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State of Nation address: Kazakh President shares his roadmap

Detailed News On Page-08

Georgia needs reforms, warns Josep Borrell

Detailed News On Page-08

Sabalenka reaches into US Open final

Detailed News On Page-06



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs the 5th Apex Committee meeting of Special Investment Council (SIFC). – DNA

Another 'unusual' meeting at President House

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Days after an unexpected meeting at the President House triggered speculations regarding the announcement of the election date, another "unusual" huddle took place between President Arif Alvi and former information minister Muhammad Ali Durrani, on the eve of the completion of the president's constitutional term on September 8 (yesterday). Durrani, the Pakistan Muslim League Functional (PML-F) leader — who served as information minister during late military ruler General (retd) Pervez Musharraf's era — last made headlines when he, in 2021, proposed to initiate a "grand dialogue" among stakeholders. In 2020, Durrani also met the then-leader of the opposition Shehbaz Sharif in Kot Lakhpat jail in Lahore during the tenure of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-led government to convey an "important message". A day earlier, a newspaper reported that the former information minister called on President Alvi at his official residence. However, no official statement regarding the meeting was issued.

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SIFC meeting Govt approves 'practical steps' for fiscal revival

Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir, federal cabinet members, provincial chief ministers and high-level government officials attended the meeting

KHAYAM ABBASI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq on Friday approved various practical steps imperative for economic revival of the country. The approval was given as he chaired the 5th Apex Committee Meeting of Special Investment Facilitation Council. The SIFC meeting was held Friday with a singular focus to improve the overall business and investment environment in the Country being imperative for 'Economic Revival,' said a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office. Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir, federal cabinet members, provincial chief ministers and high-level government officials attended the meeting. The concerned ministries presented their plans/roadmaps to overcome the macroeconomic challenges, governance related impediments and voids in regulatory mechanisms in a bid to attract both foreign and domestic investment, and stimulate economic growth," read the statement. The committee deliberated upon various measures to be taken in short, medium and long term to reap the envisaged dividends. The practical steps approved by the premier will be operationalized as soon as possible, it said. PM Kakar asked

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Nepra approves Rs1.46 per unit increase

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) on Friday notified an increase of Rs1.46 per unit in electricity prices on account of fuel charges adjustment (FCA) for the month of July 2023. The regulatory authority announced the decision on a petition filed by the Central Power Purchasing Authority (CPPA) after power distribution companies (DISCOs) demanded adjustment for the month. The additional amount will be collected in bills for the month of September 2023. This hike in power tariff under the head FCA will not be applicable to K-Electric and lifeline consumers while power distribution companies (DISCOs) will reflect

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Briefs

Jilani to chair CYMM in London

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani will chair the 10th Commonwealth Youth Ministerial Meeting (CYMM) beginning from Tuesday next in London. The theme of the meeting is "Aim Higher: Delivering More for Young People in the Commonwealth". It aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Four core areas of education, employment, engagement and environment identified in the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), will be extensively discussed in the meeting. While in London, the Foreign Minister is also expected to meet the participating Ministers and high-ranking officials of the Commonwealth.

Leaders responsible for people's miseries

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashed Ahmed has held leaders of all political leaders responsible for destroying the lives of the poverty-stricken masses by getting involved in their tussle for power struggle. "The PPP and Maulana Fazlur Rehman are blaming the PML-N for creating economic mess in the country, but actually the people of Pakistan are paying the price of inefficiencies of all of them [political leaders]," he said in his latest post on X (formerly known as Twitter). He said the real challenges the masses were facing were poverty and unemployment which were not a priority for political leaders. Taking jibe at the PML-N president, the seasoned politician said Shehbaz Sharif, being in public office, used to attend seven events a day, but after quitting public office, he always fell ill after reaching London. He went on to say that Nawaz Sharif had been suffering political illness for the last several years.

Holiday Notice

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

– Editor

Audio leaks case

SC terms govt's objections 'attack on the judiciary'

A judicial commission comprising Justice Isa along with Justice Afghan and Justice Aamer was tasked on May 20 to probe the audio leaks related

COURT REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday rejected the then-Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led government's objection against the five-member bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial hearing the alleged audio leaks. The five-member larger bench of the apex court, headed by CJP Bandial and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsen, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Shahid Waheed, was formed earlier in May this year to hear petitions against the then government's move to form inquiry commission led by senior puisne Judge Qazi Faez Isa to probe audio leaks involving the supreme court judges.

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Rabbani accuses President Alvi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi's completion of his five-year term on Friday may not culminate with an unblemished send-off, as Senator Raza Rabbani has issued a statement highlighting an alleged series of constitutional violations during his tenure as head of the state. Nevertheless, despite the conclusion of his term, President Alvi is expected to remain in office indefinitely due to the absence

Continued on Page 06

FO hopes interim Afghan Govt to fulfill its obligations

The FO spokesperson also reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to eradicate the menace of terrorism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office on Friday expressed concerns over the "advanced weapons" being used by the terrorists in Afghanistan to attack Pakistan and its security agencies. "These modern weapons have fallen into the hands of terrorists in Afghanistan who are using these [weapons] to attack Pakistan and its security agencies," said FO Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch in a weekly briefing. She said the situation needs international attention and called upon all stakeholders to assume the responsibility that they

have in this regard. The FO spokesperson also reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to eradicate the menace of terrorism. The spokesperson said Pakistan and the United States have a robust dialogue on multiple areas including on security and counter terrorism matters. She said Pakistan has been communicating with the US and other partners both inside and outside the region about Pakistan's security concerns. She hoped our friends and partners would understand the security compulsions that Pakistan has in this region including the threat of terrorism and the security situation because of the difficult and aggressive posture of our eastern neighbor.

Continued on Page 06

PTI demands President to announce election date

Committee said PDM government did not fulfil its constitutional duty to organise polls

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) core committee has demanded President Dr Arif Alvi to announce election date without a delay and unanimously passed a resolution during a session, on Friday. The PTI core committee members said that the country is facing constitutional, political, democratic, administrative and economic crises as the state infrastructure was shaken after the 'unconstitutional move' of April 2022. The committee said that the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies had been dissolved on January 14 and 18 respectively but the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government did not fulfil its constitutional duty to organise polls in 90 days besides violating the Supreme Court's April 4 order. The political party urged for concrete steps to establish a democratic government to resolve the crisis. The PTI core committee said that

Continued on Page 06

Bilawal demands polls on time

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said on Friday the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) should announce a date for next general elections, saying his party was ready whenever they are held. Talking to media, former foreign minister said: "We are ready for elections if held within 60 days and still ready if held in 90 days". The National Assembly was dissolved last month days before the completion of its constitutional term to clear the way for holding elections within 90 days. The Constitution states that election should be held within 60 days if

Continued on Page 06



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KP IGP inaugurates Command Center in DI Khan

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DERA ISMAIL KHAN : Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Akhtar Hayat Khan Friday inaugurated the Command and Control Center established at District Police Officer in Dera Ismail Khan. Regional Police Officer Dera Nasir Mehmood Satti gave a detailed briefing to Inspector General of Police KP Akhtar Hayat Khan about the Command and control center. RPO while giving the briefing said that with the help of 300 cameras equipped with modern technology in the command and control center. A wide network has been established, through which 24-hour sensitive places of Dera city, security of government offices, central jail, police lines, four bazaars in the center of the city, markets, and entrance and exit routes of the district are being monitored. This modern intelligence monitoring system will help to easily trace the movements and activities of all the criminal elements and terrorists in the district, while on the other hand, it will also help in tracing the people involved in thefts, robberies, and other criminal activities in the city, RPO briefed. IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa expressed confidence in the newly established modern security system by the Dera Region Police. Later, the IGP also inaugurated office of DPO South Waziristan Lower.

CM praises arrangements for chehlu events

DNA

LAHORE : Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi extended his commendation to the provincial ministers, administration, police and associated departments for their exceptional arrangements concerning the chehlu of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), urs of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA) and cricket matches. He specifically lauded Provincial Minister Azfar Ali Nasir and his team for their remarkable efforts in facilitating devotees during Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh urs. Acknowledging the relentless commitment of Inspector General of Police and his force in ensuring foolproof security, the chief minister also praised the commendable performance of the Cabinet Committee for Law and Order, Commissioner of Lahore Division, CCPO, DIG Operations, Deputy Commissioner of Lahore, and the dedicated staff involved. He further highlighted the round-the-clock efforts of commissioners, RPOs, deputy commissioners, and DPOs throughout Punjab in maintaining a peaceful atmosphere.

Major action of FIA Anti-Corruption Circle

DNA

PESHAWAR: As many as five suspects including NADRA officers involved in making fake ID cards were arrested on the instructions of Deputy Director Anti-Corruption Circle Peshawar Saadullah Khan, Spokesman FIA told media here on Friday. The arrested officials included Ikramullah, Farid Khan, Abdul Razaq, Asadullah and Nisar Mahmood. Accused Ikramullah and Farid Khan were posted as Deputy Assistant Director and Superintendent in Nadra Office Chitral. The spokesmen further said that alleged accused Abdul Razaq was posted as a senior executive in NADRA office Multan while the alleged accused was arrested after bail was released before the arrest. The accused made more than 59 fake identity cards in total, spokesperson FIA said, adding, that 2 different cases were registered against the accused. He said that Sheikh Irfanullah has arrested the accused and an investigation has been started, Spokesman FIA informed.

To overcome economic crisis

Business Leaders for Charter of Economy

Ahsan Bakhtawari emphasized that the government should formulate a 10-year economic policy that would help the business community and the investors to make long-term business and investment plans in Pakistan

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) stressed that all political parties should agree to sign a Charter of Economy in order to ensure long-term business and economic policies that would help attract local and foreign investment, facilitate the growth of trade and industrial activities, boost exports and revive the economy. He said this while addressing a reception hosted in his honor by Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, former President ICCI and CEO Centaurus Mall, Islamabad. The prominent business leaders of the twin cities including representatives of various trade unions/ trade associations like All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajran, Anjuman-e-Tajran Rawalpindi, Markazi Anjuman-e-Tajran, and members of business community were present on the occasion. Ahsan Bakhtawari emphasized that the government should formulate a 10-year economic policy that would help the business community and the investors to make long-term business and investment plans in Pakistan. He further urged



that all political parties should present their economic manifestoes to give a clear direction to the business community about the future economic outlook of the country. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan former President ICCI stressed that the prominent business figures from the twin cities should be included in the Special Investment Facilita-

tion Council to represent the voice of the business community in its decision-making process. Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI urged that all economic policies should be formed in consultation with the private sector that would improve the confidence of the business community and investors ultimately leading to the bet-

ter revival of the economy. Saqib Rafique President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Ms. Rizwana Asif President Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Sohail Altaf Group Leader RCCI, Sardar Tahir Mehmood President Federation of Realtors Pakistan, Dr. Rashid

Secretary Information Punjab inaugurates 3D Kohsar Cinema



RAWALPINDI. Secretary Information and Culture Punjab Ali Nawaz Malik inaugurating 3D Sunny Ko Hisar Cinema in Murree. - DNA

DNA

MURREE: Secretary Information and Culture Punjab Ali Nawaz Malik inaugurated 3D Kohsar Cine Cinema, and Museum and Art Gallery at the Murree Arts Council. Apart from artists, Executive Director Punjab Council of Arts Dr. Syed Bilal Haider, Director Rawalpindi Arts Council Waqar Ahmed and Deputy Director Murree Arts Council Muhammad Shakoore were also present on this occasion. Talking to the media on the occasion, Secretary Information and Culture Punjab Ali Nawaz Malik said that 3D cinema will provide the best entertainment in the tourist destination of Murree and the cinema has been re-activated after six years. He

said that Murree's 3D Cine Cinema has 300 seats and it is the most modern cinema in Pakistan in term of facilities. He said that the regular opening of this cinema was an old demand of the people of Murree, which has been fulfilled today and three shows will be shown on weekends and two shows daily in this cinema. Secretary Information and Culture Ali Nawaz Malik said that strict action is being taken against obscenity, nudity and meaningful sentences in private and commercial theaters and this action has been taken on public complaints. He said that amendments are being made in the drama act in consultation with artists and playwrights and the aim is to provide entertainment to the public that they can

enjoy with their families. Secretary Information and Culture Ali Nawaz Malik said that the museum and art gallery will give the artists of Murree an opportunity to express their art. He said besides being a tourist destination, Murree has a whole history of its own which will be preserved in the museum. He said that they are trying to promote positive entertainment and art and culture along with tourism in Murree and clean entertainment will be provided here to the tourists coming from all over the country. He said that more artefacts are being added to the museum and this museum in Murree will be the center of the history of Murree and Pothohar region. He said that rare items of Gandhara art and craft will also be added to the museum.

