



Islamabad POST

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Serbia, Kosovo peace talks break down again, says Borrell

Detailed News On Page-07

Shamshad sees economic recovery

Detailed News On Page-08



Yamal's star rising as Barca host Betis

Detailed News On Page-06



NAB Amendments case

SC verdict reopens cases against former president, ex-PMs

Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, former president Asif Ali Zardari and former premier Yousuf Raza Gillani are likely to face inquiries after the Supreme Court in a 2-1 verdict struck down some of the amendments made to the accountability laws



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The corruption cases against political bigwigs have been restored after the Supreme Court announced a major verdict on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's petition challenging the amendments made to the country's accountability laws. Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, former president Asif Ali Zardari and former premier Yousuf Raza

Gillani are likely to face inquiries after the Supreme Court in a 2-1 verdict struck down some of the amendments made to the accountability laws. In the majority verdict today, the apex court restored graft cases against public office holders that were closed down following the amendments during the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM-led) government. The three-member bench – headed by

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PTI welcomes apex verdict

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) spokesperson has welcomed the Supreme Court's (SC) historic decision invalidating the unconstitutional NAB amendments under which billions of graft cases against big corrupt public office holders have been restored, who dry-cleaned themselves under NRO-2 after being imposed on the nation through regime change conspiracy. In his reaction to the SC three-member bench's historic verdict, PTI spokesperson said that the apex court's decision on the petition of the Chairman PTI Imran Khan has restored the supremacy of the constitution. "The decision of the top court is not the victory of PTI Chairman, but it's the victory of truth and justice,"

he said, adding that PTI is fully support and endorse the landmark judgment of the country's highest court. PTI spokesperson said that billions rupees of theft and robbery of the PDM clique of crooks were waived off through these unconstitutional and controversial amendments in the accountability watchdog and allowed the loot and plunder of the national treasury afresh. He went on to say that the SC's ruling testified the fact that the NAB amendments were in conflict with the Constitution and fundamental human rights. PTI spokesperson said that as soon as the PDM seized the power through conspiracy, they exploited NAB to the fullest and used the institution for their vested political mileage and reduced the accountability

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq kakar addressing a press conference in Islamabad. – DNA

PM Kakar says Elections date beyond mandate of interim set-up

Caretaker PM Anwaarul Haq Kakar aslo warned a consistent crackdown on illegal trade

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Friday said that announcing the election date was beyond the mandate of the interim government. The premier passed similar remarks earlier this week too when he stated that it was for the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to decide a date, adding: "We have no intention to prolong the tenure of the caretaker government." Concerns on the poll timing have arisen from the ECP ruling out elections this year. It reasons its decision to push elections beyond November 9 on the basis of the notification of results of the new digital 2023 census and Section 17(2) of the Elections Act, which states: "The commission shall delimit constituencies after every census is officially published." Speaking at a press conference after a high-level meeting at the

Continued on Page 06

Jail authorities say 'Imran can't be allowed to speak with his sons on phone

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Attock jail authorities on Friday submitted a reply to the contempt of court petition for refusing to permit a telephonic conversation between incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and his sons. The superintendent, in his reply to Judge Abual Hasant Zulqarnain,

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Briefs

Parvez Elahi gets bail

MEHTAB ABBASSI

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday approved Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Parvez Elahi's petition seeking bail in a case relating to an attack on the judicial complex in the federal capital. ATC Judge Abual Hasnat Zulqarnain accepted the Punjab former chief minister's bail against the surety bond of Rs20,000. The PTI president was arrested hours after his release from NAB custody on September 1, despite the fact that the Lahore High Court (LHC) had explicitly restricted the authorities from arresting him earlier that day.

Fawad takes oath

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former bureaucrat Fawad Hassan Fawad was sworn in as a caretaker federal minister on Friday. President Dr Arif Alvi administered him the oath at a ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad. Fawad served in BPS-22 as the Principal Secretary to two prime ministers - Nawaz Sharif and Shahid Khaqan Abbasi. He also remained principal secretary to former Punjab chief minister Shehbaz Sharif. The interim minister had faced NAB charges of owning illegal assets worth billions of rupees.

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

PPP CEC meeting

Only polls could take country out of current crises

PML-N paid price in 2018 election for conspiring against PPP in 2013, said Bilawal

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Friday doubled down on the demand for the immediate announcement of a date and schedule for the general elections, stressing that only polls could take the country out of economic and political crises. Concerns on the poll timing have arisen from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) ruling out elections this year. The electoral watchdog reasons its decision to push elections beyond November 9 on the basis of the notification of results of the new digital 2023 census and Section 17(2) of the Elections Act, which states: "The commission shall delimit constituencies after every census

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Nawaz will return as per schedule

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif will return to Pakistan as the Supreme Court (SC) verdict regarding NAB amendments is not worrisome for the party, said the spokesperson of the party in London. The spokesman of PML-N Chief Nawaz Sharif and PML-N Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz - Muhammad Zubair, during a media interaction in London, stated that

