



# Islamabad POST

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**ME peace possible with Palestinians rights: Bashar Assad**

Detailed News On Page-0

**Trudeau repeats allegation against India**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Naseem Shah to undergo surgery**

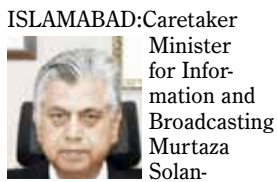
Detailed News On Page-06



**Briefs**

**Govt has no favourites: Solangi**

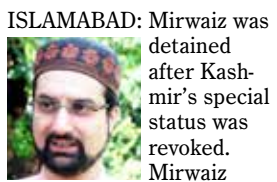
DNA



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Friday that the caretaker government has no favourites among the political parties. Murtaza Solangi said in a statement that the caretaker government was established in accordance with the law and the Constitution. He added that they caretaker set-up is not going to seize the power. He admitted that against the tradition, the tenure of the caretaker government exceeded two to three months due to the census results and new delimitations. "The election commission has announced to hold general elections in the last week of January. We will neither discriminate the political parties nor do we have favourites." Solangi said that Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has the right to give his opinion and he will respect it. "They raised objections against the presence of some Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leaders in the incumbent cabinet." He detailed, "Fawad Hassan Fawad performed duties in the civil services for 35 years. If he was associated with PML-N, then he would definitely become a minister in the previous government instead of becoming a caretaker minister only for three months.

**Mirwaiz released after 4-years**

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Mirwaiz was detained after Kashmir's special status was revoked. Mirwaiz was allowed to lead Friday prayers in Srinagar, post-release. He was visibly emotional as he addressed congregation at Friday prayer. Top Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has been released from his four-year-long house arrest in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). This significant development follows his detention in 2019 when India revoked Kashmir's special status, plunging the region into political turmoil. After his release, Mirwaiz was allowed to lead Friday prayers in Srinagar, the principal city of the disputed territory. Mirwaiz, aged 50, was visibly emotional as he addressed the congregation from the pulpit of a historic mosque in Srinagar. His return to public life was met with tears of joy from numerous supporters who had awaited his release. During his years of confinement, Mirwaiz played a pivotal role in orchestrating protests against Indian governance in the contested region. His arrest coincided with India's decision to strip Kashmir of its statehood, separate constitution, and longstanding land and job protections.

**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

**UNGA address**

## Kakar for countering terrorism

Says Pakistan was in close coordination and open communication with countries around Afghanistan regarding the rise in terrorism

CENTRELINE REPORT

NEW YORK: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar, in his address at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Friday, stressed the need to counter all terrorists "without discrimination" including the rising threat by "far-right and fascist groups such as Hindutva inspired extremists." At the outset of the address, the premier said world leaders had gathered together at a "tense and pivotal moment in history", referring to the Russia-Ukraine war and tensions between other global powers. "We see rise of old and new military and political blocs ... geopolitics is resurging when geoeconomics should have primacy." He recalled that far reaching commitments were made to implement sustainable development goals (SDGs) during the climate summit yesterday and called for the realisation of these commitments through the "re-channeling of unused special drawing rights for development and resolution of debt problems of 59 countries in debt distress". "Pakistan's triple food finance fuel challenge is a prime illustration of the impact of Covid conflict and climate on developing countries," the prime minister highlighted, adding that the country was one of the worst affected countries from impact of climate change.

Continued on Page 06

## PM invites APPNA to invest in health sector

DNA

NEW YORK: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul-Haq Kakar has invited Association of Physicians of Pakistani-descent of North America (APPNA), led by its President Dr. Arshad Rehman on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session in New York. Appreciating the APPNA's social welfare, educational and medical relief missions and programmes in Pakistan, he commended the positive role of association in spearheading the message of unity and solidarity among Pakistani-American community.

## Shujaat 'advises' PML-N, PPP to avoid conflict

He also conveyed his intention to speak with PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif about the need to avoid unnecessary political hostilities

PPP apprises ECP of its concerns

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Friday asked the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to announce the schedule for the general elections. The PPP delegation, headed by senior leader Qamar Zaman Kaira held a meeting with the ECP officials. Sources divulged that the PPP had also expressed its concerns regarding the delimitation. The PPP apprised the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) of its concerns about not announcing the election schedule. Earlier on Tuesday, PPP senior leader Manzoor Wassan said that there was a possibility of his party's alliance

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ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: Veteran politician and PML-Q chief Chaudhry Shujaat has advised his former coalition partners - PPP and PML-N - to avoid conflict, saying "this is not in the country's interest". The senior politician's remarks came during a meeting with former president Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday, during which the two held discussions surrounding the current political and economic situation in Pakistan. Shujaat, whose party

Continued on Page 06

## Nawaz Sharif insists on punishment for 'swindlers'

The three-time prime minister's assertion that Pakistan cannot move forward until all those involved in the alleged conspiracy are brought to justice

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif has said that Pakistan will not be able to move forward until all the characters of the conspiracy hatched in 2017 against his government are brought to justice. During a meeting with his brother, former prime minister Shahbaz Sharif, former finance minister Ishaq Dar, and his daughter Maryam Nawaz, among other party leaders in London, Nawaz asserted that the 2017 conspiracy had pushed Pakistan to the brink of ruin and imposed a group of individuals he described as "swindlers" on the nation. Sharif once again criticised various key figures, including former army chief General Bajwa, ex-ISI chief Gen Faiz Hameed, former chief justice Saqib Nisar, Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, Justice Azam Saeed, and Justice Ijazul Ahsan, as "criminals of Pakistan". The three-time prime minister's assertion that Pakistan cannot move forward until all those involved in the alleged conspiracy are brought to justice has added a new dimension to the already complex political climate in

Continued on Page 06

## No change in Nawaz's return

DNA

LONDON: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz said on Friday that there were no alterations in former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's return plans. Speaking to a private television channel in London, Ms Nawaz said: "The preparations to welcome Nawaz Sharif to the country are going on with great verve. We will give a great response to those who are doing propaganda regarding Nawaz Sharif's return." Earlier, former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday also claimed that there was 'no change' in the return plan of his brother and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif as the latter is set to land in

Continued on Page 06



RAWALPINDI: Saudi Arabia's Chief of General Staff (CGS) Fayyad bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili along with a high-level military delegation called on COAS General Syed Asim Munir. - DNA

## SFIC matters discussed Pakistan, Saudi Arabia defence relations strong

Saudi military Chief General Staff (CGS) Fayyad bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili meets COAS Gen Asim, CJSC Gen Sahir Shamshad

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Saudi Arabia's Chief of General Staff (CGS) Fayyad bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili along with a high-level military delegation called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir here on Friday. According to a press release issued by the military's media wing Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), matters of mutual interest related to defence and security were discussed during the meeting between the two military leaders.

Earlier, the Saudi military delegation also met with Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff Committee (JCSC) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza at the Joint Staff Headquarters. Earlier, President Dr Arif Alvi said Pakistan highly valued its relations with Saudi Arabia and was committed to

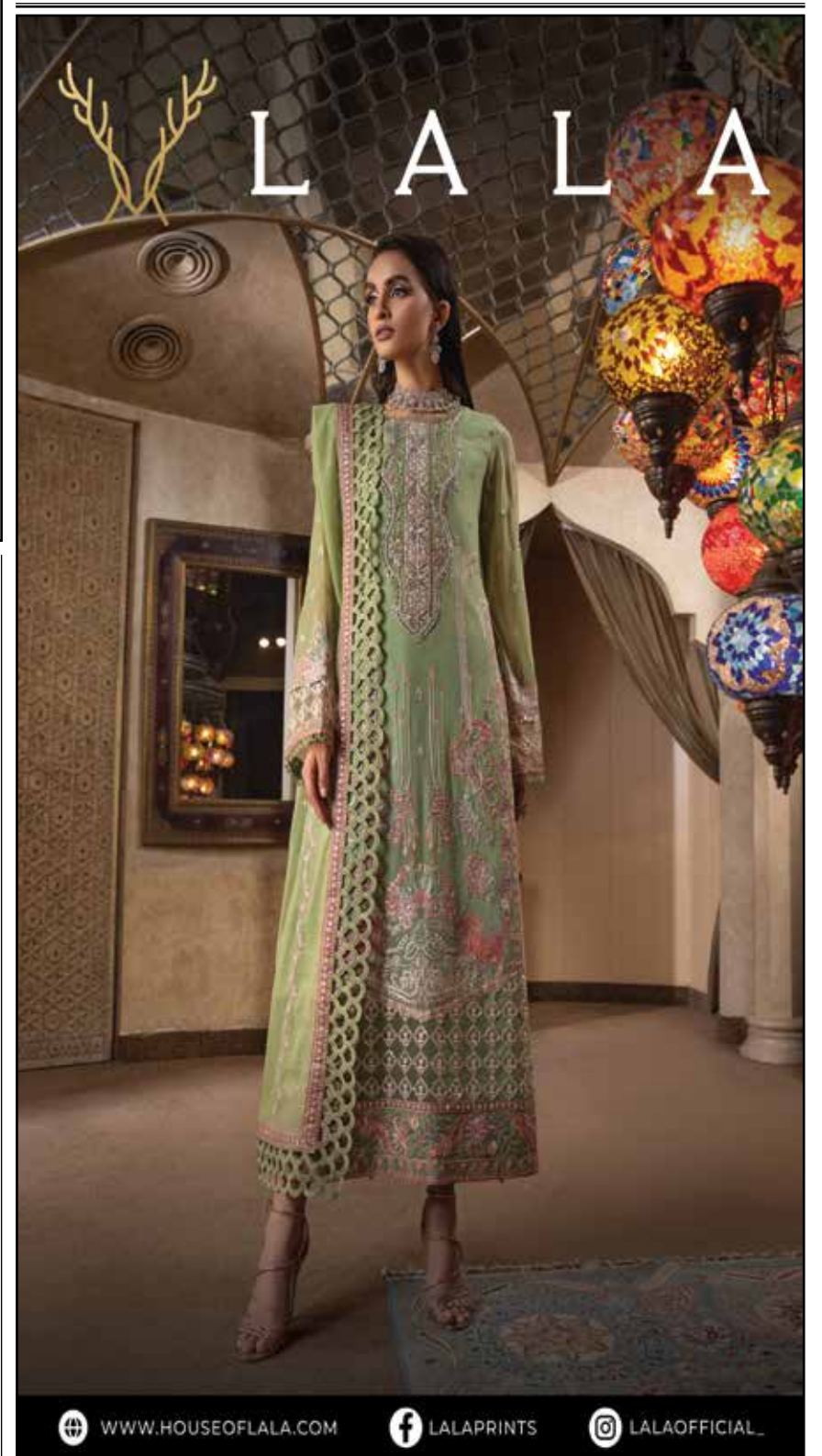
enhancing bilateral economic, investment and defence ties. Talking to the visiting Chief of General Staff of the Saudi Armed Forces General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili, who led a delegation here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, he said Pakistan was looking for investment from Saudi Arabia and other countries in diverse fields. President Alvi mentioned that Pakistan had huge potential in four key sectors including agriculture, information technology, energy and mining. In this regard, a Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has been set up to serve as a one-window platform to fast-track decision-making and facilitate foreign direct investment. Expressing satisfaction at the existing level of Pak-Saudi bilateral cooperation, the president said that the high-level exchanges of military leadership of the two countries would further boost defence cooperation.