Dysfunctional power sector wrecking the country's economy

Mian Zahid Hussain said that taxes worth 734 billion rupees will be collected on electricity bills in current year, but it will not help the power sector unless strict measures are taken to eliminate electricity theft, line losses, and non-payment of bills

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Friday that the sluggish power sector is ruining the country's economy. Local and foreign investment is difficult without bringing transparency to the power sector and introducing reforms in it so that it can become self-sufficient, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that taxes worth 734 billion rupees will be collected on electricity bills in the current year, but it will not help the power sector unless strict measures are taken to eliminate electricity theft, line losses, and non-payment of bills. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the power sector has become very incompetent and a burden. Due to the high cost of electricity, its use is decreasing while theft is increasing, and there is a need to stop theft of electricity, collect electricity bills, save electricity by closing the markets early, and revise the agreements made with private power plants. He said that closing the markets in the evening will save a huge amount of electricity, which will also save foreign

exchange, which is in short supply in the country. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the total amount of theft and non-payment of bills in the country this year is estimated to reach almost two trillion rupees, which is enough to bankrupt the people and the economy. He further said that at present there are about one million defaulters in the country, while the number of defaulters who have been disconnected is almost 150,000, except for those in Karachi. The business leader said that the defaulters owe more than one and a half billion rupees, which must be recovered. He said that the currency market in Pakistan is unrestrained and unruly; it enjoys unprecedented freedom in Pakistan, which is draining the economy. The role of the black sheep of this sector in the economic disaster cannot be ignored, he said, adding that an action against the currency dealers who are breaking the law has proved good for the economy. He said that currently, no organisation is willing to accept the responsibility of plunder by shady exchange companies. The central bank and SECP continue to blame each other for the situation; therefore, the exchange companies should be fully subordinated to the central bank; their supervision should be increased; but their business should not be closed because they play an important role in receiving remittances.

KU talk focuses on contemporary health challenges

NAZIR SAYAL

KARACHI: The Department of physiology of the University of Karachi organized the seventh annual research talk at the departmental auditorium, which focuses on contemporary health challenges and outcomes, on Friday. Associate Professor at Aga Khan University in Karachi, Dr. Najia Ghanchi, shared insights on 'Progress and Challenges in Genomic Surveillance of Pathogens During the COVID Pandemic. She emphasized the impact of genomic surveillance on human health, focusing on her specialization, pathogenic genomes. She said, "We are the nation that carries the most genomic variation which makes us more susceptible to different diseases. She also shared the current easy-to-go comparatively economic gene sequencing approach." Dr Ahsan Ashfaq, Liaquat National Hospital and Medical College discussed the Association of SLC11A1 Gene Polymorphism, Nutritional, and Demographic Factors with Pulmonary TB Susceptibility. He shed light on the genetic factors contributing to TB susceptibility in our low socioeconomic population, particularly among males. He also illustrated how a scientifically poor diet and weak immunity increase the risk of TB expression. Assistant teacher at the KU department of physiology Areeba Aslam presented her work on 'ACE2 Gene Polymorphism: Indicating Covid-19 Susceptibility and Resistance in Healthy Populations.'

Govt making efforts to facilitate tourists

DNA

PESHAWAR: A meeting of Galiyat Development Authority (GDA) was held under the chairmanship of Caretaker Provincial Minister for Tourism, Culture, Archaeology and Information & Public Relations Barister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhe here on Friday. During the meeting, the DG GDA Wasif Saeed briefed the minister about the performance of the authority and its functions. Speaking on this occasion, the minister said that the tourism department was making all-out efforts to provide the best facilities to the tourists.

PTI leader blames PDM for Pakistan's woes

MUHAMMAD ADIL

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Nusrat Khan voiced his concerns about the current state of the nation. She emphasized that the government formed by the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) bears responsibility for the country's current situation, suggesting that self-proclaimed experienced leaders have negatively impacted the lives of ordinary citizens. PTI leader Nusrat Khan acknowledged the sincere efforts of the Army Chief to navigate the country out of its current crisis but stressed the importance of national consensus. She expressed the view that Pakistan stands at a critical juncture in its history, with many ordinary citizens struggling to secure two meals a day. She



expressed concerns about the escalating prices of essential commodities such as electricity, gas, and petrol, and the uncertainty surrounding their impact on the nation's future. In response to a question, Nusrat Khan defended Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman's approach, stating that his only fault was his commitment to engage with the public. She also expressed optimism that the former prime minister would eventually prevail in his legal battle. Pakistan's fate hangs in the balance as Pakistan stands at a crucial juncture in its history, Khan's words strike a chord with the common man, resonating with those who yearn for a better tomorrow.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

September

Sept01/Libya Revolution Day
Sept01/Tanzania
Defence day
Sept01/Uzbekistan
Independence Day
Sept07/Brazil
Independence Day
Sept09/DPR Korea National Day
Sept09/Tajikistan Independence Day
Sept16/Malaysia Armed Forces Day
Sept16/Mexico National Day
Sept16/Papua New Guinea
Independence Day
Sept18/Chile National Day
Sept21/Malta
Independence Day
Sept23/Saudi Arabia National Day

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Emergency Ambulance.1122
& Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Rear Admiral Zakaur Rehman Director General Bahria University, Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Tugio and students of the Bahria University posing for a picture on the occasion of the closing ceremony of Online Internship Program.—DNA

Pakistan values ties with Brazil: Gohar Ijaz

The minister emphasized the potential of collaborative research and development efforts, aiming to benefit both nations and contribute to the global economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr Gohar Ejaz, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries and Production, graced the Brazilian National Day celebrations as the chief guest. During this event, he expressed solidarity and conveyed warm greetings to Brazil. Dr. Ejaz highlighted Brazil's remarkable economic progress, calling it a global role model and a

source of inspiration for Pakistan. He mentioned that bilateral ties have strengthened as evidenced by Brazil's active participation in TEXPO-2023 and Food-Agri 2023 exhibitions held in Karachi in May and August 2023. These visits, organized by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, included exploration of local industries, leading to the signing of several Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). Emphasizing the potential for boosting trade in

auto parts and IT sectors, the minister underscored Pakistan's appeal as an investment destination with a sizable consumer market, open to investment across various sectors with attractive incentives. Dr. Ejaz extended an invitation to Brazil's public and private sectors to invest in areas of mutual interest, particularly agriculture, highlighting the prospect of sustainable agriculture practices and renewable energy solutions. Despite geographical distance,

he urged both nations to improve transportation and logistics infrastructure, such as maritime routes, air connectivity, and Customs procedures, to facilitate cross-border commerce. Additionally, the minister advocated for increased business-to-business interactions and cooperation in agriculture, energy, and technology sectors. He also highlighted the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), which aims to allocate 10 million acres of barren land to the corporate sector

for an agricultural revolution. Dr. Ejaz emphasized the potential of collaborative research and development efforts, aiming to benefit both nations and contribute to the global economy. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and fostering prosperity. The Brazilian Ambassador to Pakistan, Olytho Vieira, praised the minister's vision and expressed willingness to work together in discovering new avenues for bilateral trade and cooperation.

US based film maker for highlighting Pak image through rich culture

Izzy's creative process integrates her cross-cultural background, experience across diverse industries, and her passion for filmmaking and storytelling as tools for instigating understanding, action, and change

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Izzy Chan – a US-based film maker stressed the need to highlight the positive image of Pakistan through a showcase of its rich cultural heritage and beauty as she recently visited Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Islamabad to train youth in documentary making. Izzy Chan is a storyteller and award-winning documentary maker who is deeply curious about cultural and social trends poised to change life. Her award-winning documentary feature on the rise of breadwinner moms and at-home dads, "The Big Flip—Stories from the Modern Home Front" (2016), premiered at the Austin Film Festival and Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival and was featured in the 2017-2019 American Film

Showcase. As a film envoy, Izzy has traveled to Egypt, China, and Ukraine to conduct workshops on storytelling and strategy. Talking to APP in an interview, she said that during her recent visit to GB, she trained over 50 young aspiring filmmakers through her methods of production, idea conception, and theme development. "Pakistani youth has amazing talent and they can excel in the field of filmmaking if their ideas are explored and provided proper platforms. They can use the filmmaking field to bring positive change as well as project a soft image of the country through highlighting the positive aspects of their society which are not shown in international media," she maintained. Praising the beauty of nature and vibrancy of the rich cultural heritage of Pakistan, especially the North

side, she said, "There is huge potential for tourism in Pakistan, and nature lovers and tourists from across the world must come to see these stunning glimpses of nature, local communities and hospitality of Pakistani people and show the world this true face of the country which is not shown unfortunately." "There is so much beauty and diversity in the GB region alongside women empowerment and a stable hospitality industry," she said. "As a cultural Envoy of American Film Showcase, which is a cultural and art exchange program, I met with young and energetic Pakistani students, the purpose of this art exchange program is to share our knowledge and documentary film-making skills with students and in return, I learned from their inspiring stories," she added. She said, "Local

communities in Pakistan are very welcoming, hospitable, and open-minded to visitors of other communities which can bring more tourists from the world to this region to enjoy unique landscapes that are worth visiting to get a lifetime experience. These local communities are keeping alive their local art and crafts and working to make them more sustainable for coming generations." She also assured her full support to the young filmmakers and her students in Pakistan for making films on their creative ideas and highlighting the positive image of the country. Izzy's creative process integrates her cross-cultural background, experience across diverse industries, and her passion for filmmaking and storytelling as tools for instigating understanding, action, and change.

APO's role in driving inclusive growth eulogized

ISLAMABAD: Senior Vice President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Faad Waheed here on Friday praised the Asian Productivity Organization's (APO) role in Asia-Pacific's development while emphasizing the need to renew our commitment to inclusive, innovation-led productivity growth. He said while addressing the closing ceremony of a five-day training program on "Assessor of the Productivity Specialist Certification Program", and welcomed international delegates and expressed gratitude to APO and the National Productivity Organization (NPO) for addressing this crucial topic. The National Productivity Organization (NPO), in collaboration with the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), in Tokyo, Japan has organized the training program. Faad Waheed highlighted the potential of working together with APO to find solutions to long-standing productivity challenges in Pakistan. The program would help in promoting the cause of producing Certified Productivity Professionals in Pakistan to support and propagate the agenda of creating a productivity improvement culture in Pakistan. He further said that to meet the current productivity challenges of Pakistan and to achieve sustainable productivity and economic growth, NPO Pakistan is closely working with APO Tokyo. Program Officer, APO Japan Zafarullah Khan expressed his gratitude to the government of Pakistan for their sincere efforts to continue the Productivity Movement. He appreciated the efforts of the APO Country Director for his strong leadership and support, and the NPO head for his keen interest. He also mentioned the APO and NPO team for their efforts for productivity enhancement in the region. Zafarullah apprised the participants about the APO's Journey of success stories and major achievements in the region.—DNA

Seminar: 'Pakistan Air Force : Second to none'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore organized a commemorative seminar titled "Pakistan Air Force : Second to None" on September 7, 2023. This event paid tribute to the enduring legacy of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), rooted in Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision of being "Second to None".