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ECP gears up for general elections in third week of January

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has started preparations for holding elections in the third week of January 2024. The sources in the Election Commission said that there is no hurdle in holding general elections in the first month of next year as the process of the delimitation will be completed on November 30, this year. So, the sources added that there are 54 days after the completion of the work of delimitation to hold general elections. The sources also said that there was no pressure on the Election Commission and it is fully aware of its constitutional responsibilities. Over the constitutional confusion between the President and the ECP for giving the date of elections,

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Torkham border crossing reopens after 10-day closure

Though the affectees from both sides have jubilated reopening of Torkham, people from trade and business circles are still skeptical

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Torkham border between Pakistan and Afghanistan Friday reopened for all kinds of traffic after 10 days of closure due to clashes between border forces. Pedestrian movement has begun following the resumption of traffic at the border with hundreds of travellers flocking to its immigration section for entry into Afghanistan. "The clearance of trucks is in process and Afghan citizens are entering Afghanistan after clearance and passing immigration processes," Irshad Khan Mohamad, assistant commissioner of Khyber district in Pakistan, told media. The Torkham border between Pakistan and Afghanistan was closed on September 6 following a clash between the security forces of

the two countries, which left a Frontier Corps soldier injured. The dispute arose over the "illegal construction" of a bunker by the interim Afghan government on the Pakistani side of the border. The FO, on September 11, said Islamabad cannot accept the construction of any structures by the interim Afghan government inside its territory since these violate its sovereignty. The crossing is the busiest for trade and people between the two nations, which share a porous 2,600-kilometre (1,600-mile) frontier that cuts through rugged mountains and valleys. Traders on both sides complained that tons of perishable goods were lost because of the border closure, while Afghan travellers missed vital hospital appointments or flights out of Pakistan. A day earlier, a customs

official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, told media that the border was likely to reopen today (Friday). "The Torkham border will be opened for trade from tomorrow," the official had said, adding that import, and export including the passageway of transit vehicles will be restored from Friday onwards. The decision came after Acting Afghanistan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi met the Head of the Pakistan Mission in Kabul, Ubaid Ur Rehman Nizamani. In the meeting, the Afghan authorities assured Pakistan that Afghan soil would not be used against Pakistan. Sources, privy to the decision, said the decision to reopen the border came after this meeting. Pakistani authorities had requested the Afghan side to halt

Continued on Page 06

FHM praises KP's dengue prevention efforts

PESHAWAR: In a pivotal meeting held under the leadership of Federal Health Minister, Dr. Nadim Jan, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department received high praise for its timely proactive measures in dengue prevention. The meeting which encompassed discussions on the current health landscape across provinces, emphasized the importance of timely actions against dengue and encouraged other provinces to follow Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's in this regard. The meeting attended by all Provincial Health Ministers, Secretaries, the Director-General of Health Services, and senior officials from the health department, delved into various critical healthcare topics. In addition to dengue prevention, the discussions revolved around Sehat Card services, malaria, hepatitis, medication procurement, and financial considerations. Federal Health Minister Dr. Nadim Jan acknowledged Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's commendable efforts in dengue prevention over this year. He pointed out that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has reported a significantly lower rate of positive dengue cases this year compared to other provinces. During the meeting, dengue case statistics were presented, revealing that, as of now, Balochistan has reported the highest number of cases at 2,627, followed by Punjab with 1,961, Sindh with 1,014, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the lowest at 234 cases. - DNA

FIA arrests accused hawala

KARACHI: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Friday arrested an accused allegedly involved in running an illegal money exchange and hawala/hundi business from Dehli Colony area of the city. According to spokesman for FIA Sindh, the Agency's Commercial Banking Circle arrested Sameer involved in running a money exchange without valid license and was also involved hawala/hundi business. The agency also recovered 70,000 US dollars. A number of receipts and messages regarding hundi were also found in his phone. A case had been registered and further investigations were underway. - APP

Governor invites foreign businessmen to invest in KP

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali on Friday invited foreign businessmen to invest in Pakistan and utilize its abundant natural resources that are still untapped due to lack of modern machinery. He was talking to the famous businessman of the United Arab Emirates, Suhail Muhammad Alzaruni here at Governor House. He said that utilizing KP's potential for natural resources would not only benefit foreign investors but also generate new opportunities for locals. He said that the lack of modern equipment and needed facilities are reasons behind the slow pace of proper exploration and use of these hidden natural resources. Governor and Alzaruni also discussed matters of mutual interests and bringing foreign investment into the country. Alzaruni also lauded the Governor for his keen interest in developing the province and inviting foreign investors. Mean-

while, a delegation of Upper Dir elders led by Paindamand Khan called on Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and highlighted issues confronted by people in his area. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor assured cooperation to the delegation and said that he is not oblivious to the problems of people living in KP and steps have been taken to resolve them. He also urged the masses to collectively work for the development of their area and said that available resources would be utilized to address the problems of Upper Dir. He stressed avoiding negative thinking and changing of mindset to counter the narrative being propagated by certain elements against the country. A delegation of Bajaur led by former Senator Abdul Rasheed also met with KP Governor and apprised him problems of the people. A five-member delegation led by Sheikh ul Hadees, Moulana Ata-ur-Rehman also called on the Governor and discussed matters of mutual interest. - APP

