey to Dubai. Khalaf Al Habtoor, a prominent Emirati businessman, has voiced his deep disappointment and concern about the incident. In a video message, he criticized the actions of the Taliban, expressing his dismay at the hindrance they have caused to the education and aspirations of these young women. Al-Habtoor facilitated the education of these 100 Afghan girls by providing scholarships to UAE universities, covering crucial aspects like travel expenses, accommodation, health insurance, and other necessary funds, as per Khaama Press. However, his noble initiative - providing 100 scholarships for Afghan girls' higher education in UAE - has been overshadowed by the Taliban's repressive intentions. In a voice message, the girls said that despite having valid reasons, the Taliban forces prevented them from travelling. Last year, this UAE businessman pledged 100 scholarships for girls in Dubai, coinciding with their denied university access. - Agencies

US provide \$215 mln in flood relief assistance

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Since the beginning of the floods, the United States has provided more than \$215 million in flood relief, disaster resilience, and food security assistance for Pakistan, including:
 • More than \$80 million in U.S. humanitarian assistance through USAID to provide urgently needed supplies for those most affected, including support for food, nutrition, health, security, safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene, and shelter.
 • An additional \$100 million of recovery and reconstruction funding announced at the January 9 International Conference on Climate-Resilient Pakistan in Geneva, Switzerland.
 • \$10 million in food security assistance, which provides urgent supplies to help farmers recover - like seeds and fertilizer - as well as assistance repairing damaged critical irrigation infrastructure.
 • \$2 million in humanitarian assistance for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) flood response in Pakistan to provide lifesaving resources to Afghan refugees and host communities in Pakistan.
 • More than \$1.9 million in U.S. Department of Defense funding to help airlift USAID supplies.
 • \$3 million for new early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience funding to support Pak ability to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters such as floods.
 • An additional \$16.4 million in nutrition and food security support, early recovery, resilience, and risk reduction assistance announced in June 2023 to provide life-saving food and nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene assistance to more than 4 million people in flood-affected communities. Private American citizens and U.S. companies have donated food, medicine, and other relief supplies, and at least \$37 million dollars to help the people of Pakistan in this time of need.

Amb-designate to Iran calls on Jilani

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador-designate to Iran Muhammad Mudassir-Tipu Thursday called on Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilani Abbas Jilani and discussed matters of mutual interests. During the meeting, the foreign minister underlined the importance accorded by Pakistan to its relations with Iran. He hoped that the ambassador would play an active role in further strengthening bilateral ties between the brotherly countries. - APP

Ukraine claims Crimea landing on Independence Day

"In this fight, everyone counts. Because the fight is for something that is important to everyone," Mr Zelensky said

KIEV: Ukraine has claimed that its troops landed in occupied Crimea, as it marked its second Independence Day fighting Russian invaders. The mission's objectives were achieved with no casualties among its troops, defence ministry spokesman Andriy Yusov wrote on Telegram. Russia illegally annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, eight years before it launched a full-scale invasion. Mr Yusov said an encounter ensued in Olenivka, west of the peninsula. He claimed Russia suffered personnel losses. However, there was no immediate comment from Moscow. "Troops have landed at the peninsula as part of a special operation," Mr Yusov told public broadcaster Suspilne, referring to Crimea. Mr Yusov refused to give further details of the operation, but he claimed that the Ukrainian state flag was briefly raised in Crimea. Suspilne reported that the skirmish in Tarkhankut involved aircraft and navy ships. A Russian Telegram channel had also reported of fighting in that area. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky released an Independence Day message on X, formerly known as Twitter, rallying his countrymen to help maintain the country's independence. "In this fight, everyone counts. Because the fight is for something that is important to everyone," Mr Zelensky

said. Independence Day has gained increased significance among Ukrainians since Russia's invasion started in February 2022, according to a poll by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. It is now the country's third most important holiday, behind only Easter and Christmas. Ukraine launched its counter-offensive last May, attempting to expel the Russians from land they had captured in the east and south of the country. An analysis by BBC Verify showed the gains in terms of reclaimed land size have been small. However, analysts at the US-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW) say the advances near Robotyne and Urozhaine are "likely tactically significant because of the structure of Russian defensive lines". They also note that Russian forces have dedicated significant effort to hold the settlements. Russia has also accused Ukraine of drone attacks, the most recent of which on 23 August hit a skyscraper under construction in Moscow. Ukraine's claim of landing its troops in Crimea came a day after Yevgeny Prigozhin, the leader of the mercenary group that fought with Russia in the war, was on the passenger list of a private jet that crashed after taking off from Moscow. Mr Prigozhin had led a failed mutiny against Russian President Vladimir Putin in June. - Agencies

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