## Cut in POL prices likely

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government is likely to reduce the prices of petrol by Rs 12 and diesel by Rs 9 after the local currency has gained some lost ground against the US dollar. The Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) revises the prices of petroleum products every fortnight and has increased the rates over the last several months to comply with tough conditionalities imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a package. The increase in petroleum prices, along with an economic meltdown has pushed inflation to historic

Continued on Page 06



# Pakistan, BD seek mutual trade boost

Which was accepted by the Ambassador of Bangladesh and assured that he will ensure his participation in this exhibition. Finally, Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry also presented the shield to Ruhul Alam Siddique, High Commissioner of Bangladesh

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The founder chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry, Khurshid Barlas, along with the delegation including Fahad Barlas, convener Exhibition, Amin-u-Rahman, Shamriz Iqbal, EC members, along with Ruhul Alam Siddique, High Commissioner of Bangladesh posted in Pakistan, at the embassy. In the meeting, Chairman Khurshid Barlas briefed the Ambassador of Bangladesh about "Third Pakistan International Property Housing and Construction Exhibition 17-19 November 2023" Pakistan China Friendship Center Islamabad. A large number of various business community associated with bank projects and tourism industry including prominent builders, developers, allied construction

industry from across the country will participate in the three-day exhibition. During the conversation, Bangladesh Ambassador Ruhul Alam Siddique said that SAARC member countries should work together to promote trade. He said that Pakistan has expertise in the field of food processing. Bangladesh can benefit from Pakistan in this sector. The two countries should find new avenues to promote mutual trade. He said that for investors in Bangladesh, Pakistan should invest in various sectors including tourism, agriculture, value-added textiles, construction sector and energy sector, especially renewable energy. There are immense investment opportunities in Pakistan. Promotion of bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh can be a milestone in regional and global trade integra-

tion and linkages. Chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas, highlighting the exhibition, said that the Expo is a trade fair. Known as Where property developers set up their stalls to introduce their latest property developments as well as upcoming projects to property buyers and investors Chairman PAEI presented a special invitation to the Bangladesh Ambassador at the 3rd Pakistan International Exhibition. Which was accepted by the Ambassador of Bangladesh and assured that he will ensure his participation in this exhibition. Finally, Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry also presented the shield to Ruhul Alam Siddique, High Commissioner of Bangladesh. On this occasion, Fahad Barlas convener Exhibition, EC members, Amin-u-Rahman, Shamriz Iqbal were also present.



## CM visits Ningxia Medical University

DNA

LAHORE : Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited Ningxia Medical University in Yangchuan capital of Ningxia province of China where he was briefed about the education and research facilities by the vice chancellor at senior faculty members. During the visit, the CM visited different sections including research and development facilities and held meetings with faculty members as well as the Pakistani students enrolled in the university, said a handout issued here on Friday. The CM appreciated the innovative approach with regard to medical education, saying that innovation is need of the hour. A wonderful work was been done with regard to medical research and the Punjab government would also raise the standard of medical education in the province in partnership with Ningxia Medical University, he added. Visiting China is not a routine visit but the bilateral cooperation would be exploited to better serve the people, he said. Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Pakistan embassy officials and senior officials of the Ningxia government were also present.

## LESCO receives Rs 61.31m on recovery campaign

LAHORE : The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), in collaboration with Tehsildars (Recovery), has recovered Rs 61.31 million from 1,126 chronic defaulters in all its circles on the tenth day of its recovery campaign. A spokesman told the media here on Friday that Chief Engineer O&M (T&G) Zafar Iqbal, with the support of Tehsildar City Mujahid Zia and Tehsildar Shalimar Noreez Humayun, recovered outstanding dues of Rs 4.29 million from 129 defaulters in Northern Circle and Rs 35.62 million from 117 defaulters in Eastern Circle, respectively.

Similarly, LESCO Manager (Material Disposal) Engineer Anwar Wattoo, along with Tehsildar Model Town Rana Aarsal and Tehsildar Cantt Sajjad Qureshi, recovered Rs 3.75 million from 129 defaulters in Central Circle and Rs 1.64 million from 68 defaulters in South Circle, while Manager (Technical) Engineer Muhammad Farooq, with the assistance of Tehsildar Nankana Sahib Muhammad Iqbal Rasheed and Tehsildar Sheikhupura Muhammad Aslam Gujjar, recovered Rs 2.14 million from 78 defaulters in Nankana Circle and Rs 2.86 million from 79 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle. He

added that LESCO Manager E&S (PMU) Engineer Abbas Ali, in collaboration with Naib Tehsildar Kasur and Okara Mirza Zahid Baig, recovered outstanding dues of Rs 1.89 million from 127 defaulters in Okara Circle and Rs 9.12 million from 399 defaulters in Kasur Circle. LESCO, with the help of Tehsildars (Recovery), has recovered a total of Rs 291.85 million from 9,100 chronic defaulters in its all circles of operation until now. He elaborated that LESCO recovered outstanding dues of Rs 34.01 million from 985 defaulters in Northern Circle; Rs 84.04 million from 1,181 defaulters.—APP

## Punjab restructuring 5 facilities to mitigate hazards

LAHORE : The Punjab government has decided to improve infrastructure and introduce initiatives for better functioning of five sectors, directly or indirectly linked with environmental issues namely, public transport system, Safe City Project cameras, traffic system, policing system, Solid Waste Management and road infrastructure.

An official of the Punjab government told APP that work on upgradation of these sectors' improvement would help upgrade environmental conditions in Lahore, and launch of these initiatives was on the cards. Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, during his recent China visit, expressed keen interest in observing the model and functioning methodologies in these fields. Lahore Development Authority (LDA) former director Estate Management, Aslam Langah, told APP that consumption choices and human lifestyle are profoundly changing the infrastructure, size and density of cities, causing civic facility complexities, directly involved in environmental-degradation. Cities' expansion on an unusual pace is alarming and calls for immediate and effective measures in improving civic facilities, so that carbon emission and environmental hazards could be improved. "We need socially and economically balanced growth without further damage to environment," Langah added. Noted environmentalist Mehmood Khalid Qamar, in a talk with APP, pleaded that expanding Lahore city had generated environmental issues, that are an amplifier of great relevance to climate adaptation strategies and the modern research tackled many ways to effectively mitigate air and water quality deterioration. "We need to manage urban environment quality through climate-sensitive urban designs, as we are facing broken roads, unchecked heavy movement of unapproved vehicles and lack of civic amenities," he added. He stressed promoting better planning and understanding of the environmental issues, caused by the un-planned civic facilities, adding that "We also need strict implementation of laws and penalise across the board all those violating the civic laws." The provincial metropolis is driven by multiple socioeconomic and environmental processes and the impact of urbanization, causing rapid lack of civic amenities is having serious impact on Lahore's environment which is being deteriorated by massive human activity. Global human population, mega cities expansion and urban development are increasing at unprecedented rates, creating huge stress on worldwide natural resources, environment and water and air quality, the expert said. According to UN-Habitat findings, the global-community is becoming increasingly urbanised with more than half of the population living in cities, exerting extra pressure on resources, causing multiple climate change challenges.—DNA

## SCCI president calls for promoting Islamic finance

The speakers called upon the business community to take full benefits from schemes launched under Islamic Banking System and contribute their share in promotion of interest-free economy in the country

PESHAWAR : Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi on Friday stressed the need for pragmatic steps for promotion of Islamic Banking and Finance System. Also, he called for making schemes that have been introduced by commercial banks to be brought on Islamic banking system in a real sense in order to ensure easy access of the people attached with various businesses. Ijaz Afridi was speaking during an awareness seminar on 'Islamic Banking and Finance for Business Community, jointly organized

by the Bank of Khyber (BoK) and IMSciences Peshawar in collaboration with the SCCI here at the chamber's house. Keynote speakers at the seminar include the BoK Sharia Compliance Department official/ Sharia Scholars Abdul Haleem Khan, Mufti Fazal Hakim, and IMSciences faculty member Dr Adnan Malik. During the seminar, Sharia scholars and officials from IMSciences and BoK briefed participants about various modes of Islamic Banking and its significance through their comprehensive multi-media presentation. The experts said the tendency of Islam-

ic banking system has not increased in Pakistan but it has played a vital role in global economic development. The speakers called upon the business community to take full benefits from schemes launched under Islamic Banking System and contribute their share in promotion of interest-free economy in the country. Ijaz Afridi in his speech informed that Pakistan's Islamic Financing has been increased by 20 per cent in the banking sector and State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is striving to increase this share to 35 per cent, he added. The SCCI acting chief urged the central bank to

issue directives to banks to maximize focus on promoting Islamic Banking in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Besides, officials and representatives from IMSciences and BoK, notably M Ali Yousafzai, Shahab M Khattak, Sardar Gul, former senior vice president Imran Khan Mohmand, Secretary General SCCI Sajjad Aziz, former vice president Abidullah Yousafzai, former executive members Ihsanullah, Fahad Amin, and Sadder Gul, Ishfaq Muhammad Fazzal Wahid and Aqeel Kayani, a large number of members of business community were present during the awareness session.—DNA



ISLAMABAD : The former chief economist DFID, Stefan Dercon and the British High commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriot called on Pakistan's caretaker minister for finance , revenue and economics affairs Dr. Shamshad Akhtar at the finance division.—APP

## 6 outlaws held, drugs recovered

DERA ISMAIL KHAN : Dera police apprehended six accused, including proclaimed offenders and drug peddlers, during the ongoing crackdown against the criminal elements and recovered hashish and ice from the possession of the arrested persons in the limits of various police stations here on Friday. According to the police spokesman, under the direction of District Police Officer Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, during operations against criminal elements and drug dealers, Dera Police recovered 1020 grammes of hashish and 1151 grammes of ice from the drug dealers who were arrested from different localities of the district. During the operations against criminal elements, Kulachi police station recovered 1020 grammes of hashish and 25 grammes of ice from the possession of Muhammad Aslam, son of Omar Daraz, a resident of Maddi, and arrested the accused as per the rules. Similarly, SHO Cantt Gul Sher Khan and his police team, while taking action against the drug dealers, recovered 280 grammes of ice from the possession of Abdul Ahad and 375 grammes of ice from the possession of Basit Rahman and arrested the accused as per the rules. Meanwhile, SHO Gomal University Malik Sajid and the police team arrested Yaqub, the son of Imam Bakhsh, a resident of Mandi Town, and recovered 372 grammes of ice from his possession as per the rules. Shaheed Nawab Police recovered 149 grammes of ice from the possession of Abdul Rahman.—APP

## Electricity thieves will face indiscriminate action

MEHTAB PIRZADA

LAHORE : Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has issued orders to all RPOs, CPOs and DPOs to crackdown on anti-national and anti-social elements who are damaging the national exchequer by electricity thefts. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar released a special video message about the crackdown against electricity thieves. He said that the crackdown of the Punjab Police against electricity thieves has been accelerated across the province including Lahore and the Punjab Police is registering more than 01 thousand cases against electricity thieves on a daily basis. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that anti-national elements and culprits involved in electricity theft rackets will not get any concession now, on the instructions of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Chief Minister of Punjab, Punjab Police is speeding up the crackdown against the elements of electricity theft. The accused who steal electricity in villages, cities, factories, commercial level are being brought under the law. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that those who steal electricity by hooking, directly from the transformer,

bery of the country's treasury by electricity thieves is equivalent to the amount stolen in all the crimes of dacoity, robbery, kidnapping against ransom etc during 15 years across the whole province. IG Punjab said that the total annual amount looted in theft, dacoity and other crimes is very less compared to electricity theft. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that anti-national elements and culprits involved in electricity theft rackets will not get any concession now, on the instructions of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Chief Minister of Punjab, Punjab Police is speeding up the crackdown against the elements of electricity theft. The accused who steal electricity in villages, cities, factories, commercial level are being brought under the law. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that those who steal electricity by hooking, directly from the transformer,

tampering with the meter or in any other way will not get any discount. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that innocent citizens & consumers have to bear the consequences and pay the bills from their hard earned money of this theft of others. IGP vowed that nobody will be allowed to commit robbery on this hard earn money of citizens' day and night labor. IG Punjab also requested the citizens to cooperate with the police, district administration and related institutions by giving information against the electricity thieves involved in theft around them. So that actions against these anti-social elements that harm the country's treasury can be accelerated. On the directions of Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, Punjab Police is ensuring crackdown against the proclaimed offender residing abroad after committing the crimes.