Chief Justice IHC prioritizes business community cases

Chief Justice IHC Aamer Farooq said that the business community is the backbone of the economy and assured that the judiciary would decide commercial and rent disputes on priority

MUHAMMAD ADIL

ISLAMABAD: The Honorable Chief Justice of Islamabad High Court Justice Aamer Farooq along with Honorable Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri and Honorable Nasir Javed Rana Judge & Session Judge Islamabad visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and inaugurated the Mediation Council Office in ICCI and congratulated ICCI for opening this office. The Mediation Council Office has been established as per requirement of the amended Rent Restrictions Act 2023, which would play mediation role for resolving the commercial rent disputes of the business community and contribute to the out-of-court settlement of such disputes.

Addressing the business community, Chief Justice Islamabad High Court Justice Aamer Farooq said that the business community is the backbone of the economy and assured that the judiciary would decide commercial and rent disputes on priority. He said that a mechanism including special bench would be considered to adjudicate the commercial disputes of the business community to facilitate them in business develop-



ment. He said that arbitration and mediation is getting popularity as a cost-effective mechanism for settlement of cases as litigation is an expensive and lengthy process. He acknowledged that the prevailing laws in Pakistan are not supportive of business and investment and stressed that legislative should amend them to facilitate the entrepreneurs and investors. He stressed that the business community should play role to

boost business activities to steer the country out of current crisis. Justice Tariq Mehmood said that inauguration of a mediation council in ICCI is a commendable initiative for the out-of-court settlement of rent disputes of the business community and said that IHC would also forward such cases to the council for mediation. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce

& Industry said that an effective commercial dispute resolution mechanism is vital for sustainable economic growth of Pakistan. However, the arbitration & mediation laws, court procedures, dispute resolution and mechanism for enforcement of different types of contracts including commercial and investment in Pakistan are weak, time taking, outdated and a cause of concern for the local and foreign investors. He said

that on average, it takes around 3 years to settle a commercial dispute in courts in Pakistan and a contract case takes many years to be decided. He stressed that the government should amend and upgrade and align business laws with the needs of current times to facilitate the growth of local and foreign investment in the country. He stressed that the government should establish a network of commercial courts across the country and evolve an effective alternate dispute resolution system for timely settlement of commercial disputes and promote a healthy environment for business and investment activities in the country. Faad Waheed Senior Vice President ICCI, Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan, Raja Aleem Abbasi Vice Chairman Islamabad Bar Council, Naveed Malik President Islamabad High Court Bar and Khalid Chaudhry former SVP ICCI also spoke on the occasion. Qaiser Imam President Islamabad District Bar, a large number of representatives from legal and business communities were present on the occasion.

LESCO charges Rs 30,205,018 detection bill

LAHORE: Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) charged 304 power pilferers with detection bill of 711,109 units worth Rs 30,205,018 during ninth day of grand anti-power theft operation in all its circles on Friday. LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider termed the electricity thieves as enemies of national exchequer and deserved no mercy. Following instructions of the Prime Minister and Ministry of Energy, a grand anti-power theft operation was ongoing in LESCO region under the supervision of CEO Shahid Haider for the last nine days. Sharing details of the ninth day operation, the LESCO spokesperson confirmed that 304 connections in all circles were found involved in electricity theft and applications for FIRs against all electricity thieves had been filed in the respective police stations, out of which 149 FIRs had been registered, while 20 suspects had also been arrested. He said that among the connections seized were one industrial, five agricultural, 12 commercial and 286 domestic and all the connections had been disconnected and charged with detection bill of 711,109 units worth Rs 30,205,018. - APP

PAF participates in two international air drills

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) is carrying out two large scale flying exercises from two different locations across the globe, marking a significant milestone in its commitment to enhancing its aerial prowess and strengthening international cooperation. The participation includes PAF's J-10 C and JF-17 lead fighter aircraft, Combat Pilots, Air Defence Controllers, and technical ground crew, who were actively engaged in the Shaheen-X bilateral Air Exercise hosted by the People's Liberation Army Air Force in China, as well as the Bright Star Air Exercise held in Egypt, a PAF news release said. The successful induction and operationalisation of the J-10C fighter jets in PAF's fighter fleet and their participation in an international exercise in an unprecedented short span of time was a remarkable achievement. The feat has been achieved in lines with modernisation plan of Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu premised on smart inductions and focused indigenisation. The participation of these fighter jets in Exercise Shaheen-X marks a significant milestone in PAF's journey towards a technologically advanced and formidable air force. The rapid acquisition and operationalisation of these ad-