The 1965 and 1971 wars tested PAF's mettle, resulting in shining victories and showcasing professionalism. The seminar's goal was to extract invaluable lessons from these historical chapters, guiding the PAF's pursuit of becoming a topnotch air force, committed to defending the nation with unwavering excellence. Group Captain Faisal ul Rehman, Director Ops and Admin, CASS Lahore, delivered the introductory remarks. His speech was followed by a keynote address by Air Commodore Kaiser Tufail (Retd), who highlighted accomplishments of the PAF in 1965 and 1971 wars. Following the keynote address, Air Commodore Khalid Chishti (Retd) shed light on the remarkable

achievements of PAF war heroes. Additionally, two distinguished war veterans, Air Commodore Abdul Basit (Retd) and Air Commodore Farooq Haider (Retd), shared their personal accounts from the 1965 and 1971 wars. An extensive question and answer session followed the statements by the guest speakers. Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President CASS Lahore, in his concluding remarks, said that for an

effective, watchful, and hard-hitting air force, it is important to have focused training; state of the art equipment and weapons; and self-sufficient industrial base with indigenously developed technologies. Under the leadership of the current Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Babar Sidhu, PAF has undergone a strategic reset in terms of combat training along with acquisition of requisite equipment and infra-

structure development, to maintain its legacy of having cutting edge combat capabilities. PAF has recently made extensive inductions to stay abreast with modern technologies and state of the art weapon systems. They include, induction of PL-15 air to air missiles and its integration to the launch platform, J10-C operationalization, offensive air and ground launched weapons, array of UAVs from strategic to tactical usage,

variety of powerful EW equipment, cyber capability in all such domains and launching of PFX Pakistan's Advanced Flight etc. The inductions made in last two years are strategic in nature and vision of the Air Chief is to have a long lasting impact on the PAF's operational preparedness and combat readiness. The most important takeaways from the seminar were In air battles, numerical superiority alone does not determine victory; instead, it is the combination of superior training, unwavering morale, and, above all, an indomitable fighting spirit that emerges as the decisive factor. PAF needs to maintain its legacy with tenacity and hard-hitting capabilities especially in light of India's vast expenditure on its defense budget. Training has always been a hall mark of PAF. To remain ahead of its adversaries, PAF has to maintain the highest degree of preparedness; therefore, high-quality combat training has to be ensured at all cost. Indigenization and self-reliance for having leading edge technologies is an essential for the future of a modern air force. Force goals and developmental strategy has to be in line with National Security and its manifestation.



Two bike lifters arrested; seven stolen motorcycles recovered

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested two bike lifters and recovered seven stolen motorcycles from their possession, said a police spokesman on Friday. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, Pirwadhai Police Station managed to net two bike lifters namely Nasir Abbas and Abdullah and recovered seven stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Rawal, Faisal Saleem said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind the bars. He said that the operation against the bike and car lifters would further be accelerated.—APP

Walk held to sheds light on Illiteracy crisis

ISLAMABAD: SOS Foundation on Friday organized an awareness walk to mark World Literacy Day here. Children from various schools, educationists, social workers, and individuals from all walks of life have participated in the walk to share a common goal for eradicating illiteracy in Pakistan. The event aimed to spotlight the critical issue of illiteracy and the alarming number of 1.8 million out-of-school children who are currently being overlooked. The awareness walk commenced at 10:30 a.m. from Super Market F-6 and culminated at the prestigious National Press Club in Islamabad.—APP

Crackdown against beggars

ISLAMABAD: Assistant commissioners and magistrates under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon have arrested 22 professional beggars from different areas of the city. The Assistant Commissioner Rural arrested five beggars from Lohi Bhair and two beggars from Humak area. Assistant Commissioner Shalimar arrested 15 beggars from the F-10 area. The beggars were arrested and transferred to the police station while the minor children were sent to the Edhi Center, an ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said on Friday. This is not the first time that a crackdown on beggars has been conducted in Islamabad. In recent years, the city has seen a growing number of beggars, many of whom are professional beggars who are not actually in need of help. The latest crackdown is part of the government's efforts to discourage the growing trend of beggary and make the city a more livable place. The authorities have also said that they will provide assistance to those who are willing to give up begging and find other means of livelihood.—APP

Weekly inflation up by 0.96 percent

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.96 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on September 7, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 279.87 points as compared to 277.21 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 26.32 percent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.—APP

Briefs

123 kg drugs recovered

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country, managed to arrest seven accused and recovered 123 kg of drugs from their possession. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday, in two operations near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad, ANF special force have recovered 70.8 kg charras and 14.4 kg opium from secret cavities of two vehicles. Four accused residents of Attock were netted during the operations. In the third operation near Car Chowk Rawalpindi, 1 kg charras was recovered from the possession of an accused, a resident of Khyber. In the fourth operation on the National Highway near Hyderabad, 30 kg charras were recovered and ANF arrested a drug smuggler, a resident of Quetta. The spokesman informed that in the fifth operation, 7.2 kg charras were recovered from the possession of an accused, a resident of Khyber, arrested from the Hayatabad area in Peshawar. "Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process," he added.—APP

COMSTech and QAU Sign MoU to Strengthen Cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary and the Vice Chancellor of Quaid-i-Azam University, Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at COMSTech Secretariat on Friday. Both institutions agreed to promote and strengthen cooperation, provide a platform for collaborative activities, and to encourage mobility and co-operation. COMSTech and QAU agreed to develop and implement joint educational and scientific programs in the field of science, technology and innovation, and collaborate in organizing national and international events, such as workshops, conferences, symposia, seminars, exhibitions, training course. QAU is offered to become the member of the COMSTech Consortium of Excellence and register on the OIC Technology and Innovation Portal. QAU will also participate in the COMSTech Distinguished Scholars Program under the MoU. The MoU enables COMSTech to place students, academic and scientific personnel from OIC member states at Quaid-i-Azam University for training, professional development and improvement of scientific and educational activities, including international academic exchange. COMSTech support for admissions of international students for full degree programs at Quaid-i-Azam University, faculty development through sabbatical visits, training and consultation for the establishment of Science Park at QAU, technician training for a period of 3-4 weeks are also part of the MoU.

PCJCCI proposes disease-free varieties of Chinese potatoes

In contrast, Pakistan imports 20,000 tons of potato seeds annually, leading to a heavy reliance on foreign seeds and high initial production costs, as around 35 to 40 percent of the expenses are allocated to seeds

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) has proposed to grow Chinese varieties of potatoes to enhance disease free production. PCJCCI leaders - during a think-tank session at the PCJCCI Secretariat - Lahore mentioned that Chinese potato varieties were known for their resistance to pests and diseases, making them a valuable resource for Pakistan to enhance its potato germ plasma. They suggested the establishment and promotion of Tissue-Culture Laboratories, highlighting that Pakistan is a

significant potato exporter and self-sufficient in domestic potato consumption, Gwadar Pro reported. Moazzam Ghurki, President of the joint chamber, noted that recent floods had caused extensive damage to various crops in Pakistan, but potato production had risen to 7.937 million tonnes in the fiscal year 2022-23, a 35 percent increase from 5.873 million tonnes in the previous fiscal year. This growth was attributed to the fact that Punjab, a major potato-producing region, was unaffected by the floods. In contrast, Pakistan imports 20,000 tons of potato seeds annually, leading to a heavy reliance on foreign seeds and high initial production costs, as around

35 to 40 percent of the expenses are allocated to seeds. Ghurki emphasized the need to make potato seed production cost-effective for small-scale farmers and proposed the promotion of Tissue-Culture Laboratories within Pakistan to produce affordable potato seeds on a large scale, reducing dependency on costly foreign imports. Fang Yulong, PCJCCI's Senior Vice President, highlighted that Pakistani and Chinese businesses were actively exploring cooperation opportunities in this sector. Beyond seed production, Chinese investors expressed interest in potato by-products, mechanized harvesting, and pest control initiatives. "They are also collaborat-

ing to establish Pakistan's largest potato tissue culture lab. Chinese potato varieties are known for their resistance to pests and diseases, making them a valuable resource for Pakistan to enhance its potato germ plasma," he added. Hamza Khalid, Vice President of the Joint Chamber, stressed the importance of localized high-quality seed production, technological improvements, and mechanization. He suggested that these efforts could potentially enable Pakistan to export potatoes to other countries, especially those with limited arable land for potato cultivation. Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General of PCJCCI, emphasized the signif-

icance of increasing the supply of locally produced seeds. This would not only conserve foreign exchange reserves but also boost farmers' income, he added. Hanif concluded that if Pakistan could achieve large-scale production of high-quality potatoes, it could potentially export these potatoes to other countries, including Arab states. In conclusion, PCJCCI proposed enhancing Pakistan's potato exports through the establishment of Tissue-Culture Laboratories, reducing dependency on costly foreign seeds, and exploring opportunities for collaboration with Chinese enterprises in various aspects of potato production and processing.

Political blame game on sugar crisis termed a fixed match

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) said on Friday that leading politicians from different political parties are trading accusations on the sugar crisis which has engulfed the whole country. This blame game is a fixed match as all the stakeholders have benefited from the crisis in which the poor masses lost billions of rupees, he said. Now the rhetoric is being used to deceive the public, which is insufficient to convince the masses struggling amid runaway inflation, he added. Dr. Murtaza Mughal said in a statement issued here today that, like all the mafias in the country, the sugar mafia also enjoys influence in the corridors of power. They have agents in political, bureaucratic, and all other important circles, and if any action is ever taken against them, they get immediate relief. For many decades, the statements of controlling the sugar mafia have been made frequently, but these rhetorical politicians give them an opportunity to skin masses in which bureaucratic and other institutions fully cooperate with the mafia, he observed. In every crisis, billions of rupees are extracted from the pockets of the people and distributed among the white-collar criminals. He recalled that in 2021, the Competition Commission of Pakistan raided the office of the Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA), seized the records, conducted a detailed investigation, and imposed a fine of Rs 44 billion. The fine has not been received until today because the courts have issued a stay order. This type of delay has negative effects on the economy and the public while encouraging cartels, he said, adding that the strict measures taken by the army chief are commendable, due to which the price of sugar has come down. Now sugar is available at 190 rupees per kg in Lahore and 220 rupees per kg in Quetta.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Aysa Raza Chairperson of the National Commission on the Rights of the Children met with the Ambassador of Spain to discuss ways of cooperation. —DNA

Agri University of China recruiting talent from Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The research group of Prof. Dr. He Cheng at China Agriculture University (CAU), Beijing is offering PhD and post-doctoral positions to Pakistani candidates in "Control of major livestock disease in Pakistan using China-aid technologies of key veterinary vaccines and diagnostic assay". The project aims to develop and promote key vaccines and diagnostic technologies by using cell fermentations and molecular biology techniques, in order to control major livestock diseases and contribute to animal products exported to international markets. A Chinese Professor at College of Veterinary Medicine, CAU told Gwadar Pro that Pakistan and China are leading more than 50 collaborative projects in agriculture and animal husbandry. Howev-



er, the livestock sector does not contribute to GDP with its full strength and still needs a lot of improvement. He said that this is basically due to the challenges of devastating diseases faced by Pakistan such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Brucellosis, Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), Avian Influenza, Salmonellosis and currently new emerging Lumpy skin disease (LSD). The coordination in mutual trade can only be achieved to develop and implement a feasible technology-based project between the two countries, where the Chinese counterpart is fully equipped

with advanced technologies in this regard, the Chinese professor added. During the 2-year course, the Pakistani students will do the Surveillance program of major livestock diseases in sheep, water buffalos and dairy cows using antibody tests, antigen detections and molecular approaches. The selected candidates will get a chance to help in coordination of developing key vaccines and diagnostic tests with Pakistani research institutes or energetic enterprises. They will also organize training programs and institute meetings at national and international conferences.

President condoles with family members of soldiers

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday contacted the family members of the soldiers martyred in Jani Khel suicide attack via telephone and offered condolences to them. During the telephonic conversation, the president paid rich tribute to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the country's security, said a press release issued by the President House press wing. President Alvi shared sympathies with the family members of Naeb Subedar Sanober Ali, Haladar Aftab Ahmed, and Havaladar Muhammad Arif. He also condoled the family members of Havaladar Muhammad Imran, Sepoy Ahmed Ali, and Sepoy Muhammad Haseeb Akbar. Likewise, the president also talked to the family members of Sepoy Zeeshan Nazakat, Abdul Rasheed.—APP

Thousand-yr-old Gandhara art shining at Chinese museum

ISLAMABAD: "The Gandhara art itself comes from the blending of several ancient civilizations, which collided with each other and burst out bright sparks. The art is also the significance of the interconnection between the ancient Silk Road and the modern Belt and Road across time and space." This was stated by Ban Rui, Deputy Director of Gansu Provincial Museum, during an exclusive interview with Gwadar Pro. The "Gandhara Heritage along the Silk Road: A Pakistan-China Joint Exhibition" co-sponsored by the Palace Museum, Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan, Gansu Provincial Cultural Heritage Administration, Gansu Provincial Museum, was launched on Friday at Gansu Provincial Museum in Lanzhou City, aims to promote mutual understanding between China and Pakistan, in particular to make Chinese people aware of the depth.—DNA



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Indonesia has demonstrated compatibility of Islam, democracy

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The online internship program jointly organized by the Indonesia Embassy and the Bahria University, Islamabad held its Session-14 on September 5, 2023. Dr. Chusnul Mar'iyah from the Center for Election and Political Parties, Political and Social Sciences of University of Indonesia was the speaker on the occasion to share her insight with the participants of the OIP on the topic of Islam & Democracy in Indonesia. In her presentation, the Dr. Chusnul Mar'iyah discussed the evolution of democracy in In-

onesia, highlighting the country's progress in establishing and consolidating democracy through political reforms. She also enlightened the participants that despite divergent views on Islam and state relations, a national consensus based on Pancasila ideology reflects the nation's diverse culture and commitment to democratic values. She added that Indonesian democracy is a dynamic and evolving system that continues to adapt and grow. Dr. Chusnul Mar'iyah observed that Indonesian experience tells a whole different story contrary to the general perception that Islam and democracy rarely go together.