## PPAF's Olive processing unit achieves successful batch

ISLAMABAD : The state-of-the-art olive processing unit, established by the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) in the Lower Dir district, has successfully processed this season's first batch of olives, yielding an impressive 12% oil ratio. According to the PPAF, the unit has been established in Lower Dir district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with funding from the Italian Government through the Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) under the

Programme for Poverty Reduction (PPR). As the season progresses, this ratio will increase to 18 per cent, resulting in an average income of Rs. 36,000 for every 18 litres of oil produced from 100 kg of olives. This project has succeeded with the support of the on-ground partner Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP). Lower Dir is rich in olive cultivation and the provision of an oil pressing unit has played a significant role in revitalizing the olive value

chain. This initiative is creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for local producers while boosting their income. Olive oil offers numerous benefits for health as it helps improving the cardiovascular system, reduction in depression risk, maintain healthy cholesterol levels and curing Alzheimer's disease. Olive oil also helps in preventing stroke, reducing breast cancer risk, protecting from ulcerative colitis, curing acute pancreatitis, and strengthening bones.—APP

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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

### Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

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

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



### Hospitals

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MH.....561116  
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11  
DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666



### Departments

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

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Artists from Malaysia posing for a picture with the High Commissioner of Malaysia Azhar Mazlan after a cultural performance at the Malaysian High Commission. — DNA

## World Bank launches reforms for a brighter future of Pak

Pakistan has been facing numerous economic hardships including inflation, rising electricity prices, severe climate shocks, and insufficient public resources to finance development and climate adaptation: World Bank

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank has launched a new program to foster debate on the critical development policy issues facing Pakistan. 'Reforms for a Brighter Future: Time to Decide' is intended to engage in discussions with a broad range of stakeholders on what fundamental policy shifts are most needed to durably steer the economy towards stronger, more climate-resilient and sustainable growth and development. This consultation program includes the publication, today, of a series of draft Discussion Notes. These will be progressively enriched by feedback received from a broad range of stakeholders. The Notes, which draw on international experience as well as a large body of evidence on Pakistan, propose fundamental policy shifts that are needed to move away from the current low-growth, anti-development status quo: From underfunded, inefficient, and fragmented service delivery and social protection systems towards coordinated, efficient, and adequately financed service delivery, targeting the most vulnerable—in

particular to reduce abnormally high child stunting rates and to increase learning outcomes for all children, especially for girls. From wasteful and rigid public expenditures benefiting a few, towards tightly prioritized spending on public services, infrastructure, and investments in climate adaptation, benefiting populations most in need. From a narrow, distortive, and inequitable tax system towards one that is broad-based, efficient, progressive, and equitable—generating sufficient revenues to significantly increase public investment in human development, infrastructure, and climate adaptation. From a protected, stagnant, and unproductive economy with a large state presence towards a dynamic open economy driven by private investment and exports. From agriculture sector policies that lock farmers into a low-value, low-productivity farming towards a more market-driven, productive agricultural system, including value chains that are resilient to climate change impacts and water scarcity. From energy sector policies that drive high energy costs, environmental harms, and unsustainable accumulation of debt, towards effi-

cient, sustainable, and resilient generation and distribution, based on accurate price signals, increased competition and private participation, and a cleaner energy mix. From a public sector that is inefficient, often ineffective, and vulnerable to capture by vested interests towards accountable, efficient, and transparent government, including at the local level. "Pakistan has been facing numerous economic hardships including inflation, rising electricity prices, severe climate shocks, and insufficient public resources to finance development and climate adaptation—when the country is among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts. It is also facing a "silent" human capital crisis: abnormally high child stunting rates, low learning outcomes, and high child mortality," said Najib Benhassine, Country Director for the World Bank in Pakistan. "These discussion notes contribute to debates on long standing policy issues that are muting Pakistan's high economic and development potential. There is reasonable consensus on priorities and challenges. Determining specific solutions requires open debates on concrete, fundamental

policy decisions. We hope this program of discussions will help build a consensus around a path towards inclusive, sustainable, and climate-resilient development". As part of the 'Reforms for a Brighter Future' engagement program, the World Bank together with the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, conducted extensive consultations across the country to seek inputs and feedback on the recommendations included in the draft Discussion Notes. These have included discussions with students across 21 universities and provincial roundtables with thinkers from academia, and the public and private sectors. Participants in all four provinces have shared insights and perspectives that have helped shaped the understanding of what it would take to put Pakistan back on a path towards sustainable, climate-resilient, and inclusive growth. The 'Reforms for a Brighter Future' program will continue over the following months both online and at in-person events across the country, including the national conversation that will take place in Islamabad today and tomorrow.

### Finance Minister launches "Centralized Gateway Platform"

ISLAMABAD, September 22: As a unique initiative in Pakistan's financial landscape, "The Centralized Gateway Portal" has been formally inaugurated by the Federal Minister for Finance—Dr. Shamsad Akhtar and Honorable Chairman SECP—Mr. Akif Saeed in a launch ceremony at CDC House, Karachi, on the 21st of September 2023. The solution has been implemented by CDC with the support of other entities, including PSX, NCCPL, MUFAP, IAP and PSBA. The platform is envisioned to greatly help financial institutions by reducing the costs and complexities associated with onboarding their clients. CGP's features include state-of-the-art tools for KYC/CDD and a uniform, synchronized and latest KYC and AML framework with AI based algorithms. It will provide financial service providers with the indicative risk rating to help them in making informed decisions—DNA

## Kazakh delegation keen to explore business prospects

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A business delegation of Kazakhstan led by H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and showed interest to explore business and investment opportunities in Pakistan. The delegation was representing food & beverages, oil & gas, minerals, precious stones, fertilizers, chemicals, textiles, autsparts, wholesale and retail sectors. Speaking on the occasion, H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan said that his country wants to further strengthen trade relations with Pakistan as both coun-



tries have good potential to do trade in many items. He said that last year, a trade delegation of Kazakhstan was organized to Pakistan and hoped that the visit of another Kazakh delegation would contribute to promote business relations between the two countries. He said that the President of Kazakhstan is scheduled to visit Pakistan

in the near future that would further strengthen trade and economic relations between the two countries. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Cham-

ber of Commerce & Industry said that both countries should set at least US\$ 1 billion bilateral trade target as the current level of trade is not matching with their actual potential. He said that Kazakhstan is a big landlocked country and Pakistani ports provide it the shortest route through Arabian Sea to access other markets. Pakistan and Kazakhstan can cooperate in many fields including construction, agriculture, energy, textiles, pharmaceuticals, food items, engineering equipment, machinery, banking & finance. He said both countries should explore road and railway links that would boost trade and economic relations between them.

## Failed SOEs should be privatized to reduce expenditure

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 failed State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) should be sold without delay to reduce the expenditure of the government. It seems that instead of reducing expenditure on the part of the government, consensus is being reached on statements, while there is no concrete plan to privatize failed government institutions, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the people have reduced their expenditure as much as possible to survive, and there is no room for further reduction. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that people are being frugal in their consumption of fuel and electricity while they are forced to subsist on substandard food items, but the situation is still not under their control. He said that immediate steps should be taken to eliminate the losses of government institutions and give immediate relief to the public. The business leader said that the political instability that has been going on for the last six years has caused a lot of damage to the people and the economy. IMF conditions and the continuous increase in the price of gas, electricity.—DNA

## Ufone 4G & JoChaho join forces to transform online shopping

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani telecom operator, Ufone 4G has joined forces with JoChaho, a leading e-commerce mobile application, to revolutionize the online shopping experience for millions of customers across the country. The partnership is in line with Ufone 4G's sustained commitment to enable customers and transform user journeys to the realm of digital technology and innovation. JoChaho is an innovative and trusted marketplace that has been serving Pakistan's e-commerce sector by offering unbeatable deals on a wide array of product categories, ranging from cutting-edge electronic devices to essential home appliances. Users can now enjoy a flat 10% discount on a vast selection of products available on JoChaho. Unlike other offers that restrict discounts to specific product categories, this unique offer covers an extensive range of items, ensuring that the needs and preferences of Ufone 4G users are carefully catered to. Commenting on the collaboration, Group Vice President, Commercial Strategy, Pricing & Geo-Marketing, PTCL & Ufone 4G, Sajid Munir said, "This partnership is a testament to Ufone 4G and JoChaho's shared commitment to innovation, quality, and customer satisfaction. Together, we are creating a shopping ecosystem that is not only convenient but also highly rewarding. e-commerce revolutionized shopping experiences by providing exceptional ease and convenience. It's contributions to the economy and social mobility are also significant. Ufone 4G and JoChaho aim to contribute to the growth of e-commerce by boosting the sector's credibility and trustworthiness through efficient service delivery and product quality." JoChaho CEO, Zhao Liang said, "e-Commerce is a challenging business model as we continue to face new challenges every day. The pace and scale of change are unprecedented. Our vision is to become customer's No.1 choice in terms of consumer electronics. Our goal is to provide a seamless buying experience to our valued Ufone 4G customers by offering them great discounts on various products leading to a vast and loyal customer base." The collaboration between Ufone 4G and JoChaho provides customers with an incredible opportunity to shop smarter.

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## Briefs

ICT AC  
launches  
crackdown  
against  
profiteers,  
encroachers,  
beggar mafia

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to curb profiteers, encroachment, and professional begging, Assistant Commissioners in ICT limits launched a crackdown on Friday and operations resulted in the imposition of fines, sealing of shops, and seizure of polythene bags, sealing of illegal clinics, shisha cafes, petrol filling agencies, and shops violating anti-dengue SOPs. In a series of operations, a total of 145 inspections were conducted regarding price hikes, resulting in the imposition of fines of Rs. 16,500, the sealing of two shops, and the arrest of two people. Additionally, 19 professional beggars were apprehended, including a 19-year-old son-in-law of one of the arrested individuals. Action was also taken against illegal clinics and shisha cafes, with one illegal clinic being sealed. Encroachment operations were also conducted, netting more than 11 kilograms of polythene bags. Further, two illegal petrol filling agencies were sealed and three persons were arrested.—APP

Implementation  
of UNSC  
resolutions on  
J&K vital

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani on Friday said the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir was vital to ensuring regional peace and ending the unnecessary arms race between Pakistan and India. Talking to Al Jazeera, the foreign minister said the non-implementation of these resolutions were directly impacting the peace of the region besides hampering development of both Pakistan and India and also the progress of SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Countries). Jilani said Kashmir is the most important and the core issue between Pakistan and India in the context of the UNSC resolutions that call for holding an impartial plebiscite in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiris. He regretted that resolutions faced non-implementation despite their passage over 70 years ago.—DNA

Islamabad to  
provide free  
education to  
deprived  
Children

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to ensure that all children in Islamabad have access to quality education, Assistant Commissioner Secretariat Aneel Saeed, on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon, has held a review meeting with representatives of the "Each One Teach One Foundation". The two organizations have agreed to collaborate in providing free education to underprivileged children in different areas of the city. The Assistant Commissioner Secretariat has announced that it will be collaborating with the "Each One Teach One Foundation" to provide free education to deprived children in Islamabad. This initiative is in line with the directions of the Deputy Commissioner, who is committed to ensuring that all children in the city have access to quality education. The collaboration will involve the two organizations working together to identify and enroll deprived children in schools. The 'Each One Teach One Foundation' will also provide financial and other support to these children to help them succeed in their studies. This initiative is a welcome step, as it will help to reduce illiteracy and inequality in Islamabad. By providing free education to underprivileged children, the Assistant Commissioner Secretariat and the "Each One Teach One Foundation" are helping to create a brighter future for all children in the city.—APP

Ethiopian envoy, Sanjrani  
discuss bilateral relations

Chairman Sanjrani emphasized the importance of the existing strong bond between the two nations, rooted in shared history, common interests, and mutual support at international platforms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, Jemal Bekker Abdula called on Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani here at the Parliament House today. The meeting focused on reinforcing the longstanding and friendly relationship between Pakistan and Ethiopia, concentrating on enhancing trade, parliamentary cooperation, and matters of mutual interest. Chairman Sanjrani emphasized the importance of the existing strong bond between the two nations, rooted in shared history, common interests, and mutual support at international platforms. He stressed the need to foster trade and economic ties, highlighting the facilitation and improvement of contacts between Pakistani and Ethiopian businessmen. In the discussion, both sides accentuated the augmentation of bilateral trade volume and applauded the resumption of flights between Pakistan and Ethiopia. Chairman Sanjrani Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani lauded the initiative, stating that it would enhance connectivity not only within



Africa but also with Pakistan. He further stressed the significance of increasing cooperation and public relations in the field of education and addressing global challenges such as Islamophobia through interfaith harmony

and mutual respect. Ambassador Jemal Bekker Abdula reaffirmed Ethiopia's importance under Pakistan's Engage Africa policy and invited Chairman Sanjrani to visit Ethiopia on behalf of the Ethiopian Parliament's leader-

ship. Chairman Sanjrani expressed gratitude to the Ethiopian parliamentary leadership, government, and the ambassador, foreseeing that the exchange of parliamentary delegations would fortify relations. Recognizing Ethiopia as a gateway

to African countries, Ambassador Jemal Bekker Abdula encouraged Pakistani investors to benefit from this strategic positioning. He reiterated his commitment to strengthen trade ties and promote bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Pakistan.