vanced aircraft showcases PAF's dedication to maintaining a cutting-edge force, capable of meeting evolving challenges and defending Pakistan's airspace with utmost proficiency. As the Sino-Pak Joint Annual Air Exercise Shaheen-X is in full swing in the Jiujuan and Yinchuan cities of Northwest China, the exceptional event highlights the dedication and capabilities of the Pakistan Air Force, demonstrating its commitment to fostering mutual learning and collaboration with allied countries. The Shaheen-X exercise in China and the Bright Star Air Exercise in Egypt provide invaluable opportunities for PAF to build upon its operational experience and exchange knowledge with esteemed counterparts from around the world. During his visit at the Shaheen-X exercise, Deputy Chief of Air Staff Air Defence, Air Marshal Abdul Moeed Khan expressed his admiration for the enthusiasm and dedication exhibited by the PAF contingent participating in the air exercise. He emphasized the significance of these exercises in achieving common objectives while addressing the evolving dynamics of air warfare in the face of shared security challenges. Deputy Chief of Air Staff Air Defence, Air Marshal Abdul Moeed Khan commended the People's Liberation Army Air Force on the successful execution of the exercise while further strengthening the existing partnership between the key allies and bolstering interoperability amongst the two air forces.

PDWP approves 7 developmental schemes

LAHORE: Punjab Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP), in its 16th meeting of the current financial year 2023-24, approved seven developmental schemes of Agriculture and Special Healthcare and Medical Education sector with an estimated cost of Rs 22026.816 million. Planning and Development Board Chairman Ifitkhar Ali Sahoo chaired the meeting here on Friday. Secretary P&D Board Nadir Chattha were present. Approved schemes are: Privatization of Agriculture Extension Services to enhance the service delivery at the cost of Rs 804.470 million; Program for strategic transformation/revamping of emergency department in tertiary hospitals in Bahawalpur and Sahiwal at the cost of Rs 1197.407 million; Rehabilitation/renovation of hospitals under Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education (SH&ME) Department through health council traditional mode in Lahore and Faisalabad at the cost of Rs 5033.372 million; Program for strategic transformation/revamping of old blocks of ex-DHQs (Rahim Yar Khan, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Rawalpindi) at the cost of Rs 1264.132 million; Program for provision of missing facilities in newly upgraded colleges of nursing in Punjab at the cost of Rs 2716.824 million; Provision of missing specialties for up-gradation of DHQ Hospital to Teaching Hospital, Sahiwal. (Revised) at the cost of Rs 9311.161 million; Establishment of Hospital Management Information System and (ongoing) Queue Management Systems (PACS) in hospitals of SH&ME at the cost of Rs 1699.45 million. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Jawad Sohrah Malik in meeting with Japan Ambassador to Pakistan Wada Mitsushiro. - DNA

SCCI chief calls for simple tax system

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) acting president, Ijaz Khan Afridi urged the government and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to take further steps to simplify the taxation system. Addressing an awareness seminar on 'Tax Management System and E-filing of Returns' jointly organised by SCCI and Regional Tax Office (RTO) Peshawar, FBR here on Friday, he called for broadening of existing tax base and bringing more people under the net instead of further burdening the taxpayers. He viewed traders are backbone of the country's economy so they should be facilitated, especially by simplifying the taxation system for them, which would help to achieve the set revenue collection for the fiscal year. During the training session, Deputy Commissioner, RTO Peshawar Riaz Ahmad and IT expert Asif Ali Shah informed the participants regarding reforms in the existing taxation system that had been made by FBR, particularly bringing more ease in submission of returns through the E-filing system. RTO officials said prosperity and development of the business community was a guarantee of economic stability. They added that the country could only run through the support of the business community, therefore, possible steps should be taken to facilitate them and bring simplification in the taxation system. - APP



DNA

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Malaysia Azhar Mazlan together with General Manager Islamabad Serena Hotel and the Executive Chef inaugurating the Malaysian Food Festival. - DNA



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For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman
Mobile: 0300 8553342

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

Enquiry

- Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

PIA's several flights cancelled, delayed amid liquidity crisis

On August 12, a number of domestic flights to and from Karachi were cancelled due to a shortage of funds and the failure to pay Pakistan State Oil (PSO) for fuel supply

DNA ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), which is facing serious cash flow problems, cancelled several domestic and international flights. A top official of the national flag carrier earlier told Geo News that that flight operations are feared to be suspended by September 15 (today) if emergency funds are not provided.

Ambassador-designate to Russia calls on President Alvi



ISLAMABAD Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to the Russian Federation Muhammad Khalid Jamali called on President Dr Arif Alvi here on Friday. During the meeting, the president hoped that the ambassador-designate would play active role in strengthening bilateral relations with Russia. Muhammad Khalid Jamali assured his determination to reinforce the bilateral ties.—DNA

Academia must update syllabus

ISLAMABAD, Sep 15 (APP):Renowned broadcast journalist Mahnoor Qureshi has emphasized that the academic world needs to regularly update itself to keep pace with the rapidly changing landscape of journalism.