"Indonesia has proved that Islam, democracy and modernity can go hand in hand by respecting the diversity and people of other faiths" the speaker underlined. She said that adhering to democratic norms and spirit of unity in diversity, Indonesia as the largest Muslim nation and world's third largest democracy has continuously been regarded as a progressive democratic country among the Muslim world that practices and promotes a moderate Islam. "Moderation, tolerance and pluralism are

the core values, recognized and practiced by the Indonesian majority under the state ideology of Pancasila" the speaker explained. She informed the participants that Pancasila, the philosophical basis of the Indonesian State, focuses on the Five Principles: Belief in the One True God, Just Humanity, Indonesian Unity, Representative Democracy, and Social Justice. The speaker stated that Indonesia is characterized by a diverse population and a vibrant political landscape with multiple parties representing diverse voices. She added that regular elections including presidential ones have seen peaceful power transfers with citizens actively participating in the democratic process and exercising their right to vote and express opinions freely. "Despite challenges, Indonesia has made significant progress in its democratic journey with ongoing efforts to strengthen institutions, promote accountability, and promote inclusivity" the speaker elaborated. Dr. Chusnul Mar'iyah specifically mentioned the role of the country's robust civil society that plays a crucial part in shaping the country's political landscape and said that the government of Indonesia in

collaboration with civil society continue to collaborate to ensure transparent and fair elections, uphold democratic values, strengthen democratic institutions, safeguard human rights and promote social justice, inclusivity and accountability. The active participation of civil society organizations in the democratic process is a testament to the nation's commitment to democratic values, she added. The speaker emphasized that voters should favor candidates with integrity, knowledge, competence and honesty about their intentions to serve their country rather than foreign interests. She asserted that democracy is a diverse and dynamic idea and both Indonesia and Pakistan being multiethnic society can gain from each other's democratic practices and various approaches to democratic governance. She emphasized the importance of fostering relationships between academia, civil society, and legislators of the two countries stating that exchange of best practices and ideas on the challenges and achievements of maintaining a democratic system can enhance democratic institutions' performance and advance democratic values.

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India's G20 summit

Narendra Modi is an authoritarian figure who, as India's prime minister since 2014, has pushed his country into increasingly becoming a "de facto ethnic democracy", in which Hindus define the national identity and non-Hindus are seen as second-class citizens. Yet as the host of the upcoming talks of the world's 20 largest economies, Mr Modi will be feted by major global leaders - except his absent fellow strongmen Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin. Mr Modi's dangerous majoritarianism is too easily overlooked by the west, as the G20 glad-handing will show. India had been considered an exemplary liberal parliamentary democracy among developing countries. This is being slowly dismantled by Mr Modi's brand of Hindu nationalism. State intimidation has seen civil society harassed and critics jailed. A report by a group of prominent lawyers last year warned that "the administration of law has become the means by which ... the Muslim community can be kept in a state of perpetual fear". Since May, the north-eastern Indian state of Manipur has been burning, with its valley Hindus and highland Christians sinking into bloody fighting. Mr Modi's party blames non-Hindus for the violence. The Indian prime minister shares the ideological viewpoint of Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen in France and Hungary's Viktor Orbán. Mr Modi claims India suffered 1,000 years of servitude: 750 years of Muslim rule, plus 250 years of British rule. Pulling down, or discarding, symbols of that history - mosques, mausoleums, Lutyens' Delhi buildings - is excused, in this thinking, because this represents a national, Hindu resurgence. Mr Modi tellingly speaks of 1,000 years of rule to come. The west thinks that it must keep stumm because it needs India to contain China. But at what cost to democracy and human rights? Mukul Kesavan, an Indian historian, wrote earlier this year that when the White House rolled out the red carpet for Mr Modi, "One of the more entertaining things about [his] visit has been the sight of [Joe] Biden welcoming a foreign leader who had openly campaigned for his predecessor and liberal b te noire, Donald Trump." Last year, Gothenburg University's annual report on the state of global democracy warned of a wave of "autocratization" spreading around the world. Since 2020, the report said, India has not been a working democracy but an "electoral autocracy" similar to that in Russia. All is not lost. India's next general election will provide a chance for the public to have its say - though how much remains to be seen, given that a peer-reviewed paper suggested that in 2019 Mr Modi won around 11 seats by suppressing the Muslim vote. Its author, a respected economist, quit after his university failed to back him. The arrival of the opposition Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance, otherwise known as INDIA, has also unsettled Mr Modi. Perhaps peeved at being opposed by "INDIA", Mr Modi wants to respond only to the country's Sanskrit name "Bharat". India's prime minister says the G20 should let the global south shape the world's future. As Human Rights Watch pointed out this week, "many proposed summit topics - debt crises, social protection programs, food security, climate change, internet freedom - are at their root about human rights". Britain has its own share of democratic backsliding. But if Mr Modi desires successful outcomes then he, like all autocratic leaders, should understand why his actions at home undermine the arguments he wants to promote abroad.

Obligations demand Japan to act responsibly

China turned down Japan's proposal of joining the International Atomic Energy Agency team to monitor the seawater off the coast of Fukushima for radiation and study real-time data, Japanese news agency Kyodo reported on Tuesday. However, as the Chinese embassy in Japan said on Thursday, the report, based on anonymous sources and aimed at blaming China for noncooperation on the issue, is fake. The fact is that Japan has commissioned the IAEA Secretariat to conduct an analysis and "laboratory comparison" of the nuclear-contaminated water samples it collected itself from the destroyed Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, and China was not invited to take part in that process at all. As the Chinese embassy in Japan said in a statement, so far, the data on the radioactive water have been collected, tested and released by Japan itself. Since Japan has been acting as both player and referee, the data it obtained, in the belief it can present them to the world as IAEA data, cannot be accepted as authentic. Laboratory comparison studies based on samples provided by Japan cannot prove the authenticity and reliability of Japanese test results. A long-term independent international monitoring group comprising representatives of all stakeholders was never formed due to Tokyo's political manipulations. Tokyo should first display sincerity in addressing the legitimate concerns of its neighbors, instead of imposing its own monitoring data on others. Also, in line with its agenda, as well as to convince others of its honesty, Tokyo claims the concentration of tritium in the radioactive water is below the safety level as if tritium is the only radionuclide in the wastewater. The toxic water in Fukushima contains a complex range of radioactive elements. Even after being treated through the Advanced Liquid Processing System, the wastewater contains nuclides such as carbon-14, cobalt-60, strontium-90, iodine-129 and cesium-137. Earlier, Japan used the IAEA report to falsely claim the nuclear watchdog had approved its plan to dump the radioactive water into the sea. What Japan didn't say, and deliberately so, is that the IAEA never said the radioactive water in the Fukushima facility was safe enough to be released into the sea. And yet the IAEA has maintained a studied silence on Tokyo using its report as a shield to fend off any criticism. In other words, while the world expects the IAEA to fulfill its duty to ensure Japan disposes of the radioactive water in a way that causes the least harm to the marine ecosystem, the nuclear watchdog appears to be dancing to Tokyo's tune. Ostensibly, with the support of Washington, the Fumio Kishida government has gone a step further to leverage its nefarious move to advance its value diplomacy, as it has started accusing anyone criticizing its action of "stoking anti-Japan sentiments". Tokyo feels no qualms about politicizing scientific issues, but is allergic to even sane advice from other countries. As Premier Li Qiang told Kishida on the sidelines of the summits on East Asia cooperation in Jakarta on Thursday, the way Japan disposes of the radioactive water will have an impact on the marine ecosystem, people's health and future generations. Hence, Japan should sincerely honor its international obligations, consult with its neighboring countries and other stakeholders, and dispose of the nuclear-contaminated water in a responsible way.



Kashmir: The stolen heaven

Abdul Rashid Shakir



Sir Cyril Radcliffe, joint chairman of the two Boundary Commissions mandated to partition Punjab and Bengal provinces of British India, was responsible for equitably dividing some 450,000 square kilometers of territory of these two regions inhabiting around 88 Million people. However, nothing short of 'cunning connivance' comes to mind when history reveals that, despite its overwhelming Muslim majority, Gurdaspur in Punjab province was handed over to India by the Boundary Commission Award published on 17 Aug 1947

While dusting off annals of partition of the Subcontinent some seven decades ago, one comes across a classic case of cunning connivance between the proponents of 'the mother of all parliaments' and the champions of 'the biggest democracy in the world'. I mean the crafty engineering of the Radcliffe Award in August 1947 in the first place, and subsequently the willful rather criminal denial of right to self-determination to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K) from 1948 onwards despite agreed upon by the United Nations in its resolutions on Kashmir.

Sir Cyril Radcliffe, joint chairman of the two Boundary Commissions mandated to partition Punjab and Bengal provinces of British India, was responsible for equitably dividing some 450,000 square kilometers of territory of these two regions inhabiting around 88 Million people. However, nothing short of 'cunning connivance' comes to mind when history reveals that, despite its overwhelming Muslim majority, Gurdaspur in Punjab province was handed over to India by the Boundary Commission Award published on 17 August 1947. This move paved the way for subsequent Indian aggression and illegal annexation of IIOJ&K by sending its troops to the region. Later on, when Kashmiris were right on their way to fighting back their homeland from the clutches of Indian armed forces, the United Nations Security Council brokered a ceasefire in 1948 to end the hostilities through its Resolution 47 and promised the people of Kashmir their just right to self-determination through an independent and fair plebiscite. But unfortunately, it has transpired into nothing else but 'unfulfilled dreams', despite the lapse of more than 70 fateful years. It is saddening to note that India's Stubborn disregard for international commitments to give Kashmiris the right to self-determination has not been able to awaken the conscience of the world community yet, ostensibly out of a desire to tap India's huge market of more than 1.2 Billion. Very much cognisant of this Achilles' heel in the Western outlook, India is committing heinous crimes in IIOJ&K with impunity. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and all other leading human rights organizations in the world have voiced serious concerns over depriving innocent Kashmiris of their fundamental rights and liberties.



More than 95,000 innocent Kashmiris have been martyred, thousands of Kashmiri women have become widows, and lots of Kashmiri children have been rendered orphans by inhumane acts of brutal Indian-occupied forces. The use of pellet guns, target killings, rape, murder, and enforced disappearances are common tools employed by the brutal Indian forces in IIOJ&K. Quite recently, India committed a blatant constitutional aggression on 05 August 2019 when it annexed IIOJ&K as one of its union territories and tried to change its demography by abrogating Articles 370 and 35-A of its constitution, which had granted IIOJ&K special status or limited autonomy as a disputed region. It is heart-rending to note that IIOJ&K is a potential flash point between Pakistan and India. Since independence in 1947, both countries have fought wars in 1947-48, 1965, 1971, and 1999, besides many armed skirmishes along the Line of Control (LoC) from time to time. The recent standoff between the two countries after the 2019 Pulwama attack makes it quite clear that even a minor misadventure by India along the Line of Control (LOC) can potentially burst into a full-scale war between the two nuclear-armed neighbors, capable of destabilizing rather than destroying the whole region. Therefore, it is high time that India must honor its pledge of granting the right to self-determination to the people of Kashmir through a free and

fair plebiscite as promised to them in the UN Security Council's Resolution 47 of 1948. UN bodies and international human rights organizations must exert their full influence on the Indian Government to stop extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances of innocent Kashmiris in IIOJ&K. Moreover, the International community must play a decisive role in getting the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir implemented. It would not only fulfill the long-standing promises made to the people of Kashmir but would also lead peace and stability to the whole region. Steadfast in its principled stance, Pakistan will continue its moral, political, and diplomatic support for the oppressed Kashmiri brethren. In this regard, we as a nation, observe the 5th of February each year since 1990 as Kashmir Solidarity Day to ensure the people of Kashmir our unwavering support for their just right to self-determination in line with the UN resolutions on Kashmir. Moreover, Pakistan would continue to highlight the sufferings of the Kashmiri people at all bilateral and multilateral international fora because Kashmiris and Pakistanis can not be separated. We salute their courage and perseverance and stand by them till the realization of their dreams. God willing, they will snatch freedom from the clutches of brutal Indian forces very soon.