Students' project  
exhibition held at ICG

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Academic project exhibitions hold significant importance in the educational realm. They provide students with a platform to showcase their theoretical knowledge and practical skills. These exhibitions encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork, fostering a holistic learning experience. They also enable stu-

dents to receive feedback from peers, teachers, and experts, facilitating continuous improvement. Moreover, project exhibitions enhance communication and presentation skills, vital for academic and professional success. Keeping this in view Islamabad college for girls (ICG) F6-2 organized a Project Exhibition titled "Beyond The Classrooms", a Students Projects Exhibition in which students participated with full interest and enthusiasm and made ex-

cellent projects on different subjects. The projects were about Natural sciences, Sustainable energy, Ecosystem, Biodiversity, Languages Digital library and Social sciences in which student worked for weeks to complete them. The chief guest of the event was Federal, Minister for Education and Professional Training Mr. Madad Ali Sindhi while principal Prof Sabah faisal Presided the ceremony Madad ali Sindhi in his address appreciated all the projects and surprised by the

quality of work about sustainable energy i.e. production of electricity by windmills, garbage, solar panel, small turbine on naturally flowing hilly areas. Further he liked the projects display of hydraulic robotics mechanical crane's working model. "Our bureaucracy should send their children in government schools and colleges because the level of education is quite impressive in these institutions". He added In the end principal Prof Sabah faisal presented college crest.

Chinese tech firm  
launches its first  
service center in Pak

The company plans to expand the RMA network in Pakistan by establishing such centers in various other cities, he said

ISLAMABAD: The Hangzhou-based Chinese technology company, Hikvision, has inaugurated its first service center in Pakistan, according to a statement issued here. The Return Merchandise Authorisation (RMA) Centre in Rawalpindi represents an advancement in the company's efforts to provide after-sales support to its expanding customer base in Pakistan. Gwadar Pro reported on Friday quoting the statement. In 2016, Hikvision established its presence in Pakistan, bringing advanced offerings to the video security industry and expanding its product lineup to include access control systems, video-based doorbells, smart home products, and other innovations. The company said the RMA Centre will help enhance technical support services, improve after-sales problem resolution, and advance service and product quality. A key objective is assisting customers with software and hardware issues, the statement noted. A spokesman for Hikvision Pakistan told Gwadar Pro that the company has offices



in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad. The company plans to expand the RMA network in Pakistan by establishing such centers in various other cities, he said.—

ANF seizes 56  
kg drugs  
in four  
operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations across the country managed to recover 56 kg of drugs and arrested seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that ANF foiled a drug smuggling bid through a luxury vehicle and recovered 30 kg heroin recovered from a Toyota Land Cruiser intercepted near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad. During the operation, five 30-bore pistols with magazines were also recovered. Two accused residents of Khyber and Peshawar were arrested on the spot. In another operation, 14.4 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle near Qamar Deen Park Lahore while two accused were arrested. On the plantation of the arrested person, two other accused including a woman were also arrested. In the third operation, 9.6 kg of hashish was recovered from the possession of a bike rider.

An Afghan resident was arrested during a raid on a house near Yaro Railway Track in Quetta. 2 kg of Ice drug 190 litres of hydrochloric acid and different types of prohibited powder were recovered from the house which was being used to store drugs. Separate cases have been registered under the Anti-Narcotics Act against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.—APP

IRSA releases  
221,300  
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 221,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 188,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1548.33 feet and was 150.33 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 116,700 cusecs and 120,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1232.15 feet, which was 182.15 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 10,700 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 95,200, 116,400, 89,900 and 39,700 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 23,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 8,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) preparations  
in full swing in Rwp Division

RAWALPINDI: Like other parts of the country, preparations to celebrate Eid Milad-Un-Nabi (PBUH) are in full swing in Rawalpindi Division as Milad-Un-Nabi would be celebrated with religious fervor and devotion. Different Naat committees in the city are organizing Naat competitions to celebrate 12 Rabi-ul-Awal. Like every year, the government and religious organizations have planned several activities to celebrate the annual event. As a tradition, Milad-un-Nabi processions would be held in all areas of Rawalpindi city. Strict security

arrangements would be made to ensure the security of the processions of Eid Milad-un-Nabi. The Punjab government has directed all the district and tehsil administration officers to take strict security measures in this regard. In this connection the main procession of Milad-Un-Nabi would start in the morning from Bunni Chowk Rawalpindi and after passing from Circular Road, Waris Khan, Murree Road, Committee Chowk, Iqbal Road, Fowara Chowk, Raja Bazaar, would end at central Jamia Mosque. The

district administration is finalizing a plan for the security of the faithful on Eid Milad-Un-Nabi. The entry of tractor-trolleys, trucks and other heavy vehicles would be prohibited at the route of the main procession. Ulama and people belonging to different sects of life have also been urged to play their role in maintaining law and order to foil the nefarious designs of the miscreants. The city district government would set up a control room for the surveillance of the processions and reviewing security arrangements.

Pakistan, China sign MoU to  
strengthen meteorological coop

DNA


ISLAMABAD: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) and the Institute of Electrical Engineering of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (IEECAS) was signed here, aimed at further strengthening collaborative activities in meteorology and climatology. Sahibzad Khan, Director General of PMD, and Dr. Yaohua Li, Director of IEECAS, signed the MoU. At the same time, Khan Muhammad Wazir, Science Counsellor at the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing, and




Prof. Tianhua Hong, Executive Director of the China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences, witnessed the MoU signing, according to China Economic Net (CEN).

Khan Muhammad Wazir, Science Counsellor at the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing, said that the purpose of the MoU is to initiate and promote the establishment of a

VLF/LF lightning detection network in Pakistan to improve the lightning warning capability of PMD and to reduce the casualties and property losses caused by lightning disasters.



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## Europe's politics shift right, becomes volatile

The taxation of property in the eastern German state of Thuringia would normally be a subject of strictly local concern. But last week a vote to cut stamp duty in the regional parliament in Erfurt made national headlines. Ignoring a cross-party taboo on collaborating with the far-right Alternative für Deutschland party, local Christian Democrats and liberals co-opted its support to force the measure through. Loud condemnation duly followed. But with the AfD running second in national polls, there are grounds for fearing that this will not be the last occasion on which the cordon sanitaire surrounding the party is breached. The Thuringia vote is just one sign of changing and volatile times in European politics, as the radical right expands its influence on the mainstream. New PopuList research by 100 political scientists in 31 countries, reported in our new digital Europe edition, finds that almost one-third of Europeans voted for anti-establishment parties in national elections held last year. Half of that number voted for the far right, which is increasing its vote share among these disaffected voters most rapidly. Illiberal, nationalist parties hold power in Italy, Hungary and Poland. They have a share of it in Finland and Sweden and anti-establishment forces have every chance of acquiring it in forthcoming elections in the Netherlands and Slovakia. Austria's Freedom party, ostracised at the time of its emergence in the 1990s, is well ahead in the polls, with elections due next year. As Europe seeks to meet immense challenges relating to migration, the transition to net zero and growing geopolitical instability, the trend is deeply concerning. A nativist hostility to immigration still drives most radical-right parties. But the researchers found that the climate emergency, the cost of living crisis, various culture wars and post-lockdown conspiracy theories have allowed them to diversify and forge new coalitions of voters. Perhaps most insidiously, the higher profile of the radical right is normalising agendas that until recently would have been seen as beyond the pale. The AfD – which has embraced climate change denialism in the past – has successfully weaponised anxieties about net zero measures, orchestrating a backlash which (as in Britain) is seeping into mainstream politics. Italy's prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, hopes to use next year's European elections to effect a merger between the centre right and her own radical-right grouping in the European parliament. Should that project succeed, ensuring that EU values and norms are upheld in countries such as Viktor Orbán's Hungary and a Law and Justice-led Poland will become even harder. Europe's apparent rightwards drift is not a fait accompli. But there is a risk that, as mainstream parties accommodate more and more of the radical right's agenda, it becomes one. Years of austerity, followed by the pandemic and the Ukraine-related cost of living crisis, have led to chronic economic insecurity for less well-off Europeans. That has created an opening for ugly political movements and populist leaders to exploit. In Poland, for example, which goes to the polls in a few weeks' time, the Law and Justice party has ruthlessly demonised minorities and irregular migrants, but also offered generous welfare benefits to struggling families.



## Derna's deluge tragedy

To count the thousands killed by the floods in the eastern Libyan city of Derna does not truly help us grasp their loss. "Those people are not numbers at all ... Those people are love stories, friendships, dreams, ambitions ... are people who had names," Joheer Ali, a journalist from the city. Libyan authorities do not want people to focus on those victims, or why they died. Global heating made the torrential rain that hit Libya 50 times more likely, scientists say. But it was the collapse of dams and failure to evacuate that multiplied this disaster. Survivors want to know why warnings about the structures were ignored and what happened to millions of dollars allocated for their maintenance. But on Tuesday, after furious residents protested, officials blocked foreign journalists from entering the city and local media were reportedly detained. Telephone and internet links were cut. This is a country with two competing governments, but a barely functioning state. The coalition of militias under warlord Khalifa Haftar in the east competes with the UN-recognised Government of National Accord in the west. Those who rule pursue wealth and power, with scant regard for 7 million Libyans reeling from years of dictatorship, revolution, civil war and political deadlock. Incompetent, corrupt and callous governments rely on others – even teenage Scouts – to do their duties, while caging and repressing civil society. Now many fear that political leaders will exploit the crisis to enrich themselves and delay elections. Mr Haftar is already entrenching his power and that of his family. His son Saddam has been put in charge of the disaster response committee; the international community will be coordinating with a man whose forces took "substantial quantities" of cash and silver belonging to the central bank, according to UN experts, and have carried out a "catalogue of horrors", including war crimes, according to Amnesty International. Libyans at home and abroad have had enough. They want an international inquiry into the disaster and the response, looking at the role of authorities in both power centres. Any domestic inquiry will at best find scapegoats, and they do not expect cooperation with foreign investigators. But political elites have enjoyed complete impunity for the last decade – not even having to justify failures and crimes. Derna's tragedy has thrown the spotlight upon their behaviour. An inquiry would at least highlight their actions and inaction, essential information for Libyans; it might play some part in preventing future catastrophes; and it would confront western governments with their own responsibility. A new paper from the Chatham House thinktank, focusing on Libya, Iraq and Lebanon, notes that international policymakers "have repeatedly prioritized 'stability' over accountability. The resulting settlements (or 'elite bargains') have instead created and perpetuated political systems that benefit those elites at the expense of citizens." The paper's authors, Dr Renad Mansour, Tim Eaton and Dr Lina Khatib, argue that such deals have reduced direct violence, but overlooked structural forms of violence and have failed to improve, or even worsened, corruption and human development scores. Increasing accountability, they argue, must be a key part of reaching political settlements. Libya's leaders have dodged that until now. But nothing less is owed to the lovers, friends, dreamers and strivers of Derna.

## Why Erdogan and Netanyahu have decided to seek closer ties

Sinem Cengiz

Key highlights from the meeting, which were shared with the press, included an agreement to arrange mutual visits; the possibility of Erdogan visiting Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in the near future; cooperation on various fields such as energy, technology, innovation, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity; discussions regarding Israeli-Palestinian relations; and efforts to normalize Israel's relations with Saudi Arabia. The meeting took place a day after Erdogan expressed support for the US administration's initiative to broker an Israeli-Saudi deal, as he believed it could

The highly anticipated encounter between the leaders of Türkiye and Israel, Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Benjamin Netanyahu, finally occurred on Tuesday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. This was the first documented meeting between the two leaders. The two countries had close ties until the infamous Mavi Marmara incident of 2010, which was a pivotal moment in the relationship between Tel Aviv and Ankara. Key highlights from the meeting, which were shared with the press, included an agreement to arrange mutual visits; the possibility of Erdogan visiting Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in the near future; cooperation on various fields such as energy, technology, innovation, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity; discussions regarding Israeli-Palestinian relations; and efforts to normalize Israel's relations with Saudi Arabia. The meeting took place a day after Erdogan expressed support for the US administration's initiative to broker an Israeli-Saudi deal, as he believed it could help reduce tensions in the region. It also occurred in the context of warming relations between the two countries, following Israeli President Isaac Herzog's visit to Ankara in March, which marked the first high-level Israeli visit since 2008, and Foreign Minister Eli Cohen's meeting with the Turkish leader in February. Indications of improved ties were also apparent in Erdogan's speech at the UNGA. In contrast to previous years, he refrained from criticizing Israel. Erdogan has a long history of animosity with Netanyahu, with the two leaders having publicly exchanged harsh words for many years. Few leaders have experienced such prolonged tension with Erdogan as Netanyahu. Therefore, the meeting held greater significance than merely two ambitious leaders coming together; it reflected the repercussions of multiple factors operating on three levels: domestic, regional and the involvement of the US. Beginning with the role of the US, the improvement in Turkish-Israeli relations has consistently been intertwined with Ankara's relations with America and the Jewish lobby there. This lobby has significant sway in either bolstering or undermin-

ing Türkiye's relations with Washington. Historically, its support has proven beneficial for Ankara in various cases, such as the Armenian issue, Greek claims and arms sales.