PNCA hosts artistic talk

DNA ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts had the honor of hosting a captivating artist talk featuring the illustrious Sumera Jawad and Sameeta Ahmad, two senior artists whose profound insights left a lasting impact on students, fellow artists, and media personalities alike.

14 bootleggers, illegal weapon holders netted

DNA RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected bootleggers, illegal weapon holders and other lawbreakers here on Friday managed to arrest 14 accused besides recovering over 67 liters liquor, six pistols, a rifle and other items from their possession.

CDNS achieves Rs 250 billion targets in fresh bonds

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved target of Rs 250 billion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to September 5. The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Friday.

Real face of so-called Indian democracy is daily witnessed in IIOJK'

ISLAMABAD: As the world is observing International Day of Democracy, today, Narendra Modi-led Indian government continues to deny the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir their democratic right to choose their political future.

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GTP Education Wing educates students of private school

DNA RAWALPINDI :The students of a private school were educated and trained here on Friday on road safety rules in a program held by the Rawalpindi City Traffic Police (CTP).

Tractor production increase 6.52% in Jul-Aug

DNA ISLAMABAD: The production of farm tractors in the country witnessed an increase of 6.52 percent to 6,189 units during the first two months of the financial year 2023-24, against the production of 5,810 units during the same months last year 2022-23.

Police strikes on criminals, arrests wanted snatcher gang member

ISLAMABAD: In a major breakthrough, Islamabad Police has arrested a wanted member of a notorious snatcher gang, recovering a cache of valuables and weapons from his possession.

Briefs

Smart Classrooms initiated under CPEC growing in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Smart Classrooms project was initiated under CPEC in September 2021 and is now grooming in the country. Around 100 smart classrooms are being built in 50 universities across Pakistan. Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. Meanwhile, a smart classroom was inaugurated at Karakoram International University (KIU) in Gilgit-Baltistan, aiming to empower teachers with the essential skills needed to effectively utilize technology in the classroom. This initiative seeks to enhance the learning experience for students through comprehensive training programs. Vice-Chancellor of KIU, Engineer Professor Dr. Attaullah Shah, inaugurated the smart classroom in the presence of senior administrative and teaching staff of the university. According to Dr. Attaullah Shah, "The university is dedicated to providing facilities that align with modern educational and learning requirements for its students," and he further emphasized this commitment by pointing to the establishment of a modern classroom as a clear and concrete example. This information is in line with an official statement from the university. The Vice-Chancellor said that the objective behind establishing a smart classroom is to embrace the digital age by providing state-of-the-art facilities that meet today's educational requirements. "This initiative aims to enhance learning opportunities, benefiting both students and teachers alike," he said and added that KIU has consistently prioritized its students by continually advancing in response to the demands of the digital age, and the inauguration of the "smart classroom today serves as a tangible testament to this commitment".—APP

Cricket fever in China

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Cricket fever in China is going high ahead of upcoming Asian Games set to take place in Hangzhou from September 23 to October 8. A "Friendship Cup" was organized by Chinese company Guangdong YajiaSiTechnology (YIS) and Beijing Cricket Club (BCC) at the Cricket field of Dulwich College Beijing, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. The aim of the event is to share the passion for sports, enhance friendship between the people of participating countries as well as to promote the game of cricket in China. The tournament was well attended by the diplomatic staff and teams from different embassies, schools, and universities, particularly players from China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, the United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa, Bangladesh, and Nepal which gave an opportunity to display the cricketing talents. Cricket is one of the most exciting sports in the world and is now slowly but surely getting a place in sports in China. The upcoming Asian Games to be held in Hangzhou is one of the best examples where Pakistan men's and women's Cricket teams will be participating in.—DNA

Diverse topics, expert insights dominate PIDE-RASTA conference

Need to focus on progress and move forward with the ideas presented to policymakers: VC, PIDE

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), through its Research for Social Transformation and Advancement (RASTA) program, successfully concluded its 3rd RASTA conference at the Gun & Country Club in Islamabad. The conference encompassed a wide array of research themes, including Urban Development and Industry, Law and Judiciary, Human Capital and Opportunities, Sludge and Dead Capital, Education and Technology, and Public Finance Management and Financial Inclusion. These sessions provided an extensive and multifaceted examination of their respective topics, thereby contributing significantly to a deeper comprehension of the pertinent issues. The conference witnessed enthusiastic participants presenting their studies within these overarching themes, offering localized solutions to pressing challenges. Distinguished contributors represented various esteemed institutions such as the University of Illinois Chicago USA, Government College University Faisalabad, NUML Islamabad, Government College University Lahore, Jamal and Jamal Advocates and Legal Consultants Islamabad, University of Peshawar, BUITEMS Quetta, University of Punjab, and Lahore College