Stay orders on sugar prices: billions robbed!

Waheed Hussain



In Pakistan we have approximately 82 sugar mills. Forty-one in Punjab, 34 in Sindh, and seven in KPK). This year sugar production was around 6.8 million metric tons which was sufficient to cater for our population's need. Out of the total country's sugar production, only 20 percent is being used by the household

Another mighty sugar scam. Fifty-six billion rupees looted in a few days from the masses. Where is the government? What the courts are doing? Who would recover the looted money from the elites, most of them remained in the various parliaments and governments, legislating fraudulent laws, the one which had always protected criminals (mostly so-called lawmakers and their beneficiaries). It's not the first time that consumers have been robbed by the Sugar Mafia. After every two to three years these white-collar criminals become active, while the administrative and judicial system remain blind, deaf, and dumb. A few weeks back the sugar was being sold around Rs. 100 in the retail shops and suddenly the prices exceeded Rs 180, 190 in some cities over Rs. 200 per kilogram. Brokers, middlemen, and the wholesalers spread the rumors of sugar shortage in the country which resulted in the sudden increase in the market price. The rumors create a fear among the consumers that if they didn't buy the product at that specific time, they may face shortage of the commodity in the future. This strategy of launching propaganda and disinformation convinces the consumers to buy extra quantity for future use. Despite the high rates the sale increases, and the profiteers generate billions of rupees illegally. Let us first present the facts based on the government of Punjab report on the recent sugar price hike. According to the report in April 2023 the Ministry of Food Security fixed the ex-mill price of sugar as Rs. 96.80 per kilogram, while the retail was determined Rs. 99.99 per KG in the Punjab province. However, the notification was suspended by the Lahore High Court judge honorable Justice Shahid Karim on May 4, 2023, giving the argument that price fixing was the provincial subject, therefore, the federal government cannot fix the price of any product. The report further noted that taking advantage of the court orders the Punjab government appointed Sugarcane Commissioner of Punjab to fix the rate for the current year. The sugar mill owners and other people related to this business went to the LHC again and honorable justice Anwar Hussain issued the stay order against the price fixing on August 1, 2023. According to details of the report, Justice Shahid Karim also issued the stay order against monitoring the

supply chain of sugar leading to unchecked movement of the commodity to Afghanistan through the province of Balochistan. It has been reported that around seven hundred thousand (700'000) metric tons of sugar have already been smuggled out of the country, badly affecting the strategic reserves of the country. Mill owners, brokers, middlemen, and wholesalers through various WhatsApp Groups sold 1.4 million metric tons of sugar on inflated rates between Rs. 180 to 200 per KG extorting more than 56 billion rupees extra from the Pakistan consumers. According to the media reports, the stay orders of the courts have allowed the profiteers to make billions of rupees through illegal means. In the present sugar scam, fingers have been pointed to the stay orders of the courts. The court orders have developed two narratives. First that the corrupt businessmen are being protected by the higher judiciary forcing the poor and weak citizens to be looted by the criminals. The second impression was that our justice system is really sliding down to dust. If the judiciary fails to provide relief to the weaker segments of society against the powerful mafias and criminals, how can we expect to establish or nourish a society truly based on a justice system? If the laws are being molded benefiting the elites, rich, powerful and criminals, ultimately there would be unrest and chaos in the country. This kind of situation leads towards the stone age era, where the might was always right. Defeating this very barbarian concept that might was right, the laws and regulations including functional institutions were introduced in the modern national states. The justice system provides the guarantee to the all the citizens of the civilized nations that they are equal in the eyes of law and state. Historically speaking there have been many question marks on our higher judiciary regarding political and constitutional cases. People have not forgotten justice Munir, Justice Maulvi Mushtaq Hussain, Justice Saqib Nisar. With heavy heart we have to say that even the sitting honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Umar Ata Bandial has been bitterly castigated by the PML (N) leadership including other PDM parties for favoring PTI chief in the various cases. If we look at the lower judiciary except few well-reputed, honest, and professional judges, most of them have serious question marks on their judicial conduct. We must keep this fact in mind that either lower or

higher courts, we still have independent professional judges, due to whom the public get justice, according to the law of the land. Poor or rich, weak, or powerful all must be equal in the eyes of the law. If this principle was missing from our institutional system. Like many other institutions, the judiciary must improve its image with the public. In Pakistan we have approximately 82 sugar mills. Forty-one in Punjab, 34 in Sindh, and seven in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). This year sugar production was around 6.8 million metric tons which was sufficient to cater for our population's need. Out of the total country's sugar production, only 20 percent is being used by the household, while 80 percent goes to the industry including sweets, bakery items, candies, cold drinks, and beverages etc. The recent smuggling of the commodity has badly affected the supply chain including the manipulation by the black marketeers. According to details so far one million metric tons of sugar has been smuggled to Afghanistan since March this year. The Afghanistan total sugar consumption stand at two hundred thousand metric tons. The Afghans have exported the same Pakistani sugar to the neighboring Central Asian States making over 700 million dollars profit. According to a sugar industry expert as the sugar prices at the international market was high, so the millers could have adopted the level way of exporting the commodity through a tender, generating better profits from other countries, then smuggling to Afghanistan. Dollars, flour, sugar, cement, and hundreds of other items are being smuggled to Afghanistan, weakening our forex reserves and creating shortage of those products in the country. Our policy and decision makers should open their eyes and block this trend immediately. Everybody in the government knows that those who are deployed on the entry/exit points of Afghanistan and Iran borders, make hundreds of billions every year, but unfortunately maximum chunk of the funds does not deposit to the government revenues' accounts, they go to the individuals' pockets. The customs department officials and those who guard the entry and exit points, have a nexus with the traders and business community. Majority of the businessmen and traders have single believe and agenda to make money and increase profits even at the cost public or the country.

Briefs

Govt approves 'practical steps'...

FROM PAGE 01
The ministries to deliver optimal results irrespective of the time that is available with the interim government and emphasised to lay a strong foundation for the future government. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad with other caretaker federal ministers after a meeting of the Special Investment Facilitation Council, Caretaker Finance Minister Shamshad Akhtar said the interim government needed to revive the economy and it was important to remove import restrictions "across the board" since Pakistan was an import-intensive country. "Management of foreign exchange reserve is a very high priority for us and we are closely monitoring the situation. We are in discussions that that inflows are brought in on a timely basis and we will also go for the rollover of deposits that we have in place right now on their maturity," she said, adding that the situation was "reasonably okay" for now.

Nepra approves...

FROM PAGE 01
The increase in power price separately in consumers' bills. Earlier in the day, caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said consultation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was underway for the relief in electricity bills. Talking to a private channel, the minister said some final decisions for the purpose were taken during the last meeting of the Cabinet presided over by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar the other day. He said the prime minister had directed the relevant stakeholders to hold a consultation with the IMF which was underway. The minister said the position on the relief in the electricity bills for the masses would be clear within a few days.

Another 'unusual'...

FORM PAGE 01
"Political pundits are terming the meeting unusual, as Durrani was inactive in politics for a long time and played a key role in the backdoor meeting," the publication said. The Alvi-Durrani meeting took place just days after a high-profile huddle held on the fourth floor of Aiwan-e-Sadr (Presidency), where the president's office is situated. During the meeting, the fourth floor of the Aiwan-e-Sadr was off-limits and even the staff was restricted from entering the area, according to The News. No statement was issued by the President House regarding the meeting between 'three elders'. However, given the country's current situation, there were a lot of speculations on social media.

SC terms govt's...

FROM PAGE 01
Subsequently, the then-PDM government filed a civil miscellaneous application (CMA) in the apex court requesting that CJP Bandial, Justice Ahsan and Justice Akhtar recuse themselves from the five-member larger bench hearing the instant matter. The short verdict, announced by Justice Ahsan on Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Abid Shahid Zubairi's petition requesting to declare the commission's formation illegal, said that the objections raised by the previous government against judges were tantamount to an "attack on the independence of the judiciary". The apex court reserved the verdict on the then government's petition on June 6. On May 26, the larger bench suspended the operation of the government's notification, constituting a Judicial Commission for probing the veracity of alleged audios and halted until May 31 the proceedings of the commission.

Asia Cup 2023

PAK vs IND Super 4s clash to have a reserve day

ACC has given a green signal for a reserve day for the high-octane PAK vs IND clash, scheduled on September 10

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KARACHI: The much anticipated PAK vs IND clash of the ongoing Asia Cup 2023 Super 4s will have a reserve day, sources told. According to the details, the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) has given a green signal for a reserve day for the high-octane clash PAK vs IND clash, scheduled on September 10. Notably, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) echoed reservations about the scheduling of the Asia Cup 2023 Super 4s stage in Colombo where heavy rainfall is forecast until the end of the tournament. Consequently, if PAK vs IND clash gets washed out on September 10 then the action will resume on September 11 from the stage it was halted. Furthermore, if the anticipated clash gets postponed to the reserve day then India will have to play back-to-back matches as



they are scheduled to take on Sri Lanka on September 12. The PAK vs IND clash is the only Asia Cup 2023 Super 4s fixture to have a reserve day.

Rain Threat Persists: Despite adding a reserve day for the Super 4s clash between Pakistan and India, dark clouds still loom over the rest of the tournament

as the Asia Cup 2023 final and all five remaining Super 4s games are in the capital, where rain is forecast all week. If all remaining Super 4s fixtures get washed

out, Pakistan will qualify for the final with four points as they have already secured two points by thumping Bangladesh by seven wickets on Wednesday. However, Sri Lanka and India will be tied on three points each, along with the same Net Run Rate and then a coin toss will determine which team will advance into the final to join Pakistan. Meanwhile, the washouts will result in Bangladesh crashing out of the tournament as they will end up with two points, having already lost a game. The two fierce rivals came face to face in the group stage of the ongoing Asia Cup 2023 on September 2 but the rain played spoilsport after Pakistan's pace trio of Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah booked India on 266. The second innings of the blockbuster clash could not be possible and the two sides settled for a point each.

Highest-paid player in NFL

Burrow signs \$275 million deal with Bengals

The 26-year-old becomes the highest-paid quarterback in the NFL



CINCINNATI: As the 2023 NFL season is on the horizon, Joe Burrow, the quarterback for the Cincinnati Bengals, reportedly signed a five-year, \$275 million extension contract, making him the highest-paid player in NFL history.

From Louisiana State University, Burrow was selected first overall in the 2020 NFL Draft and, before signing the hefty contract, had two years left on his rookie deal with the Bengals, whom he helped reach the AFC Championship

and Super Bowl. Although they were not able to bag a Super Bowl trophy, the Bengals still wanted to ensure that Burrow was under contract for a considerable amount of time because they believe he can win a Lombardi Trophy, according to NBC Sports.

Based on the new contract, the 26-year-old will be paid \$55 million per year including \$219.01 million guaranteed, according to ESPN. According to the sports compensation tracking website Spotrac, the \$55

million yearly wage is more than the \$52.5 million yearly average of Los Angeles Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert. Burrow was asked about the possibility of signing an extension with the team while speaking to reporters on Wednesday.