The meeting held greater significance than merely two ambitious leaders coming together. However, following the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations, the Jewish lobby changed its stance, leaving Türkiye vulnerable. The US went on to back several decisions that were contentious from a Turkish perspective. Over the years, Ankara has come to recognize that, without the backing of the Jewish lobby, it is challenging for it to make further strides in its relations with the US.

The second factor at play is the shifting regional dynamics that have prompted the two countries to reassess their relations. Historically, regional developments have been a significant driver in shaping Turkish and Israeli calculations toward each other. In the past, when Türkiye faced threats from its neighbors, namely Iraq, Iran and Syria, it tended to draw closer to Israel. Similarly, for Israel, the Iranian threat has consistently been a motivating factor in forging closer ties with Türkiye and other regional powers. The significance of the Iranian factor should not be underestimated in Tel Aviv's signing of the historic Abraham Accords with Bahrain and the UAE. Moreover, the Nagorno-Karabakh war of 2020, which culminated in Azerbaijan's victory over Armenia thanks to Turkish and Israeli support, played a role in thawing relations between Tel Aviv and Ankara. One of the consequences of the war was the diminishing influence of Iran in the region. Israel's support for Azerbaijan was primarily driven by Tehran's support for Armenia. In seeking to establish a closer relationship with Baku, Israel, which also hosts a sizable Azerbaijani diaspora, provided support against Yerevan. This common cause brought Tel Aviv and Ankara together once again.

The third factor to consider is the situation in Syria, where both countries face similar threats. Moreover, Israel is uneasy about Türkiye's close contacts with

Iran and Russia on the Syrian file. Tel Aviv does not want Türkiye to align itself with the Russian-Iranian axis. From the Turkish perspective, there have been concerns about the close energy ties between Israel, Greece and Cyprus, particularly in regard to the EastMed pipeline, which aims to export Israeli and Egyptian liquefied gas to Europe. For Türkiye, improving its ties with Israel is part of a broader overhaul of its foreign policy. For Türkiye, improving its ties with Israel is part of a broader overhaul of its foreign policy – a policy that had left Ankara isolated in the region. Türkiye is also expected to strengthen its ties with the Gulf countries, so the restoration of ties with Israel aligns with this policy as well as with the US-mediated Abraham Accords. Türkiye is now not as vocally against the Abraham Accords as it was when they were signed in 2020. At the domestic level, it is worth noting the observation of prominent scholar Louis Fishman, who has written: "If you look at the two countries' domestic politics, they perhaps are much more alike than different, like two peas in a pod." Netanyahu has faced legal challenges for several years, including allegations of corruption, fraud and breach of trust, which have triggered a political crisis in the country. He needs to demonstrate to the public that he is reconciling with former regional rivals for the sake of the economy. In Türkiye, the situation mirrors this, as Ankara is striving to break its regional isolation to attract financial investments.

Both countries now seek to increase bilateral trade, even though it is important to note that Türkiye remained a key trading partner of Israel even during the height of the tension between the two countries. In recent months, they have also discussed the idea of an Israel-Türkiye natural gas pipeline, though the likelihood of such a project materializing appears extremely low for a variety of reasons. Thus, economic and energy-related interests, closely linked to domestic gains, shifting regional dynamics and the US factor, play a predominant role in the new phase of Turkish-Israeli relations initiated by Erdogan and Netanyahu.

—Sourced by Arab news

## Saudi National Day: These are exciting times for SA youth

Maha Akeel

Today, as we celebrate Saudi National Day, we are extremely proud and appreciative of, as well as inspired by, the success and the visionary leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who has spearheaded these efforts. As in every society, the top concern for youth is unemployment. In the latest Arab Youth Survey, young Saudi men and women expressed their strong support for the ongoing economic and social reforms in Saudi Arabia. Some 90 percent of the Saudi youth surveyed voiced support for the policies encouraging graduates and school-leavers to pursue careers in the private sector

What do the youth of today want? In an ever-changing, dynamic world, knowing what the youth of today wants both now and in the future – and providing and facilitating the means for them to achieve all they aspire to and wish for – is a measure of success for any country's policies. And Saudi Arabia has had a successful track record ever since it adopted Vision 2030, which identified youth as a top priority.

Today, as we celebrate Saudi National Day, we are extremely proud and appreciative of, as well as inspired by, the success and the visionary leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who has spearheaded these efforts. As in every society, the top concern for youth is unemployment. In the latest Arab Youth Survey, young Saudi men and women expressed their strong support for the ongoing economic and social reforms in Saudi Arabia. Some 90 percent of the Saudi youth surveyed voiced support for the policies encouraging graduates and school-leavers to pursue careers in the private sector, while 91 percent supported a larger role for the private sector in the overall economy and 96 percent approved of the various tourism and leisure giga-projects taking shape in the Kingdom. This offers a resounding approval of these policies, which aim to stimulate economic diversification and job creation. After decades of high unemployment, the Kingdom's unemployment rate is today remarkably low. With an increase in labor force participation, especially by women, total unemployment dropped to 4.8 percent at the end of 2022. Youth unemployment was halved in the space of two years to 16.8 percent, while women's participation in the labor force reached 36 percent in 2022, exceeding the 30 percent target set by Vision 2030. According to the latest report by the General Authority for Statistics, key labor market indicators for Saudis have improved compared to a year ago, with rises in both the participation rate and the employment-to-population ratio.

Saudi Arabia has firmly established itself as an economic powerhouse on the world stage, not only with a gross domestic product exceeding \$1 trillion and a position as a dominant oil and gas producer, but also as a go-to hub for tourism, music, the arts and sports, and as a center for renewable energy, sustainable urban development and artificial intelligence. According to a recent report by the International Monetary Fund Executive Board, Saudi Arabia was the fastest-growing G20 economy in 2022.

There is a mood of optimism and high hopes for a better future, in which the youth can reach for the skies Through successful planning, management and marketing, and with the powerful engine of its youth, Saudi Arabia is creating a new frontier in living spaces, tourist destinations and development. The Kingdom's economy is no longer driven only by strong oil production, but also by non-oil GDP growth due to robust private consumption and non-oil investment, including giga-projects, with wholesale, retail trade, construction and transport being the main drivers of non-oil growth. This generates a mood of optimism and high hopes for a better future, in which the youth can reach for the skies. It is thus not surprising that the Arab Youth Survey highlighted Saudi Arabia as a model for other countries to emulate. This was not only because of the country's economic prosperity and job opportunities, but also the quality of life for families, the reformed education system and the diverse culture that organically combines modernity with tradition. Besides unemployment, the youth in the survey identified corruption, rising living costs, economic instability and climate change as being among their top concerns. Importantly, the youth were highly confident in their government's ability to address these concerns and that it is going in the right direction. This is a clear vote of confidence in the Saudi leadership and its Vision 2030 agenda. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has succeeded in benefiting from its youth dividend by focusing on creating the right enabling environment for

young individuals to thrive and grow. A key aspect of this is supporting and investing in start-ups, incubator initiatives and venture capital funds. Showing the country's entrepreneurial spirit, the number of small businesses in Saudi Arabia, many of them female- or youth-led, has more than doubled to over 1 million since the launch of Vision 2030 seven years ago. There is also more desire to work in the private sector rather than in government, which is a big shift in the mindset from previous decades. This is confirmed by the latest General Authority for Statistics report, which revealed that 94.5 percent of unemployed Saudis indicated they would accept employment in the private sector. The latest "Future of Jobs" report by the World Economic Forum reported that the fastest-growing job roles in Saudi Arabia will be driven by technology and digitalization. Looking at how our young talents are enthusiastically participating in hackathon events, fintech startups and innovative tech solutions, as well as winning international science and technology competitions, shows how tech-savvy and creative they are. With the expected sharp rise in demand for AI and machine learning specialists, as most businesses are undergoing a digital transformation, our young men and women are ready to take on the digital world. Teaching at a university, I am surrounded by vibrant, optimistic, creative youths who think of change, impact and sustainable development. They are much more engaged, aware, curious and connected to the world through communications and technology than previous generations. They have aspirations, goals and concerns and are not hesitant about expressing them, but more importantly they are not afraid to venture, challenge themselves and make a difference. Initiatives such as the Mohammed bin Salman Foundation and the National Transformation Program are focused on engaging the youth, developing their skills and harnessing their talents, which gives them confidence and motivation.

—Sourced by Arab news

## Briefs

## Kakar for countering terrorism

FROM PAGE 01  
The premier lamented that the epic flood last year had submerged one-third of the country, killed 1,700 people, displaced over eight million people, destroyed vital infrastructure, destroyed vital infrastructure and caused over \$30 billion damage to the economy. "We are gratified by the commitment of over \$10.5bn for the Pakistan's comprehensive plan for recovery, rehabilitation, reconstruction with resilience. "Specific projects are being submitted to ensure timely funding and execution of the 4RF funding and I hope our development partners will accord priority to the allocation of funds for our recovery plan which costs \$13bn," he said. PM Kakar further assured that the Pakistani government was committed to rapid economic recovery, stability of forex reserves and currency, expansion of domestic revenues and mobilisation of significant domestic and external investment. "Disgusting reality behind Hindutva politics can ensnare the world in fires of war"

## Nawaz Sharif insists...

FROM PAGE 01  
The country. Sharif's comments have ignited discussions regarding the legal implications and potential repercussions of these claims. However, the PML-N leadership has remained tight-lipped about the reasons behind Shehbaz Sharif's abrupt departure to London shortly after his return to Pakistan. This sudden move has fueled rumours of a possible change in Nawaz Sharif's travel plans, leaving many within and outside the party questioning the true purpose of this unscheduled meeting. Party leaders in Lahore have attempted to quell speculation by stating that there have been no alterations to Nawaz Sharif's planned return to Pakistan on October 21. They maintain that preparations to welcome their leader are ongoing as scheduled. Nevertheless, some party insiders have raised concerns and speculations about the motive behind Shehbaz Sharif's swift return to London. One Member of the National Assembly (MNA) from Punjab suggested that Shehbaz might have departed to convey a message from influential entities within Pakistan's power structure, although there has been no official confirmation of such communication.

## PPP suspends Khosa's...

FROM PAGE 01  
member of Central Executive Committee of Pakistan [Peoples Party] are defending/pleading/representing a head of another political party without prior approval of leadership in corruption cases in which he has been convicted and in a case against him under official secret Act, while delivering a speech in lawyers function you criticized the state policy regarding cipher," said the notice. The notice also mentioned that the PPP leader criticised the state policy on the cipher issue during the event, adding that Khosa's party membership would be terminated in case of no reply within the said time period. The letter did not mention PTI Chairman Imran Khan's name but said that Khosa—who is also a part of the former premier's legal team—defended the head of another party. The notice also directed him to respond to the notice within seven days. However, Khosa did not reply to the show-cause notice, eventually leading to his suspension. Senior lawyer Khosa along with senior PPP leader Aitzaz Ahsan has been at loggerheads with their party leaders for defending the PTI chief's stance on several political matters publicly. The PTI chief is in judicial custody till September 26 in the case of missing cipher—a classified state document that the former prime minister had waved during his political gathering ahead of his ouster from office last year.