for Women University, Lahore. This gathering of diverse minds underscores RASTA's steadfast commitment to nurturing collaborative research aimed at positively influencing Pakistan's policy landscape. Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, Vice-Chancellor of PIDE and Chairman of the RASTA Research Advisory Committee (RAC), emphasized that RASTA represents an evolving process. He stressed the importance of conducting local research and finding tailored solutions to local issues while acknowledging the value of global research that aligns with local needs and requirements. Dr. Haque emphasized the need to focus on progress and move forward with the ideas presented to policymakers, advocating for a distinctive local flavour in research. He praised RASTA's inclusivity, highlighting how it has exposed policymakers to new perspectives and emphasized the critical nature of inclusive research. The 3rd RASTA Conference continued its intellectual journey on its second day, featuring a compelling lineup of presentations that explored various facets of Pakistan's economic and legal landscape. Esteemed speakers from academia and research circles engaged in thought-provoking discussions on pressing issues. In the first session, Saad S. Khan examined the "Critical Appraisal of Legal Institutional Structure of Revenue Courts in Pakistan:

Minimizing Sludge in Agricultural Property Cases," shedding light on the complexities within the legal system. Moazzam Ali presented a case study titled "Alternate Use of Public Assets: A Case Study of Allama Iqbal Open University," exploring efficient public resource utilization. Anwar Muhammad Aslam addressed "Unlocking Pakistan Railways Dead Capital," discussing strategies to optimize the potential of Pakistan's railway infrastructure. Alvina Sabah Idris analyzed "Factors Associated with School Dropout in Pakistan: An Assessment Using Survival Analysis," offering valuable insights into the education sector. Ghaznfar Iqbal advocated for a solution to K-12 education problems with his presentation on the "Framework for Mainstreaming Career Education." Verda Salman highlighted "Technology Adoption in Islamabad Police," showcasing innovative approaches in law enforcement. Abedullah Anjum, Chief of Research at PIDE, contributed to the discussion on self-sufficiency in edible oil production with his comprehensive report titled "Investigation of a Value Chain of Edible Oil to Identify Possible Policy Interventions to Achieve Self-sufficiency." In the second half, Muhammad Ahmad Barula explored "Taming the Leviathan towards Public Sector Resources Efficiency: Fiscal Federalism or Fiscal Decentralization in Pakistan," addressing governance

and resource allocation. Ameen Shakeel engaged in a discourse on the "Withholding of the Taxation System: Beneficial or Not?" examining the implications of the taxation system. Fareena Armagan delved into "Firm's Financial Inclusion and Export Performance: Evidence from Manufacturing Sector Firms in Pakistan," shedding light on economic development strategies. The second day of the RASTA Conference was characterized by rich discussions, robust debates, and the exchange of ideas among experts and attendees alike. The conference continues to serve as a pivotal platform for intellectual exploration and the exchange of knowledge. RASTA, Pakistan's premier economics and public policy research grants program, remains at the forefront of shaping the nation's policy discourse. With an unwavering commitment to fostering an extensive knowledge network, RASTA has emerged as a pivotal force in producing high-quality, evidence-based policy research. This dynamic initiative boasts participation from over 60 universities, collaboration with more than 10 international institutes, and involves a talented cadre of over 2,300 researchers and academicians. RASTA's steadfast dedication to knowledge-driven solutions is propelling Pakistan towards a brighter and more prosperous future, underpinned by data-driven policy decisions.

Pakistan facing serious economic, political crises

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Friday that the country is facing serious economic, political, and environmental crises. Authorities are trying to manage problems temporarily with some success, but serious matters should not be taken lightly, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that lessons should be learned from the countries that have gone bankrupt recently, and negotiations should be started without delay for new loans from the IMF. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that in addition to the IMF loan, efforts should also be made to restructure the domestic and foreign debt; otherwise, the IMF loan will not be able to help much. He said that sloganeering against the IMF should be stopped and decisions should be taken according to ground realities because the current crisis is more serious than all the past crises. Mian Zahid Hussain said that foreign investment of 100 billion dollars can change the destiny of Pakistan, but it will take some time. The business leader noted that there is a need to facilitate investment and business in Pakistan, reduce electricity and gas prices, make the tax burden fair, and equip the youth with technical education. He observed that with the current actions of COAS General Asim Munir, the situation has improved somewhat; the rupee has strengthened, smuggling has decreased, and the price of sugar has also come down. But exports and remittances are decreasing, which will widen the current account deficit, which needs urgent attention. Many politicians are constantly playing games



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi administering the oath of office to Mr. Fawad Hasan Fawad as Caretaker Federal Minister, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.—DNA