"This is where I want to be my whole career," Burrow said when asked about the possibility of signing an extension with the team while speaking to reporters on Wednesday. Burrow continued: "We're working toward making that happen. You

know you've seen what the front office has done, and what (coach) Zac (Taylor) has done in their time here. "I'm a small part of that and I'm excited to be a part of that. We have great people in the locker room that grind every day, that are excited to go and showcase their talents and excited to do it in the city of Cincinnati. We have the best fans. "This is where I want to be." Burrow, who is starting his fourth season in the league, had a tough rookie year as he suffered ACL and MCL injuries in his left knee. Since then, he has aided in the Bengals' two consecutive AFC championship game trips in 2021 and 2022, as well as their journey to Super Bowl LVI, where they lost to the Los Angeles Rams, CNN reported. Burrow threw for 4,475 yards, 35 touchdowns, and 12 interceptions while leading the Bengals to a 12-4 record in the previous year. Later, the Bengals lost AFC Championship game to the Kansas City Chiefs. - Agencies

Neymar: Saudi League may rival Ligue 1

RIYADH : Saudi Arabia's football league could already be stronger than France's Ligue 1, says Brazil captain Neymar. The 31-year-old forward moved to the Saudi Pro League from Paris St-Germain in August for about £77.5m and add-ons. Neymar joined Al-Hilal in a transfer window that saw Saudi clubs spend more than £700m on overseas players. "For the names that went to Saudi Arabia, I wouldn't be surprised if the Saudi league is better than the French," he said. Saudi clubs' spending this summer on international transfers was second only to the Premier League, whose teams spent just under £1.6bn on overseas deals, according to figures from football governing body Fifa. While Al-Ittihad were unable to prise Mohamed Salah away from Liverpool, Salah's former team-mates Jordan Henderson, Roberto Firmino and Fabinho were among the Premier League players to move to Saudi Arabia.

Notable Premier League departures to Saudi Arabia Al-Ahli: Allan Saint-Maximin (Newcastle), Riyad Mahrez (Manchester City), Edouard Mendy (Chelsea), Roberto Firmino (Liverpool)

Al-Ettifaq: Jordan Henderson (Liverpool), Demarai Gray (Everton)

Al-Hilal: Ruben Neves (Wolves), Kalidou Koulibaly (Chelsea), Aleksandar Mitrovic (Fulham)

Al-Ittihad: N'Golo Kante (Chelsea), Fabinho (Liverpool)

Al-Nassr: Aymeric Laporte (Manchester City), Alex Telles (Manchester United)

Saudi clubs also lured Neymar's PSG club-mate Georginio Wijnaldum, Real Madrid's Ballon d'Or winner Karim Benzema and Bayern Munich's Sadio Mane.

Others to make the switch to the Saudi Pro League have included Inter Milan's Champions League final captain Marcelo Brozovic, Barcelona's Franck Kessie, Celtic's Jota and Lazio midfielder Sergej Milinkovic-Savic. - Agencies

Molano beats Groves in stage 12 victory

BARCELONA: Juan Sebastian Molano sprinted to stage 12 victory in the Vuelta a Espana, while Sepp Kuss kept the red jersey. Molano, a Colombian, lost to Kaden Groves in the burst to the line at the end of stage four but this time was too fast for the Australian at the end of the flat 151 kilometers from Olvega to Zaragoza. Led out by his UAE Team Emirates colleagues, Molano took the stage victory ahead of Alpein-Deceuninck's Groves, who had earlier won the intermediate sprint to tighten his grip on the green jersey. Jumbo-Visma rider Kuss stayed 26 seconds ahead of Spaniard Marc Soler and one minute 9 seconds in front of reigning champion Remco Evenepoel in the general classification battle. Three-time Vuelta winner Primoz Roglic, fourth, gained four seconds by finishing second in the intermediate sprint. "Thanks to my team - they were amazing today," said Molano. "I'm very happy to win a stage in the Vuelta last year, now this year." The Colombian was hit by a car while training in Belgium in March, leaving him concussed and with a broken toe. "After the incident (it was) not easy to return but now it's okay and I'm very happy," he added. Emirates rider Rui Oliveira launched Molano to victory in the finale, with Boy van Poppel third behind Groves. "In the end we got bumped by UAE, who came with momentum," Groves, who won stages four and five, told Eurosport. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Chief Commissioner Islamabad & Chairman CDA Capt. (R) Anwar-ul haq presented a shield to the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey Dr. Mehmet Pacaci on his visit at CDA headquarter. - DNA

US Open 2023

Gauff, Sabalenka into final after climate protest

Gauff shrugged off disruption from climate protesters to reach the US Open final. The 19-year-old Gauff showed great poise to remain unfazed after match

SPORTS DESK

NEW YORK: American teenager Coco Gauff shrugged off disruption from climate protesters to reach the US Open final. Aryna Sabalenka survived a huge scare to stay on course for a second Grand Slam title. A night of nerve-shredding semifinal drama saw Gauff reach the final for the first time with a 6-4, 7-5 defeat of the Czech Republic's 10th seed Karolina Muchova. The 19-year-old Gauff showed great poise to remain unfazed after the match was halted for 49 minutes early in the second set when environmental activists staged a protest in the upper tiers of the Arthur Ashe Stadium. Play was held up as officials attempted to remove one of the protesters who had glued their bare

feet to the concrete floor of the arena. The four protesters were later taken into police custody. When play resumed, sixth seed Gauff closed out a hard-fought second set to advance to the second Grand Slam final of her career. The American teenager said while the enforced stoppage had been "challenging," she had sympathy for the activists and their cause. "I definitely, I believe, you know, in climate change," Gauff said. "I think there are things we can do better. I prefer it not to happen in my match but I wasn't pissed at the protesters. "Obviously I don't want it to happen when I'm winning up 6-4, 1-0, and I wanted the momentum to keep going. But hey, if that's what they felt they needed to do to get their voices heard, I can't really get upset at it." The protest was the latest high-profile sporting

event to be targeted by environmental activists in recent years. Other Grand Slam tennis events including Wimbledon and the French Open have also been disrupted by protesters.

Gauff, who is now the youngest American woman to reach the US Open final since her idol Serena Williams in 1999, will face second



seed Sabalenka in Saturday's final. The 25-year-old from Belarus, who will take over the world No.1 ranking from Iga Swiatek at the conclusion of the tournament, has been in scintillating form in New York. But she was forced to come back from the brink to dig out a 0-6, 7-6 (7/1), 7-6 (10/5) win against American 17th seed Madison Keys in 2hr 32min to reach the final. "I'm really proud of myself that I was able to turn around this game and get this win, because it was just incredible," Sabalenka said after the victory. "I was just, like, 'Come on, keep trying, keep pushing, like, I don't know, do something extra. Just try to turn around this match.' "I think this kind of thinking really helped me to stay in the game and to keep trying, keep pushing, to still have this belief that I have a chance to turn around this

match." Sabalenka suffered a disastrous opening set and then fell a break behind in the second to leave Keys serving for the match at 5-4. But the Australian Open champion roared back to force a tie-break which she won emphatically and then rode her luck in the deciding set, once again recovering from a break down to set up another tie-break. She was left blushing after mistakenly celebrating victory in the tie-break when she went 7/3 ahead, forgetting the 2022 rule change which dictates that final set tie-breaks are now first-to-10. "I thought that we play tie-break up till seven," a sheepish Sabalenka admitted. "I was just all over the place." But she quickly regrouped to close out a Houdini act that had looked improbable after her out-of-sorts display for most of the first and second sets.

Rabbani accuses...

FORM PAGE 01
of an electoral college necessary for the presidential selection process. This will make him one of the only heads of state in the country's history to have an extended term, though Chaudhary Fazal Elahi also spent an additional month in office as a figurehead before Ziaul Haq became president on Sept 16, 1978. Under the law, the president is elected by members of both houses of the parliament - i.e. the Senate and the National Assembly - and the four provincial assemblies. With the general elections' outcome still shrouded in mystery and the Election Commission's contemplation of holding them in late January, it's uncertain how much longer Alvi will hold his position. Today, PPP Senator Rabbani issued a statement, outlining over a dozen instances when President Alvi allegedly violated the Constitution.

FO hopes interim...

FORM PAGE 01
Her statement comes after interim Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and Ambassador Masood Khan reportedly said the weapons left behind by America had fallen into the hands of terrorists. In response to their statement, National Security Council (NSC) spokesperson John Kirby said that the US did not leave behind any military equipment for terrorist organisations in Afghanistan. He blamed the Afghan forces for abandoning military equipment when the Taliban took over the country. Speaking about the recent terrorist attacks on two Pakistan Army check posts located near the Afghanistan border in Chitral which martyred four soldiers, Baloch said Pakistan has conveyed its concerns to the Afghan authorities on the matter. "The Interior Ministry and institutions concerned can provide the details on the situation in Chitral," she added. On 6 September 2023, a large group of terrorists equipped with the latest weapons attacked two Pakistani military posts located closer to the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The FO spokesperson added that the Pakistan-Afghan border should be a border of peace, adding that the Torkham border was closed in view of security concerns.

PTI demands...

FORM PAGE 01
Article 48 bounds the president to finalise the election date in 90 days and the president should fulfil his constitutional duty. The core committee said that the president would be responsible for violating constitutional and democratic rights if he failed to give election date. Yesterday, Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarul Haq Kakar said that general elections in the country might be held ahead of February next year. While talking to a private news channel, PM Anwaarul Haq Kakar the Election Commission of Pakistan was the relevant forum to take a decision in this regard. The ECP was mandated to take a decision in this regard and the caretaker government would fulfil its constitutional obligation by extending all possible support to the ECP for holding elections, the prime minister expressed his views.

Bilawal demands...

FROM PAGE 01
assemblies are dissolved on completion of five-year term and in case of premature dissolution, the stipulated period is enhanced to 90 days. As per the Constitution, the general elections in Pakistan must be held till November 2023 as the National Assembly had been dissolved prematurely on August 9, 2023. However, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has hinted at delay in the polls as it has decided to go for fresh delimitation in line with the digital census. Bilawal Bhutto, whose party was also part of the PDM-led government, demanded that the elections should be held within 90 days. He hoped that the ECP would ensure transparent and fair election in the country.

Briefs

Many flights canceled due to strike in Italy

ROME : A national strike of airport personnel led to the cancellation of many flights in Italy on Friday, airlines and airport authorities said. At Milan's Malpensa airport, 60 flights were canceled, while at Linate, the other airport of the northern city, 20 flights were canceled, the airports said. In Venice, another 20 flights appeared to be cancelled. Twelve flights at Catania airport have been canceled, while another eight have been delayed. National carrier ITA Airways said it canceled 30 national flights scheduled for Friday, 11 of which were from Rome's Fiumicino airport. It said it is rescheduling passengers on other flights and as a result, 55% of passengers due to fly on Friday will be able to do so. Union CUB Trasporti, which organized the strike, said they are demanding higher salary increases and complained that working hours have been increased without a corresponding rise in pay.—DNA

EU approves Frontex deployment in Albania

BRUSSELS : EU member states agreed on Friday to sign an agreement that allows the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) to be deployed in Albania. The Council of the European Union announced in a statement that EU countries "adopted a decision to sign an agreement with Albania on operational activities carried out by Frontex. Frontex "will be able to assist Albania with managing migratory flows, countering illegal immigration, and tackling cross-border crime," the statement said. The agreement will allow joint operations with Albanian law enforcement organizations and the deployment of Frontex border management teams in the country. The bloc signed a similar agreement with Montenegro earlier this year that entered into force on July 1.—Agencies

Turkiye 'neutralizes' PKK's terrorist groups

ISTANBUL : Turkish security forces "neutralized" the PKK terrorist group's so-called ringleader in northern Iraq's Zagros Mountains, the National Defense Ministry said on Friday. Ferit Yuksel, code-named Serzan Meva, was "neutralized" during Turkiye's counterterrorism operation Claw-Lock Zone. The statement added that Turkish soldiers continued "their relentless struggle" in the operation zone. Turkish authorities use the term "neutralized" to imply the terrorists in question surrendered or were killed or captured. PKK terrorists often hide out across the border, in northern Iraq, to plot attacks. In its more than 35-year terror campaign against Turkiye, the PKK — listed as a terrorist organization by Turkiye.