## Girls' Cup Karachi: Empowering girls through cricket

As pioneer in cricket coaching, we always support grassroots cricket development. We hope this initiative with the Australian High Commission for the Girls Cricket Cup will go a long way in developing women's cricket in Pakistan," Jalal Uddin said

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Australian High Commission supported a girls' cricket clinic and tournament in Karachi in collaboration with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Jalaluddin Cricket Academy (JCA), and Karachi City Cricket Association (KCCA). Australia aims to promote gender equality and empower girls through enabling them to participate in one of Pakistan's favourite sports—cricket. "The Australian High Commission has been sponsoring girls' cricket in Pakistan since 2016," High Commissioner Neil Hawkins said. "We began with a single annual tournament in Islamabad but then expanded to Lahore and in Karachi." "Our countries share a passion for cricket, and a key interest of Australia in Pakistan is to support gender equality so we're very pleased to support this event," Mr Hawkins said. "Cricket and other sports can help tear down barriers and stereotypes. Every time these girls hit a boundary or make a catch, they are taking a step towards greater equality." The girls attended a four-day coaching clinic in the



lead-up to the competition. We are very pleased to have the participation of first-class cricket coaches as well as the players of the visiting Australian Over 40s Cricket team, who helped to build confidence, foster team spirit,

and encourage the girls," the High Commissioner said. He thanked the schools—Nasra Public School, Alpha Girls School, Ismail Academy and The Future Academy—for joining the event and paid tribute to the con-

tribution made by JCA, PCB and KCCA. Leading coach Jalal Uddin, a former national player and now JCA Chairman, congratulated the Australian High Commission on the initiative. "As pioneer in cricket coaching, we always

support grassroots cricket development. We hope this initiative with the Australian High Commission for the Girls Cricket Cup will go a long way in developing women's cricket in Pakistan," Jalal Uddin said.

## Pakistan announce 18-member ICC World Cup 2023 squad

SPORT DESK

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced the squad for the upcoming World Cup 2023 on Friday. Chief Selector Inzamam-ul-Haq announced the 18-member squad at a press conference. He said Babar Azam would lead the team and Shadab Khan would be vice captain. The ICC ODI World Cup 2023 is scheduled to be held in India from Oct 5 and Pakistan will play its first match against the Netherlands on Oct 6. Also Read: Misbah backs Babar Azam as captain for World Cup **The Squad:** Babar Azam (captain), Shadab Khan (vice captain), Abdullah Shafiq, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imam-ul-Haq, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Muhammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Muhammad Wasim Jr., Hasan Ali, Saud Shakeel, Salman Agha and Osama Mir. **Reserve:** Mohammad Haris, Abrar Ahmed and Zaman Khan. **Naseem Shah**, who is not part of the World Cup 2023 squad expressed his dis-



may through his Tweet. Taking to X (formerly known as Twitter), Shah mentioned that "With a heavy heart, I'm sharing that I will not be part of this amazing team that will be representing our beloved country. While I'm disappointed, I believe everything is in Allah's hands. InshAllah will be on the field very soon." Meanwhile the Pakistan Cricket Board has released the video of national

cricket team. Adam Gilchrist names Pakistan among four favourite teams. Legendary cricketer Adam Gilchrist has named Pakistan among his four favourite teams in the upcoming ICC Men's World Cup 2023, which is set to begin from October 5 in India. The Australian cricket commentator revealed his favourite team in an interview with an Indian media outlet.

He predicted that India, Pakistan, Australia, and England would qualify for the semi-final round of the world cup. "I think India and Pakistan could feature in the semi-finals, Australia and England are another two teams," Gilchrist replied to a question highlighting the India's recent performance in the Asia Cup 2023, he said the Team Blue was in great form.

## US to host 2024 World Junior Squash C'ships

ISLAMABAD: The World Squash Federation (WSF) board has awarded US Squash the rights to host the 2024 WSF World Junior Squash Championships, set to be held in Houston, Texas from July 12 to 23. The 2024 edition, to feature both men's and women's junior individual tournaments, would take place at the Houston Squash Club, which is also home to two PSA World Tour Gold events the Houston Open, said a press release. Next year's championships would also see the men's and women's junior team championships being held simultaneously for the first time in event history. The 2023 event, which was staged in Melbourne, Australia, saw Egyptian 16-year-old Amina Orfi claim her second consecutive women's individual title and Pakistan's Hamza Khan become his country's first champion since Jansher Khan in 1986. In the women's team event, Egypt also claimed their tenth WSF Women's World Junior Team Championship title and eighth in succession. This would be the first time US Squash has hosted the event since the 2011 women's individual and team championships in Boston, when the women's team—led by 2010 individual junior world champion Amanda Sobhy—finished runner up to Egypt. "Houston is one of the fastest growing squash communities in the U.S. and we are looking forward to hosting the world's best junior players in Texas" said Kevin Klipstein, US Squash President & CEO. —DNA

## Naseem Shah to undergo surgery

LAHORE: Star pacer Naseem Shah has been advised surgery and will recover in three to four months, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said Friday. Naseem suffered a shoulder injury during Asia Cup 2023 in a match against India on 11 September and was ruled out of the tournament. "Following thorough medical examinations and consultations with leading medical experts, Naseem has been advised to undergo surgery," the board said in a statement released today announcing the squad for the ICC World Cup 2023. He has been replaced with Hasan Ali in the 15-member squad. "Naseem Shah is a key bowler for us, but he's injured," PCB chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq told reporters in Lahore today. "Unfortunately, the report we have from our doctors, we hear Naseem will be out for a longer time than just the World Cup. At this time, he was the world's best bowler in my view. It's a loss for Pakistan. We hope he's fit soon." Pakistan's pace attack will be led by Shaheen Shah Afridi and he will be supported by Haris Rauf, Mohammed Waseem, and Ali in a largely unchanged side led by Babar Azam. Squad Babar Azam (captain), Shadab Khan, Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim Jr, Salman Ali Agha, Saud Shakeel, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Usama Mir.—DNA

## Afghan Wushu fighters pursue Asian Games glory

KABUL: Wushu fighter Khalid Hotak sweats in his chest padding as he spars with a teammate in a Kabul gym, defying financial worries to prepare for the Asian Games as best he can. Afghanistan will compete in 15 sports in Hangzhou, the country's first Asian Games since the Taliban seized power in 2021. The Games, the biggest in history and boasting

more competitors than the Olympics, open on Saturday after a delay of a year because of China's zero-Covid policy, since abandoned. Hotak and his three teammates begin their training for the Chinese combat sport, similar to kung fu, early each day at the federation's training centre, stretching and honing their techniques to bring their opponents down. "I would often

watch Chinese films... I would watch Jet Li and I liked the strength of his body and when I learned about him I realised he was a wushu fighter," Hotak told AFP of the Chinese-born movie star. "That's why I went to a club and registered myself. I would stand in the back row, but then I found the potential in my body." Hotak, 30, won bronze at the last Asian Games in 2018—a

first for Afghanistan in wushu. He goes for a medal again on Sunday, the opening day of the wushu competition in Hangzhou. "Medals from the Asian Games are important to all of Asia, but to us they are even more important," said the father-of-one, referring to the obstacles Afghan competitors must overcome. Scrapping by Afghanistan's economy has struggled through decades of war, a crisis deepened by international sanctions on the banking system and foreign assets after the Taliban government came to power.—APP

## Garcia, Kenin reach WTA Guadalajara semis

Frenchwoman downs Azarenka 6-3, 6-4; American beats Fernandez 6-4, 6-7, 6-1

OUR CORRESPONDENT

GUADALAJARA: France's Caroline Garcia overpowered Victoria Azarenka in straight sets to reach the semi-finals of the WTA 1000 Guadalajara Open. Third seed Garcia was always in control against her 10th-seeded opponent from Belarus, winning 6-3, 6-4 in 1hr 37min. The 29-year-old Frenchwoman will face Maria Sakkari in the last four after the second seed from Greece eased past Colombia's Emiliana Arango 6-3, 6-4. Garcia, who is chasing the 12th title of her career, used her powerful serve to gain the upper hand on Azarenka, slamming down 10 aces during the match. Garcia was also able to save no fewer than 11 break points to deny Azarenka any chance of an opening. "It's always tricky," said Garcia. "She had a lot of break point opportunities, but I served really well at those points, so I guess I have to thank my serve." The win ensured that Garcia, the world number 11, will move into the top 10 at the end of this tournament. In other quarter-final action on Thursday, former Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin's recent resurgence contin-



ued as she overpowered 2021 US Open finalist Leylah Fernandez of Canada 6-4, 6-7 (6/8), 6-1 to reach the last four. Kenin, 24, has gradually worked her way back up the rankings after tumbling to 426th in the world last year following a slew of injuries and upheaval in her coaching set-up. She has won 14 of her last 17 matches on the WTA Tour since July, and is poised to climb back into the top 30 after this tournament. On Thursday, she secured her latest semi-final berth the hard way, advancing despite coughing up 14 double faults, with Fernandez racking up 15 aces. "Leylah played great," Kenin said in her on-court interview. "She started off really well in the second, and I almost came back, almost won it. I was kind of frustrated that I lost it, but she's a fighter, so I knew I needed to cool off and fight in the third." Kenin, who also reached the semi-finals in San Diego last week, will face unseeded American Caroline Dolehide in the last four. Dolehide defeated Italy's Martina Trevisan 3-6, 7-6 (11/9) 6-3 in their quarter-final. The American battled into her first WTA 1000 semi-final after saving four match points in the second set before winning the deciding set.

## No change in Nawaz's return

FROM PAGE 01  
Pakistan on October 21. Shehbaz Sharif rushed back to London merely hours after he returned to the country from the UK, a development that gave way to rumours regarding a possible change in travel plans of Nawaz Sharif. Shehbaz Sharif—while talking to journalists—said that he returned to London on directions of Nawaz Sharif. "No change was made in return plan of PML-N supremo," he added. In response to a question, Shehbaz said he never visited Gujranwala and did not hold a meeting. Earlier on Thursday, Ms Nawaz headed to London along with her younger daughter. Few days back Ms Nawaz said that the efforts to debar former prime minister Nawaz Sharif from politics harmed the country. Addressing the party workers in Islamabad, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Chief Organiser praised PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif.

## PPP appraises ECP of its...

FROM PAGE 01  
with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Sindh Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) member Nisar Ahmad Durrani held a meeting with Mr Wassan On this occasion, Mr Wassan presented the proposals of the PPP to Mr Durrani in line with the elections and delimitation. Speaking to media following his meetup with Mr Durrani, Mr Wassan took a swipe at the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), saying, "The MQM-P remained an alliance for all the ruling political parties. Mr Wassan predicted that the general elections could be held in the last week of January next week. He asserted that none of the political parties will win a majority in the general elections. Mr Wassan said, "However, the PTI is becoming weaker under difficult circumstances." PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said on Monday that only his party represents the masses in its real context.

## Shujaat 'advises' PML-N...

FROM PAGE 01  
was a part of the previous coalition government in Islamabad, expressed concerns regarding the ongoing political tensions between the two major political parties. Responding to the elderly politico, Zardari said his party has not done anything like that. He added that his party is talking in accordance with the Constitution and ground realities, and not to engage in confrontation with anyone. He emphasised that the rhetoric and confrontational stance between both political entities was not conducive to the country's stability. Shujaat urged Zardari regarding the importance of maintaining a more cooperative approach. He also conveyed his intention to speak with PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif about the need to avoid unnecessary political hostilities. It is worth recalling that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari recently alleged that the 2013 election in Punjab was manipulated by certain elements, including former Inter-Services Intelligence chief General Ahmad Shuja Pasha, former chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, and a political party.

## Cut in POL prices likely

FROM PAGE 01  
highs in Pakistan. According to sources, the government is likely to decrease the price of petrol and high-speed diesel following the rupee's gains against the greenback. The US dollar has depreciated by 5% so far from a high of Rs 307.10 in the interbank.