Crackdown on sugar and dollar mafia is commendable

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Hanif Mughal, Senior Vice President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) said on Friday that the crackdown against the sugar and dollar mafia is highly laudable. Action is being taken against sugar hoarders and smugglers, while wholesalers and distributors are being continuously monitored, but sugar mills are not being raided, he said. The beginning of the sugar crisis is from the sugar mills, so they should not be spared; otherwise, questions will arise in the minds of the people, he added. Dr. Hanif Mughal said in a statement issued here today that in addition to the weak, the powerful should also be held accountable, and all food businesses should be strictly monitored to protect the public

and dispel the impression that no government can control the shopkeepers. He said that, like in developed countries, all businesses should be closed at sunset to reduce the oil import bill by billions of dollars. If doing business until late at night brought prosperity, then Pakistan would have been the richest country in the world. He said that the transit trade agreement with Afghanistan has become a big problem for Pakistan and has to be gotten rid of so that the economy gets some stability. Hanif Mughal demanded that action be initiated against tax evasion and drug trade as different mafias are hemorrhaging the country's economy. The illegal supply of Iranian POL products alone causes an annual loss of at least Rs225 billion to the national exchequer. Smuggled Iranian oil is usually sold at illegal roadside gasoline outlets but has now even found its way to regular filling stations.

Rethinking Tobacco harm reduction on global stage

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In the quest to liberate the world from the shackles of smoking, it's evident that a one-size-fits-all approach falls short. This realization must extend to the very institution that aims to lead the charge - the World Health Organisation (WHO). Two decades ago, the WHO unveiled the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, envisioning a universal solution to combat smoking's scourge. Yet, today, over a billion people still smoke worldwide, and the WHO's

stringent stance on alternative options, particularly vaping, appears to be part of the problem, not the solution. Amidst the glaring data that smoking remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death globally, the WHO's adamancy in treating all nicotine products as equally harmful persists. The critical misstep is that this stance conflates cigarettes and safer alternatives, thwarting the potential for harm reduction strategies. Acknowledging that perfection doesn't exist, it's irrefutable that alternatives to cigarettes such as vapes, e-cigarettes,

heated tobacco products and nicotine pouches offer a substantially less harmful path compared to cigarettes. This sentiment is echoed by eminent experts, none more distinguished than Professor Chris Whitty, the UK's Chief Medical Officer. "If you smoke, vaping is much safer," he asserts. The caveat is simple: if you don't smoke, don't vape. A balance that transcends dogma. In a world where abrupt cessation often leads to frustration, harm reduction offers a pragmatic path. The United Kingdom, unwilling to be dictated by the WHO's intransigence.

JazzCash Becomes First Fintech Platform

DNA

ISLAMABAD: JazzCash, Pakistan's leading fintech player, in a pioneering move, has announced the integration of Special Communications Organization (SCO) mobile network onto its platform. This strategic partnership brings a range of exciting new features, including SCOM Prepaid Load, SCOM Bundles and SCOM Postpaid Bill Payments, all seamlessly accessible through JazzCash. The integration marks a significant milestone as the first of its kind in the fintech industry, demonstrating Special Communication Organization (SCO) and JazzCash's innovative approach and dedication to serving its customers' evolving needs across Pakistan. While commenting on the partnership, Murtaza Ali, Head of JazzCash, said, "SCO's commitment to digitization aligns perfectly with JazzCash's vision of a digitally empowered Pakistan. Through this partnership, we are enabling people to remain connected in some of the country's most remote areas." He added, "I want to extend my sincere gratitude to our colleagues at SCO for their dedication in making this partnership a reality."

Solangi lauds Namira Saleem's upcoming space journey

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Friday that Namira Saleem's upcoming journey to space was a sign of Pakistan's growing presence in space exploration and a major achievement for the nation. This he said during a meeting with Pakistan's first female astronaut Namira Saleem who met him here. Namira Saleem briefed the caretaker minister about the preparations for her space journey on October 5 this year. Namira Saleem expressed her determination to raise the Pakistani flag in space. Solangi congratulated Namira Saleem on behalf of the Government of Pakistan, the Prime Minister and the people for starting the space journey and expressed good wishes for her success. Terming Namira Saleem a role model for all women, Murtaza Solangi said the young generation can raise the name of Pakistan in the world in various fields of life. "This effort of Namira Saleem will highlight the positive image of Pakistan as a peace-loving and progressive country," Murtaza Solangi maintained. It should be noted that Namira Saleem is the first woman of Pakistan who also has the honour of reaching the poles. Namira Saleem had hoisted Pakistan's flag at the North Pole on April 21, 2007, while she would be leaving for space travel on October 5.—APP