Refugee camps: historic resistance amid Israeli aggression

RİYADH: The Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council reaffirmed on Thursday the "exclusive right" of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to the disputed Durra gas field on the eastern border of the submerged area in the Persian Gulf. In a statement following its ministerial meeting in the Saudi capital Riyadh, the Gulf Cooperation Council affirmed that "the ownership of the natural resources in the submerged area adjacent to the Saudi-Kuwaiti divided zone, including the entire Durra field, belongs to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait only." It added: "We reject any claims regarding the rights of any other party to the Durra field."—Agencies

Russia aims for productive energy talks with Pakistan

Nikolay Shulginov stressed that Russia is interested in holding multilateral negotiations with the participation of the Pakistani side to work out issues on the international transport corridor

DNA

Nikolay Shulginov held a working meeting with the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Russian Federation Shafiqat Ali Khan in connection with his departure from Russia and completion of his tenure. The Head of the Ministry of Energy thanked Shafiqat Ali Khan for fruitful cooperation in the field of energy, as well as for the work carried out within the framework of the Russian-Pakistani Intergovernmental Commission, co-chaired by Nikolai Shulginov. "Over the years of our joint work, much has been done, including thanks to your deep understanding of the specifics of Russian-Pakistani cooperation. We look forward to a further productive energy dialogue between Russia and Pakistan," Nikolai Shulginov said. In turn, Shafiqat Ali Khan stressed that relations between the two countries have been



developing positively for many years, including in energy issues, and expressed hope for further strengthening of energy

cooperation. The sides also discussed key issues of the current bilateral energy cooperation. In particular, the Minister noted that it

is necessary to accelerate the creation of a working group for the preparation and further implementation of a Comprehensive

plan for the development of the gas industry in Pakistan. Nikolay Shulginov stressed that Russia is interested in holding mul-

tilateral negotiations with the participation of the Pakistani side to work out issues on the international transport corridor.

ASEAN-Turkiye partnership boosts economic ties

ANKARA : The partnership between Turkiye and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is contributing to growing economic relations as well as tourism among Ankara and the member countries, Brunei Darussalam Ambassador to Turkiye Shafiqe Kassim said Friday. Speaking at the ASEAN Day Celebration and launch of the ASEAN-Turkiye Commemorative Stamp in the Turkish capital, ASEAN Ankara Committee Chair Kassim said: "This partnership and the presence of Turkish embassies in all 10 ASEAN member countries contribute to FDI and trade between Turkiye and ASEAN member states."

"Turkiye is also a preferred holiday destination among ASEAN members, and this is further encouraged with direct flights to many ASEAN capital cities and destinations," he added during his speech at the program, which also included Deputy Foreign Minister Burak Akcapar in attendance. The ambassador reiterated that since 1967, ASEAN members have been evolving into dynamic economies

that contribute to regional peace and stability. Saying that ASEAN's growth includes the extension of mutually beneficial partnerships not only in the region but also beyond, Kassim expressed his appreciation of the partnership established with Turkiye six years ago in the Philippines capital Manila. To improve ties with Asian countries in different areas, Turkiye launched the Asia Anew Initiative in 2019. The initiative offers a new vision that might shape the future of Turkish foreign policy as

a whole. It aims to improve ties with Asian countries in various areas, including education, the defense industry, investments, trade, technology, culture and political dialogue.

Turkiye views ASEAN as a key organization in the region, considering its combined economy, dynamic population and strategic location. Turkiye applied to become a sectoral dialogue partner of ASEAN in 2015, and its application was accepted on Aug. 5, 2017, during the 50th meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers

held in the Philippines. Following the conferment of sectoral dialogue partner status, ASEAN and Turkiye convened annual trilateral meetings at the level of foreign ministers with the latest taking place in Jakarta, with Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan in attendance. "Minister Fidan's attendance at the Jakarta meeting despite his busy schedule is indicative of Turkiye's commitment to the partnership and to the Asia Anew Initiative," Kassim said, adding that he hoped the cooperation would grow further.—Agencies



US appeals court allows Texas to keep controversial river buoys at US-Mexico border

HOUSTON : A federal appeals court ruled that the state of Texas is allowed to keep its controversial river buoys in place for now at the US-Mexico border. A three-judge panel of the New Orleans-based 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals overturned a previous ruling handed down by a federal judge 24 hours earlier, but provided no explanation for granting the state's request, according to the Dallas Morning News. On Wednesday, US District Court Judge David Ezra issued a preliminary injunction for the state to remove the river barriers in the Rio Grande by Sept. 15 and also barred the installation of similar structures without federal approval. But Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, immediately appealed the order and got his request granted one day later. In July, Abbott ordered state agencies to deploy the floating barriers in the Rio Grande to protect the state from what the governor called an illegal migrant "invasion."—APP

Russia deems attempts to incite enmity unacceptable

MOSCOW : Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman on Friday called "unacceptable" attempts to incite enmity between Russia and Armenia. In a video message on Telegram, Maria Zakharova said "the information space of Armenia has recently been characterized by a distinct tendency to spread one-sided, negative and often simply false messages about Russia." "We consider unacceptable attempts to incite enmity and hatred between our people by blaming Russia for all the troubles of the Armenian people," she said. Zakharova condemned the arrest of an observer of the Russian Sputnik news agency in Armenia on Thursday. "The provocation with the detention of Sputnik Armenia observer Ashot Gevorgyan and blogger Mikael Badalyan in Armenia is aimed at clouding relations between Moscow and Yerevan," she said. Zakharova pointed out that the Armenian authorities banned entry to the country of a number of Russian political and public figures because of their criticism of the current Yerevan's line, including lawmaker Konstantin Zatulyn, RT editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan, media-manager Aram Gabrelyanov, and experts Andranik Migranyan and Viktor Krivopuskov. Zakharova said that the statements of some Russian experts "cannot be compared to the anti-Russian campaign in a number of Armenian media." Growth of Western media outlets in Armenia. The spokeswoman marked the significant growth of the number of the Western media outlets in Armenia, saying their main goal is Russia's defamation. Some of them "heap slugs" on structures like the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, she said. According to Zakharova, this propaganda is not just encouraged, but promoted by the West, which finances numerous non-governmental organizations, "experts" and allocates grants. "Judging by the scale of their broadcast and the quality of their programs, the wide distribution of materials on the sites of various American hosting companies and social networks.—Agencies

Kim claims to have launched nuclear submarine

North Korea claims to have launched a new "Korean-style" tactical nuclear attack submarine that it says heralds "the beginning of a new chapter" for its navy. The submarine, named "Hero Kim Kun Ok,"

FOREIGN DESK

SEOUL: North Korea claims to have launched a new "Korean-style" tactical nuclear attack submarine that it says heralds "the beginning of a new chapter" for its navy. But analysts say those claims should be taken with a large pinch of salt, with South Korean authorities doubting the vessel even works properly. The submarine, named "Hero Kim Kun Ok," was launched to much fanfare at a ceremony attended by North Korean leader Kim Jong, according to the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). The agency quoted Kim as saying the vessel was "equipped with a large number of nuclear delivery means" and capable of "preemptive and retaliatory strikes against hostile countries," and said he had called on the country to convert all of its medium-sized subs into nuclear-capable versions. But South Korea's Joint Chiefs

of Staffs (JCS) poured scorn on those claims in a statement on Friday, saying the new sub appears "not capable of normal operation," and warned there were signs North Korea was trying to

exaggerate its capabilities. The reports about the sub come after North Korea last weekend claimed to have simulated a nuclear missile attack to warn the United States of "nuclear war danger."

Meanwhile, US experts have also expressed doubts over the potency of its missiles and whether North Korea would be able to build more than one such vessel. North Kore-



an leader Kim Jong Un attends what state media report was a launching ceremony for a new tactical nuclear attack submarine.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attends what state media report was a launching ceremony for a new tactical nuclear attack submarine. What's 'nuclear' about it? US analysts believe the submarine, which was first revealed to be under construction four years ago, is conventionally powered but possibly capable of launching ballistic missiles tipped with nuclear warheads. Submarine expert H I Sutton, writing on the Naval News website, said the new vessel appears to be based on the old Soviet-designed Romeo-class submarines. According to the Nuclear Threat Initiative, North Korea already has 20 Romeo-class subs in its fleet of an estimated 64 to 86 submarines. The latest sub appears to have 10 missile launch tubes in a compartment attached to its sail. Sutton noted, adding that, "Given the Hermit Kingdom's investment in ballistic missiles.

20 injured in Lebanon Refugee camp clash

BEIRUT : At least 20 Palestinians were injured in renewed clashes between the Palestinian Fatah movement and other armed groups in the Ain al-Helweh refugee camp in southern Lebanon. The Lebanese official news agency NNA said the injured people were taken to nearby hospitals. Eyewitnesses told Although the clashes stopped early Friday, the situation remains vulnerable to further escalation. The Lebanese University campus in Sidon city, southern Lebanon, where the camp is located closed due to the security situation around the camp. Machine guns and heavy weapons were used in the clashes on Thursday, forcing hundreds to flee the camp, according to NNA. The Ain al-Helweh camp, the largest of 12 Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, also witnessed heavy clashes on July 29. The clashes between Islamic groups and Palestinian forces affiliated with the Fatah movement left 11 people dead and more than 40 others injured, according to UN figures.—Agencies

64 people killed after attacks in Mali

MALI: Two attacks by suspected al-Qaeda-linked militants in restive north-eastern Mali killed 64 people including dozens of civilians, the country's transitional government said. The attacks targeted a passenger boat on the Niger River near Timbuktu and an army base in Bamba, in the northern Gao region, killing 49 civilians and 15 soldiers, according to the interim government's statement. It was not immediately clear how many people died in each attack. The Malian Army said an "armed terrorist group" attacked the passenger boat at 11 a.m. local time near Rharous Cercle in the Timbuktu region. The attacks were claimed by Support Group for Islam and Muslims (GSIM), a militant group associated with al Qaeda, the government said. Authorities declared three days of national mourning in the country, which has seen an escalation in violence after seeing two military coups in the past three years.

Mali is part of the Sahara-Sahel region and one of several African countries battling Islamist insurgents. The United Nations in June said "endless" violence was being unleashed on civilians in northeastern Mali by the Islamic State (ISIS) militant group and its affiliates. Experts have voiced widespread concern regarding the worsening conditions in the troubled Sahel state. "In less than a year, Islamic State in the Greater Sahara has almost doubled its areas of control in Mali," a UN Security Council report released in August said. The UN also expressed concerns about human rights abuses by Mali's armed forces and "their foreign security partners.—DNA

Half of Ukrainian refugee children lack education: UN

GENEVA : The UN on Friday said that as the new school year begins across Europe, children and youth from Ukraine now face their third year of disrupted education after Moscow launched a war on Kyiv in February 2022. William Spindler, a spokesman for the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), said at a news conference that while 30-50% of some 5.9 million Ukrainian refugees across Europe are children, only about half were enrolled in schools in host countries for the 2022-2023 academic year. "UNHCR is concerned that unless urgent action is taken, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugee children will continue to miss out on education this year," Spindler said. UNHCR released a report, titled Education on Hold, which focuses on the impact of Russia's war on Ukraine. "With the ongoing full-scale war in Ukraine, major efforts are required to avoid long-term damage to children's learning, potential and prospects," Spindler said.—Agencies

Briefs

PTI SG grieved over death of Laleka

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan expressed his grief and sorrow over the tragic death of former provincial minister Main Shaukat Laleka and his wife whose vehicle met with a tragic accident when they were changing their location on being informed of the Punjab police raid. Omar Ayub Khan said: "Deeply saddened to hear of the passing away of PTI leader Mian Shaukat Laleka and his wife who passed away a few days ago." PTI Secretary General strongly condemned for unleashing a reign of terror, as the couple were in hiding since long to avoid the police unlawful detention. Omar Ayub Khan said that they were in the process of changing their location on being informed of a Punjab Police raid on their location when their vehicle met with a tragic accident.

Grant of judges' loan challenged

DNA
LAHORE: The decision of approving an interest-free loan of Rs360 million to 11 judges of the High Court was challenged in the Lahore High Court (LHC). The application has been filed on behalf of a citizen, Mashkoor Hussain. The applicant has made chief secretary, finance secretary and others party in the dispute. The applicant submitted that interest-free loans to judges is an illegal act. The judges are already enjoying numerous privileges. The caretaker government is not authorised to dole out public money indiscriminately. The applicant prayed the court to declare the decision of the caretaker government to grant loans to the judges null and void. He also requested the court to declare the approval of loan to the judges illegal and grant injunction against dispensation of loan pending the final decision.