## Briefs

## EU to start paying Tunisia under migration pact

BRUSSELS: The EU is to start releasing money to Tunisia under a pact aimed at stemming irregular migration from the country, the European Commission said Friday. A first payment of \$135 million will be disbursed "in the coming days," a commission spokeswoman, Ana Pisoneiro, said. EU lawmakers, the bloc's ombudsman and migrant assistance charities have questioned whether the deal with Tunisia meets European rights standards. Under the agreement, a memorandum of understanding signed by commission chief Ursula von der Leyen in July, Tunisia will get 105 million euros to curb irregular migration, 150 million euros in budgetary support and 900 million euros in long-term aid. Tunisia is one of the main launching points for boats carrying migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean for Europe, with most heading for Italy, in particular its island of Lampedusa. The EU deal, strongly supported by Italy's far-right government, aims to bolster Tunis's coast guard to prevent boats leaving its shore. Some of the money also goes to UN agencies assisting migrants. Pisoneiro said that, of the 127 million euros to be "swiftly" disbursed, 42 million euros came under the migration aspect of the July deal.—DNA

## Ukraine missile strike hits Russian fleet, 1 fatality

KYIV: Ukraine carried out a fiery missile strike Friday on the main headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet, killing one serviceman, the Russian Defense Ministry said. Photos and video showed large plumes of smoke over the building in Sevastopol in annexed Crimea. The Russian-installed governor of Sevastopol, Mikhail Razvozhayev, said no one was injured outside the burning headquarters, and he didn't provide information on other casualties. Firefighters battled the blaze, and more emergency forces were being brought in, an indication the fire could be massive. Sevastopol residents said they heard explosions in the skies and saw smoke, Russian news outlets reported. Images circulated in Ukrainian Telegram channels showed clouds of smoke over the seafloor. The Associated Press could not immediately verify the videos. A stream of ambulances arrived at the fleet's headquarters, and shrapnel was scattered hundreds of meters (yards) around, the Tass news agency reported. The Defense Ministry said five missiles were shot down by Russian air defense systems responding to the attack on Sevastopol. It was not immediately clear if the headquarters was hit in a direct strike or by debris from an intercepted missile. Oleg Kryuchkov, an official with the Crimean administration, said one cruise missile downed near Bakhchysarai, about 30 kilometers (18.5 miles) inland, sparked a grass fire.—Agencies

## Sudan's army chief asks UN to designate RSF

KHARTOUM: Sudan's army chief asked the United Nations to designate the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) as a terrorist group. Addressing the 78th session of the UN General Assembly in New York, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, who is also the chairman of Sudan's Sovereignty Council, claimed that the RSF has brought thousands of mercenaries to fight with them during the five-month-long war. "I urge (the international community) to consider this group, the RSF, a terrorist group. We also documented that this group has brought thousands of mercenaries to fight with them, and this will lead to serious consequences in the region," said Burhan.—APP



NEW YORK: A delegation of U.S. Pakistan Business Council calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly.—DNA

## Belarus, Pak economic ties focused at Gomel economic forum

As these two nations continue to explore new avenues for partnership, the future holds great promise for their mutual prosperity

## DNA

MINSK: Ambassador of Pakistan to Belarus, Sajjad Haider Khan, participated in the Gomel Economic Forum held on 21 September. The Ambassador lauded the Gomel Economic Forum as a remarkable platform for fostering international collaboration and exploring opportunities to strengthen economic ties. He emphasized the historical growth

of diplomatic and economic relations between Pakistan and Belarus, rooted in cooperation for trade, investment, and technological advancements. "The Gomel Economic Forum provides a unique opportunity to further strengthen these ties," Ambassador Khan affirmed. While acknowledging the impressive pace of economic development between Pakistan and Belarus, Ambassador Khan also highlighted the untapped

potential for growth. He emphasized Pakistan's strategic location and dynamic market as a gateway for Belarusian businesses to access South Asian markets and beyond. Pakistan has instituted a comprehensive investment friendly mechanism to facilitate the investors. Similarly, he pointed out that Belarus, known for its innovations and technological achievements, offers significant opportunities for

Pakistani investors and businesses. The Ambassador emphasized the pivotal role of agriculture in Pakistan's economy and identified agriculture as a key area for cooperation. Belarusian tractors, renowned for their quality, are highly popular in Pakistan. Furthermore, Gomselmash, a prominent Belarusian agricultural machinery manufacturer, stands as a potential partner for collaboration.

He invited the Belarusian business to reach out to Pakistan's textile industry, which accounts for approximately 60% of the country's total exports. He also highlighted the potential for cooperation and investment in this sector. Looking ahead, Belarus and Pakistan will celebrate the 30th anniversary of their diplomatic relations next year. To mark this significant milestone, a series of events,

including educational and cultural initiatives, are in the pipeline, further strengthening the bonds between the two nations. The Gomel Economic Forum stands as a testament to the commitment of Pakistan and Belarus to fostering economic growth, innovation, and collaboration. As these two nations continue to explore new avenues for partnership, the future holds great promise for their mutual prosperity.

## Azerbaijan offers 'just, fair, lasting peace' to Armenia

"We also understand that, in a positive step, representatives of the local population and the government of Azerbaijan met earlier today for an initial exchange "The Secretariat will remain in close contact with all relevant actors and the concerned parties and stands ready to support ongoing peace efforts, as needed," he added

## NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Azerbaijan has extended an offer of a "just, fair and lasting peace" to Armenia, the country's top diplomat told a meeting of the UN Security Council. "Azerbaijan once again reaffirms its readiness for genuine dialogue and negotiations on the basis of equal and reciprocal respect for each other's legitimate interests," Jeyhun Bayramov told the Security Council session on Karabakh. "We once again extend our offer of a just, fair and lasting peace to Armenia, notwithstanding the unhealed wounds of its armed aggressions against my country," he said. "Ethnic Armenian residents are welcome to be part of our peaceful coexistence model," Bayramov added. He noted that Azerbaijan's anti-terror activities in Karabakh are in "full compliance" with international law and international humanitarian law. "The counterterror measures

have already been seized and dialogue on the reintegration of ethnic Armenian residents of the Gulf region of Azerbaijan started in practical terms on the ground," Bayramov said. Recalling a meeting between Azerbaijan authorities and representatives of the Armenian population of Karabakh in the city of Yevlakh on Thursday, he said the parties "outlined the plans of the government for integration and the issues related to restoration and operation of infrastructure." "Such a dialogue was not possible before due to the obstruction of the Armenian side, relying on a heavy illegal military presence on the sovereign soil of Azerbaijan," he added. Türkiye expects Armenia to fulfill its promises Türkiye's Deputy Foreign Minister Burak Akcapar said Azerbaijan was left with no choice but to take measures necessary for its own security and stability when launching the counterterrorism operation on Sept. 19. Akcapar added that Türkiye welcomes the meeting

between the representatives of Azerbaijan and the Armenian population of Karabakh on Thursday. "We hope such contacts will continue and be productive to solve the decades-long issues," he told the UN Security Council. "We expect Armenia to fulfill its promises, especially the opening of the Zangezur corridor, he said. "We once again urge the Armenian side and other interested parties not to waste this latest opportunity," he added. The senior Turkish diplomat noted that Türkiye has "fully supported" and continues to support the peace process between Azerbaijan and Armenia from the very beginning and has initiated a normalization process with Armenia. "However, in the last three years, we have witnessed that the Armenian side has been reluctant to fully implement the trilateral declaration which ceased hostilities at the end of the second Karabakh war," he said, accusing "illegal military formations" in Karabakh

of continuing their armed attacks. UN supports ongoing peace efforts Miroslav Jenca, Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and Americas in the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "remains deeply concerned about the impact of the escalation on the fragile humanitarian situation and calls on the parties to urgently facilitate unimpeded access." Noting Wednesday's announcement of a cessation of hostilities and cautioning that the situation on the ground remains fluid, Jenca said: "We also understand that, in a positive step, representatives of the local population and the government of Azerbaijan met earlier today for an initial exchange." "The Secretariat will remain in close contact with all relevant actors and the concerned parties and stands ready to support ongoing peace efforts, as needed," he added.

## President Charles says UN system 'sclerotic, hobbled'

## WEB DESK

LONDON: European Council President Charles Michel said that the United Nations system is "sclerotic and hobbled by hostile forces" and highlighted the pressing need for a revamp of the global body's decision-making process. Michel's remarks came during his speech at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly in New York. "We must assume our responsibility, and that means being engaged in order to put multilateral cooperation back on solid ground. And to that end, what we need is to first restore trust, solve the most urgent problems, and repair the United Nations system," he said. "The global effort to combat poverty is weakening. And this war of Russia against Ukraine is exacerbating food insecurity and creating an energy crisis. And finally, we are losing our sense of urgency that the (coronavirus) pandemic had taught us. Progress is too slow," he added. He also expressed his support for initiatives aimed at restricting veto powers within the UN Security Council during emergency situations and broadening its global representation. "For the last 19 months, a permanent member of the Security Council - Russia - without any shame has been undertaking a war to conquer its neighboring country, which never threatened it in the past," he said. "It can even abuse its veto rights to prevent sanctions against itself and even use the Security Council to disseminate propaganda, disinformation and lies - let's be honest," he noted. Michel said the current structure of the UN Security Council does not adequately represent today's global landscape and undermines the organization's legitimacy. One key proposal gaining traction is the establishment of a mechanism that combines majority decision-making with a more controlled and flexible use of the veto right. "Currently, 60 countries have never had a seat on the Security Council. Entire swaths of the world - Africa, South America, the Caribbean, Asia - are under- or non-represented. We support a comprehensive reform of the Security Council to amplify the voice of these regions and countries," he added. The European Union holds the status of a permanent observer at the UN.

## Ukraine to launch joint weapons production with US

Ukraine and the United States have agreed to launch joint weapons production in a step that will enable Kyiv to start producing air defense systems

## FOREIGN DESK

KYIV: Ukraine and the United States have agreed to launch joint weapons production in a step that will enable Kyiv to start producing air defense systems, President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Friday as he wrapped up a visit to the US. In his daily address to Ukrainians, Zelensky said the long-term agreement would create jobs and a new industrial base in Ukraine, whose economy has been devastated by Russia's invasion and war. "It was a very important visit to Washington, very important results," Zelensky said in a video posted on the presidential website on Friday morning. "And a long-term agreement - we will work together so that Ukraine produces the necessary weapons together with the United States. Co-production in the defense (sector) with the United States is a historic thing." Kyiv has stepped up efforts to boost domestic weapons production as much as possible because 19 months of war has created a huge demand for arms and ammunition



to fend off Russian attacks along a 1,000 km (620 mile) front line. Russian air strikes across Ukraine have caused widespread damage and

killed many people. Zelensky said the Ministry for Strategic Industries, which oversees weapons production in Ukraine, had signed coopera-

tion agreements with three associations, uniting over 2,000 defense US companies, on future possible work in Ukraine. "We are preparing to create a new defense ecosystem with the United States to produce weapons to strengthen further freedom and protect life together," Zelensky said without disclosing more details. Ukraine depends heavily on Western military support. To reduce its dependence, Zelensky and his team have been pushing for reforms in the domestic defense industry to modernize local producers and increase supplies to the front. Zelensky has said previously that Kyiv will soon host an international arms production forum, inviting companies from over 20 countries. The government is also implementing reforms at its main weapons production company - Ukroboronprom - to improve transparency, boost production capacity and enable it to cooperate more actively with Western producers. Ukraine has already agreed several joint projects with central European producers to repair Ukrainian tanks and other vehicles, and has been working to develop drone and missile production.

## Migrants' arrivals pause in Lampedusa

LAMPEDUSA: Bad weather provided a brief pause in the constant arrival of thousands of migrants to the Italian southern island of Lampedusa, where the overcrowded reception center reached a minimum attendance on Friday. However, the Italian government still lacks a long-term plan to handle the migration emergency that reached a new peak last week, pushing Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni to invite EU Commission head Ursula von der Leyen to visit the struggling island and call for EU action. Red Cross officials said another 400 migrants left Lampedusa's reception center on Friday, bringing the total number of people hosted there down to 300. Last week, the center was overwhelmed following a few days of record arrivals, with about 7,000 migrants crowding the tiny structure - about the same number of the island's residents. For years, the Sicilian island of Lampedusa has been the first port of call for people crossing a dangerous and often deadly stretch of the Mediterranean Sea from Northern Africa. "The situation is currently less critical and we hope it will continue to be like this in the coming days," said Ignazio Schintu, deputy secretary general of the Italian Red Cross, at a news conference in Lampedusa. The Red Cross plans new migrants' departures on Saturday to further reduce the number of presences at the center, bringing it close to zero.—APP

## Civilians killed by shells fired in Timbuktu

MALI: Two people have died and five others were wounded by shells fired on the northern Malian city of Timbuktu, the army said, a month and a half into an insurgent blockade on the area. "The city of Timbuktu has come under terrorist shellfire this afternoon," the military said in a statement on Thursday, adding a "provisional toll" of two dead and five wounded. Two sources had previously told the AFP news agency three people had died. "Three shells were fired by the insurgents in Timbuktu. There are at least three dead civilians, including children," an elected official from Timbuktu told AFP - a toll confirmed by a hospital source. The Al Qaeda-linked terror groups in August declared "war in the Timbuktu region," warning trucks from neighboring regions not to enter the city. A month and a half later, tens of thousands of inhabitants remain almost completely cut off from the world.—APP

## Foreign arrivals in Türkiye jump 5.65% in August

ANKARA: The number of foreigners visiting Türkiye increased by 5.65% in August when compared to the same month the previous year, according to data released by the Culture and Tourism Ministry Friday. Türkiye welcomed 6.66 million foreign visitors in August, while the foreign arrivals in the first eight months reached a figure of 33.4 million, added the ministry. The famed resort city of Antalya on the Turkish Riviera was the top draw for foreign visitors with 37%, attracting 3.5 million foreign visitors last month. Istanbul - Türkiye's largest city by population and a top tourist spot - ranked second, attracting 1.7 million foreign visitors in August. The Aegean province of Mu la, and the northwestern province of Edirne, which borders both Bulgaria and Greece, followed with 628,654 and 525,270 foreign visitors, respectively. At 871,270, Germans made up 13.1% of all foreign visitors, followed by Russians at 852,640, Britons at 588,448, Iranians at 280,951, and Polish visitors at 279,040. In January-August, foreign arrivals in Türkiye surged by 13.95% year-on-year to 33.4 million. Russia made up the largest chunk of foreign visitors in the first eight months of the year with 4.3 million arrivals, up 44.84% from last year. They were followed by Germans with 4.1 million.—APP

## Briefs

### Trudeau repeats allegation against India

DNA

OTTAWA: Canadian PM Justin Trudeau has reiterated that there are "credible reasons" to believe that Indian agents may have been behind the murder of a Sikh separatist on Canadian soil. He first made the allegation on Monday, which India has strongly rejected, calling them "absurd". Hardeep Singh Nijjar - who India designated a terrorist in 2020 - was shot dead outside a temple in June. Tensions between the two countries have flared after the allegation. The Indian government has often reacted sharply to demands by Sikh separatists in Western countries for Khalistan, or a separate Sikh homeland. Though India designated Nijjar a terrorist, his supporters reject the claim, saying he was a peaceful activist who backed the demand for a separate homeland for Sikhs. Mr Trudeau's accusation has fuelled an ugly diplomatic row between India and Canada, two countries that have historically shared close ties and good trade relations. Both countries have expelled a diplomat each of the other nation and on Thursday, India suspended visa services for Canadians.

### SC announces transfer of officials

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC), with the approval of Chief Justice QaziFaez Isa, announced a significant restructuring of its administrative personnel on Friday. The apex court issued notifications regarding transfers and the end of tenure. AmerSaleem Rana, a District & Sessions Judge (grade 21) serving as additional registrar (grade 21) on deputation in the apex court has been repatriated to his parent department, the Lahore High Court. SC also announced that Munawar Ali, a senior civil judge (grade 19), who had been dutifully discharging his duties as deputy registrar (grade 20) on deputation, is set to return to his parent department, the Sindh High Court, Karachi. In a subsequent notification, Muhammad AkramSoomro, a senior auditor (grade 17) serving as assistant accounts officer (grade 17) on deputation in SC, is slated to return to his parent department, the Accountant General Pakistan Revenues, Islamabad, on September 22, 2023. Lastly, Muhammad Owais, a senior civil judge-cum-magistrate (grade 19), who had assumed the role of deputy registrar (grade 20) on deputation, is set to return to the Lahore High Court, effective September 22, 2023.

### Ban on pillion riding announced in Karachi

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Sindh Home Department has imposed a ban on pillion riding in Karachi and other districts of the province due to 'ChupTazia' processions taking place on September 25 and EidMilad-un-Nabi events on September 29. The order came in response to a letter from the Sindh police chief, who had recommended that to maintain law and order situation and avoid any untoward incidents during the processions, it is necessary to take immediate measures. "The Government of Sindh, in the exercise of the powers conferred under Section 144 (6) CrPC, do hereby impose a ban on pillion riding of motorcycle/scooter in various zones/districts of the province of Sindh," a notification from the department read. The ban, however, will not be applicable to women, children below the age of 12 years, senior citizens, journalists, personnel of law enforcement agencies, security agencies in uniform, and employees of the essential services.

# Dr Alvi calls for enhanced co-op with Saudi Arabia

Expressing satisfaction at the existing level of cooperation, the President said that the high-level exchanges of military leadership of two countries would further boost defence cooperation



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have reiterated their desire to further improve bilateral cooperation in the areas of trade, economy and defence. This was discussed at a meeting between the visiting Chief of General Staff of the Saudi Armed Forces General Fayyadh bin Hamed

Al-Ruwaili, who along with the members of his delegation, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Nawaf Bin Saeed Al-Malki also attended the meeting. Welcoming the delegation, the President said Pakistan highly valued its relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) which had always supported Pakistan at difficult times. He stated that both brotherly countries

enjoyed excellent relations in various fields and had commonality of views on various regional and international issues. He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to enhancing bilateral economic and financial ties with the Kingdom for the mutual benefit of two brotherly countries. The President highlighted that Pakistan was looking for investment as the country had huge potential for the investment in the agriculture and IT

sectors. He apprised the delegation that Pakistan had constituted a Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to serve as one window platform to fast-track decision making and facilitate Foreign Direct Investment in four key areas: Information Technology, Agriculture, Energy and Mining in the country, especially from the KSA. Expressing satisfaction at the existing level of cooperation, the President said that the high-level exchanges of military leadership of two countries would further boost defence cooperation. He informed that he was highly impressed by the vision of His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman that led to the normalisation of relations between the Kingdom and Iran and would also bring peace and prosperity to the region. The President appreciated the role played by the KSA in the Organization of the Islamic Countries for important Muslim causes, especially for Palestine, Kashmir and Afghanistan. He deeply thanked the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for providing financial support to Pakistan to deal with its economic challenges. He asked General Fayyadh bin Hamed to convey his warm regards to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili said that Pakistan and KSA enjoyed close ties in various fields since the beginning. He called for further improving bilateral cooperation between two brotherly countries. He said that the Kingdom's vision 2030 would bring prosperity to the neighbouring countries as well as to the Islamic World.

# Xi meets Assad, declares new 'strategic partnership'

NEWS DESK

HANGZHOU: Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks with Syrian counterpart Bashar Assad on Friday, and said the two leaders would unveil a new "strategic partnership." Assad is on his first official trip to China in almost two decades as he seeks financial support to rebuild his devastated country, as well as rehabilitation for his regime from years of isolation over Syria's civil war. He will attend the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou on Saturday. Xi and Assad met in the eastern Chinese city on Friday afternoon, state media said. "Today, we will jointly announce the establishment of the China-Syria strategic partnership, which will become an important milestone in the history of bilateral relations," Xi told Assad, according to a readout from state broadcaster CCTV. "Faced with an international situation full of instability and uncertainty, China is willing to continue to work together with Syria, firmly support each other, promote friendly cooperation, and jointly defend international fairness and justice," he added. Relations between the two countries "have withstood the test of international changes," Xi said. "And the friendship between the two

countries has been strengthened over time," he added. The leaders were each flanked by nine aides at a large rectangular wooden table, a CCTV video clip showed, as two flags from each country were set in front of a Chinese painting in the meeting room. China is one of only a handful of countries outside the Middle East that Assad has visited since the 2011 start of a civil war that has killed more than half a million people, displaced millions more, and battered Syria's infrastructure and industry. China's foreign ministry has said his visit will take ties to a "new level." "China and Syria have a traditional and deep friendship," foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a regular briefing. "We believe that President Bashar Assad's visit will further deepen mutual political trust and cooperation in various fields between the two countries," she added. Assad's visit is his first to China since 2004. Analysts expect Assad's visit to China will focus, in part, on funds for reconstruction. It also comes as China's influence in the Middle East grows. This year Beijing brokered a deal that saw longtime regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Damascus-backed Iran agree to restore ties and reopen their respective embassies. The detente was followed by Syria's return to the Arab fold at a summit in Saudi Arabia in May, ending more than a decade of regional isolation.



# ME peace possible with Palestinians rights: Abbas

LONDON: Those who think peace can prevail in the Middle East without the Palestinian people enjoying their full rights are mistaken, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said on Thursday. Addressing the UN General Assembly, he said Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory "violates the principles of international law and legitimacy while it races against time to change the historical, geographical and demographic reality on the ground, aimed at perpetuating the occupation and entrenching apartheid." Abbas said his country remains hopeful that the UN will be "able to implement its resolution demanding an end to the Israeli occupation of our territory and realizing the independence of the fully sovereign state of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the borders of June 4, 1967." He added that Israel continues to attack his people, and its "army and its racist, terrorist settlers continue to intimidate and kill our people, to destroy homes and property to just steal our money and resources." Abbas said Israel "continues to assault our Islamic and Christian sacred sites ... especially the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, which international legitimacy has recognized as an exclusive place of worship for Muslims alone." He added that Israel is digging tunnels under and around the mosque, threatening its full or partial collapse, "which would lead to an explosion with untold consequences." He urged the international community to assume its responsibilities in preserving the historic and legal status of Jerusalem and its holy sites. - Agencies

# PTI denounces journalist's arrest

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) spokesperson strongly condemned the arrest of senior journalist and Bureau Chief of ABN News Islamabad Khalid Jameel in a midnight raid by the FIA at his house. In a strong reaction to the detention of Bureau Chief ABN News, PTI spokesperson vehemently denounced FIA for violating the sanctity of senior journalist's residence and arresting him in the dark of night. He said that Pakistan is in the grip of the law of jungle as the state institutions are committing serious violations of the law. PTI spokesperson rued that the honor, life, property and freedom of every citizen who dared to demand basic constitutional rights from the state were at stake. - APP

# Chinese power plants using inferior coal: Nepra

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) has exposed Chinese coal-fired power plants for using lower-quality imported coal, despite their pledge to use coal with a calorific value of 6,000 (CVs). Not a single imported consignment meets the required standards and still they claim multi-billion rupees of capacity payments that are being collected from the public. This revelation came to light during a public hearing conducted by Nepra on Thursday to review the existing mechanism, last revised in 2016. The mechanism is based on a fixed benchmark weightage of different coal origins and heat values, originally approved by Nepra in June 2014 as part of the determination of coal upfront tariffs.

Nepra Chairman Waseem Mukhtar headed the proceedings while the authority's members - including Mathar-Niaz Rana (member Balochistan), Maqsood Anwar Khan (KP), Amina Ahmed (Punjab), and Rafique Ahmad Shaikh (Sindh) - were in presence. It is important to mention that the coal-based current derated installed capacity is 6,777MW (foreign-funded on imported coal), with an outstanding capacity payment of a substantial Rs643 billion. While citing documents, a Nepra member said: "Your documents say that you imported lower quality coal against what was promised in the agreements." Notably, the Sahiwal Coal Power Project, now known as Huaneng Shandong Ruyi (Pakistan) Energy (Limited), disclosed that it had imported multi-thousand tons of coal in July 2022 when prices were high, at a rate of Rs70,000 per ton (\$380). In response, a Nepra member remarked: "You claim capacity payment, but you don't use costly coal." The disclosure unveiled that these coal-based power plants had pledged to utilise coal with a calorific value of 6000 (CVs) but had been importing coal with CVs ranging from 4500 to 5500. Consequently, they were employing substandard coal while billing customers for the price of higher-quality coal.

# Stefan Dercon, British HC, Finance Minister discuss bilateral ties

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Professor Economic Policy at Oxford University Stefan Dercon, along with British High Commissioner to Pakistan Ms Jane Marriott called on Finance Minister DrShamshad Akhtar in Islamabad today and discussed bilateral relations. The Finance Minister shared policy actions to enhance Pakistan's economic resilience in the face of global challenges, with a focus on sustainable development and inclusive growth. The British High

Commissioner commended the longstanding relationship between the United Kingdom and Pakistan and pledged to explore avenues for increased economic cooperation and investment between the two countries. The Finance Minister appreciated the collaboration and expressed gratitude for the support provided by the World Bank and the United Kingdom. She expressed the desire to further foster bilateral relations in various fields. The meeting concluded with a sense of optimism and shared commitment to work together to address the economic challenges facing Pakistan and to promote sustainable development and cooperation.



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