EU rebukes its representative in Austria

BRUSSELS: The European Union's executive branch strongly criticized the bloc's representative in Austria for accusing the country of paying "blood money" to Russia for gas supplies and said Friday he has been ordered back to Brussels. EU representative Martin Selmayr said during an event on Wednesday that Austria continues to get 55% of its gas from Russia - but not one, he noted, is out on Vienna's central Ringstrasse boulevard to protest that, the Austria Press Agency reported. "That surprises me, because blood money is being sent to Russia every day with the gas bill," Selmayr said, according to the report. -Agencies

State of Nation address: Kazakh President shares his roadmap

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev says Political and economic reforms alone are not sufficient to build a Just Kazakhstan. First of all, a change in public consciousness and the aspirations of citizens is required; without this, all other efforts will be in vain

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kistafin arranged a press briefing to discuss various aspects of the state of nation address of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev titled "Economic course of a Just Kazakhstan" at Islamabad Serena Hotel. The ambassador shared with the audience some salient features of the Presidential address. Ambassador Kistafin said that the president mentioned in the address that after the spring elections, the number of parties in Parliament increased, and the composition of MPs changed significantly. The fractions representing political parties, as well as single-mandate MPs, have actively engaged in work, initiating many relevant bills and raising important issues concerning the country's development. Parliamentarians have also been busy during the summer months. In just two months, they visited over 1,200 settlements and met with voters to become acquainted with the situation on the ground. I express my sincere gratitude to everyone for their fruitful efforts. I am confident that the pace of work will increase even further during this new session. The President also said that salaries of teachers have doubled since 2020. Medical professionals have also seen significant salary increases, and their incomes now exceed the national average. Citizens have been afforded the opportunity to access part of their pension savings, a move that has positively impacted the well-being of nearly one million people, enabling them to address their housing needs. Within the framework of the "Comfortable School" project, around 400 schools are slated for construction. The president also talked about the global economy and said, it is essential to recognize that most countries are also advancing. Today, we are witnessing fundamental shifts in the global economy and the international division of labor. The pace of technological innovation is accelerating, and competition for resources is intensifying globally.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kistafin describing salient features of the State of the Nation address of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. - DNA

Issues such as climate change, food security, and sustainable demographic development have moved to the forefront. In summary, humanity has entered a new era characterized by unprecedented challenges and radical changes. 'The new paradigm for Kazakhstan's economic development will hinge on the effective exploitation of our competitive advantages and the full realization of the potential of all key production factors—labor, capital, resources, and technologies. As part of this new economic policy, we will eschew the practice of setting long-term, ephemeral goals. All objectives outlined in this Address should be accomplished within three years; for the most complex tasks, specific deadlines will be set', he added. He said, by the end of this year, we need to develop a comprehensive vision for industrial development. To support manufacturing, foreign and domestic investors should be exempted from taxes and other compulsory

payments for the first three years of their investment. This is a fundamental issue that should give a serious boost to the manufacturing industry. Another important issue is to fully strengthen the defense industry, which plays a key role in ensuring national security in developed countries. The most important task is to create a production cycle with a high degree of localization to reduce dependence on imported supplies. Our army should be equipped with high-tech weapons and military equipment, including armored vehicles, unmanned aerial vehicles, and modern small arms. 'The development of nuclear power is a particularly important economic and political issue. There are different opinions on the feasibility of building a nuclear power plant in our country. On the one hand, Kazakhstan, as the world's largest uranium producer, should have its own nuclear generation. Some experts support the idea of building plants with small reactors. On the other hand, many citizens and some experts have safety concerns about nuclear power plants'. The international corridor known as "North-South" is another key focus, providing our country with access to the Persian Gulf ports. Incrementally, the capacity of the railroad portion of this route should be doubled. It is necessary to start the modernization of the Kazakhstan section of the "Bolashak-Chelyabinsk" railway line. The President further said that it is important to consistently expand the direct participation of citizens in decision-making at the level of local executive authorities. For more than two years, citizens have been choosing the akims of villages, towns, and rural districts themselves. During this time, three-quarters of the akims at the rural level were elected. Now we must test the electability of district and city akims of regional significance. The President further Political and economic reforms alone are not sufficient to build a Just Kazakhstan. First of all, a change in public consciousness and the aspirations of citizens is required; without this, all other efforts will be in vain.

ATC sends Elahi on 14-day judicial remand

DNA
ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday sent PTI President Parvez Elahi to jail on 14-day judicial remand in a case pertaining to the March 18 riots outside the Federal Judicial Complex (FJC). The March 18 events were marred by clashes between the police and PTI workers amid party chairman Imran Khan's appearance at the FJC in a hearing for the Toshakhana case. On September 5, Elahi was arrested in the case hours after the Islamabad High Court (IHC) had suspended his detention under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) ordinance and directed his release. On Wednesday, Elahi was presented before an ATC at the FJC, where police sought his 14-day physical remand and his lawyers urged the court to discharge him from the case. However, ATC had granted the police two-day physical remand of the PTI president. During today's hearing, Elahi was presented in court before ATC Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain. Lawyers Sardar AbdurRazzaq, Babar Awan and Ali Bukhari appeared as the PTI leaders' counsel while Prosecutor Tahir Kazim was also present.



ISLAMABAD: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, and the Muslim World League's Regional Director in Pakistan, Saad bin Masoud Al-Harhi, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad. - DNA

G20 gathers in India, without China's Xi

NEW DELHI: US President Joe Biden and other G20 leaders gathered in New Delhi on Friday for their annual summit, as deep divisions between heavyweight members and a no-show by China's Xi Jinping called the bloc's relevance into question. The Group of 20 was conceived in the throes of the 2008 financial crisis as a way of managing the global economy. But finding consensus among members has been increasingly difficult in recent years. With India's capital spruced up and partly emptied of people for the occasion, the host scrambled for last-minute agreement on vexed issues including the Ukraine war, climate and global governance. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned leaders that their ongoing squabbles risked stoking conflict and corroding public trust. "If we are indeed one global family - we today resemble a rather dysfunctional one", Guterres told reporters in New Delhi.

Even before it began, the importance of the G20 summit was called into question when China's Xi decided to skip the meeting and send his number two, Premier Li Qiang instead. No official reason was given for Xi's absence, but the Asian giants have been at loggerheads over a border dispute and other issues, while Beijing is seeking to make US-led groupings such as the G20 more amenable to its own interests. Guterres insisted countries must assume responsibility regardless of "whether it's the president or the prime minister or vice president that comes" to New Delhi. But a failure of G20 leaders to agree on a joint summit statement, a once routine diplomatic affair, would be a major embarrassment for the host. The Indian leader, sensing an opportunity to burnish his credentials as a statesman ahead of a re-election tilt early next year, has also thrust himself front and centre of proceedings. Modi hosted Biden on Friday evening, with the White House later praising their nations' "close and enduring partnership", and backing India's push to become a permanent member in a reformed UN Security Council. Biden will also return to India next year when Modi is set to host the Quad, a security partnership with Australia, Japan and the United States that China views as an effort to contain its influence in Asia. Modi does look set to secure one notable diplomatic victory, with several leaders expressing support for expanding the bloc into the "G21" by including the African Union as a permanent member. An invitation to join could come as soon as Saturday. - Agencies

UK experiencing longest September heatwave

LONDON: Britain is experiencing a record-breaking period of hot September weather with Friday expected to be the fifth consecutive day of temperatures climbing above 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit). This week has already broken the record for the number of consecutive September days with the temperature topping 30C, according to Britain's Meteorological Office. The previous record was three consecutive days, seen four times before, most recently in 2016. "Many areas will remain very warm or hot until at least Saturday, with the heat becoming more confined to southeastern areas on Sunday and Monday," the Met Office said. Temperatures could reach 32C in southeastern England on Saturday before easing off on Sunday and Monday, the Met Office added. Thursday was provisionally the hottest day of the year so far with 32.6C recorded in Wisley, Surrey, in southern England. The temperature surpassed the 32.2C recorded on two days in June. The hottest ever September day in Britain was recorded back in 1906 when the mercury hit 35.6C in South Yorkshire, northern England. Enjoying the late summer heatwave, Britons have crowded the beaches in the south of the country, including in the popular seaside town of Brighton. "I've been in Brighton many times, but this is the first time I see the beach so crowded," Anastasia Nosko, 22, told AFP in the coastal town this week. An amber health alert is in place until Sunday evening for most of England, with authorities warning of increased risks to the more vulnerable. The Met Office has said that "as our climate changes due to human influences, hot spells like this are becoming more frequent and severe". - Agencies

Georgia needs sweeping reforms, warns Borrell

TBILISI: The EU's top diplomat is in Tbilisi to discuss EU integration. The Balkan State applied for candidate status in March 2022 along with Ukraine and Moldova. The European Union is open to Georgia becoming a member, the EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said Thursday, but warned Tbilisi needed to implement sweeping reforms to get candidate status. The EU recognised Georgia's "European perspective" last year but deferred its membership application, while granting candidacy to Ukraine and Moldova, arguing Tbilisi needed to make changes first. "The European Union door is open to Georgia, and the European Union is committed to supporting Georgia on its path towards the European Union membership," Borrell told a news conference in Tbilisi. "Candidate status ... needs to be earned through serious reforms and adherence to the European Union values. And to be frank, there is still quite a bit of work to be done," he added. "Georgia should use the short remaining time to address the key reforms requirement." The European Council is due to review Georgia's progress in its reform programme in October and consider the next steps in the country's accession process. The EU's conditions include ending political polarisation, improving freedom of the press and courts, electoral reforms, and "de-oligarchisation." Georgian authorities have faced mounting international criticism over a perceived backsliding on democracy and engaging with the Kremlin, seriously damaging Tbilisi's ties with Brussels. The ruling Georgian Dream party has insisted it remains committed to Georgia's EU and NATO membership bids, enshrined in the constitution. - Agencies

Ukraine slams 'fake elections' in occupied territories

KYIV: Ukraine denounced what it called "fake elections" being held by Moscow on its occupied territory Friday, while Russian air strikes across the country killed four people and wounded dozens more. Russia said voting for local officials was open in the four Ukrainian regions of Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson - none of which Moscow fully controls - as well as in Crimea. "Russia's pseudo-elections in the temporarily occupied territories are worthless," Ukraine's foreign ministry said in a statement, accusing Moscow of "grossly violating" its sovereignty. The votes came as Russia continued to pound Ukrainian cities in the centre and east of the country with air strikes, as Kyiv officials posted images of the destruction on social media. "A Russian aerial bomb killed three civilians in Odradokamyanka - two women and a man. Four local residents were injured," Interior Minister Igor Klymenko said, calling the attack a "war crime". Odradokamyanka is about 60 kilometres (40 miles) upstream of Kherson city, on the west bank of the Dnipro river, which was recaptured by Ukraine's forces last year. A Russian strike on President Volodymyr Zelensky's hometown of Kryvyi Rig killed a policeman, Klymenko said, after a police building in the city centre was hit. Photos from the scene showed smoke spewing from the ruins of the building as rescue workers carried an

injured person to an ambulance. "Rescuers of the State Emergency Service pulled out three more from under the rubble. They are in serious condition," he said. Russia also struck the city of Sumy in northeast Ukraine, officials said, while one man was injured by a rocket attack on Zaporizhzhia in the southeast. The new wave of strikes on Ukraine came a day after top US diplomat Antony Blinken wrapped up his surprise two-day visit, in which he announced \$1 billion of new wartime aid and praised Kyiv's "extraordinary resilience". "President Biden asked me to come to reaffirm strongly our support, to ensure that we are maximising the efforts that we're making," Secretary of State Blinken told Zelensky on Wednesday. The United States has provided Ukraine with over \$40 billion of security assistance since Russia invaded last year, including weapons Kyiv says are vital to pushing back Russian forces. Ukraine, which had for months been pressing for more Western help, launched a counteroffensive against Russian forces in June after building up assault battalions and stockpiling Western weapons. Progress has been slow however, as Kyiv's forces encounter waves of heavily fortified Russian defences. Washington promised this week to supply Kyiv with depleted-uranium tank rounds to boost Ukraine's firepower, a decision the Kremlin warned was "very bad news". -Agencies

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