Gwadar off-road rally 2023 set to thrill national racers

ISLAMABAD, Sept. 15 (): Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) on Thursday officially unveiled the itinerary for the upcoming 5th "Off-Road Jeep Rally," scheduled to thrill enthusiasts from October 17 to October 22. "Rev up your engines and get ready for the most thrilling adventure of the year!" wrote Director General GDA Muejeb Ur Rehman Qambarani on his official X (formerly Twitter) account, adding "Experience the adrenaline rush as you conquer challenging terrains, explore the stunning landscapes, and compete with fellow daredevils". As per Mr. Qambarani, this "off-road extravaganza" promises to be an unforgettable journey for all tourists involved. The Gwadar Off-Road Rally 2023 is presented by Raees Associates and Enterprises. The event has been sponsored by GDA while the rally enjoys the support of the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistan Army. Last year, the rally could not take place due to flooding in the region. Talha Iqbal Raees, the Chief Executive Officer of the Gwadar Off-Road Rally, shared in an interview with Gwadar Pro, "This is a mega event for the region, and we anticipate racers and tourists joining us from all corners of Pakistan." He also mentioned that in addition to Pakistani racers, they have high hopes for international participants, including those from Iran.—DNA

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Quaid's Sculpture unveiled at Beijing Jintai Art Museum

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant cultural milestone, a striking sculpture of Pakistan's founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, known as Quaid-e-Azam (Great Leader), was unveiled at the Beijing Jintai Art Museum. This event marks a testament to the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China, strengthening diplomatic ties through the language of art. The sculpture, crafted by renowned Chinese artist Yuan Xikun, stands tall and proud at the Beijing Jintai Art Museum, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. The sculpture is



a striking representation of Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, featuring intricate details and a dignified pose that captures the essence of his leadership and vision. The unveiling ceremony was attended by high-ranking officials, diplomats, art enthusiasts, and members of the Pakistani and Chinese communities. Speaking at the ceremony, Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque, emphasized the importance of cultural exchanges in strengthening bilateral relations. He stated, "Unveiling this sculpture in China is very meaningful. Both our countries have forged unbreakable bonds in our struggle against imperialism and colonialism."

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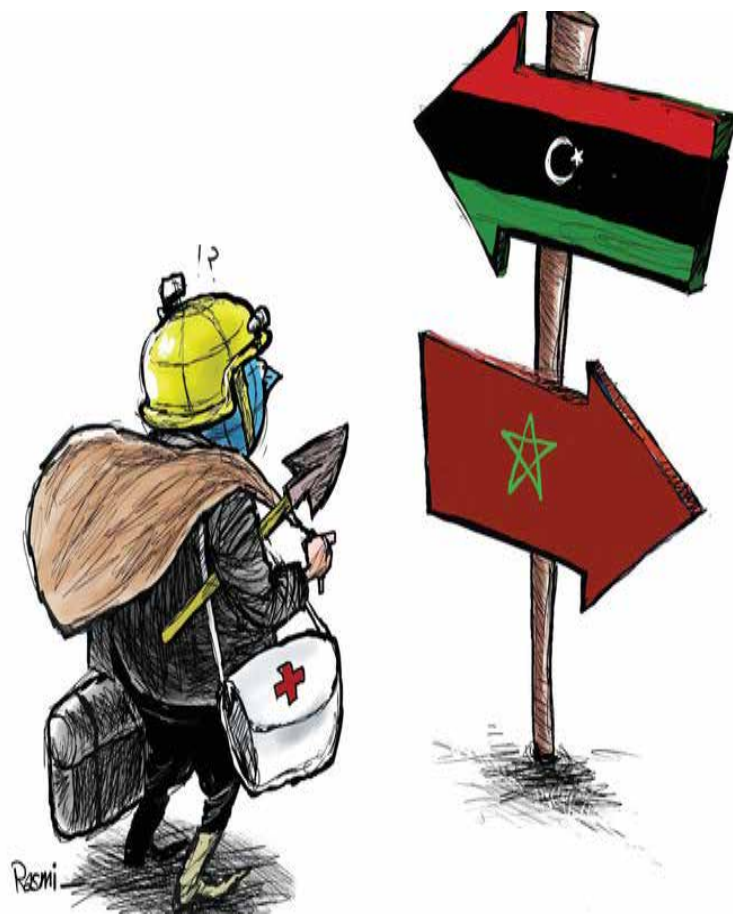
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Some Western Media Playing Tricks

THE Wall Street Journal reported last week that China had banned government officials from bringing foreign-brand smartphones such as iPhones into government buildings or using them for work. Citing unnamed sources, as is the wont of the WSJ, the article claimed China was seeking to "cut the country's reliance on foreign technology" and beef up cybersecurity, as well as keep sensitive data from leaking to foreign governments. That people find the report credible is because it is not a surprise that China should reciprocate the United States' ban on government officials using Chinese devices. That few people seem to have questioned the authenticity of the report reveals the extent to which people take it for granted that a tit-for-tat technology war is a new normal in the relations between China and the United States. Such a pathetic state of affairs can be attributed to Washington's attempts to leave no stone unturned in its attempt to smear and constrain China's tech development. Responding to a question about the report at a regular media briefing on Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning made it clear that China has not issued any law, regulation or policy document that bans the purchase and use of cellphones produced by foreign brands. While the WSJ report claimed the alleged move broadly targets foreign-made smartphones, Apple stands out, as China is one of its biggest markets and a key part of its supply chain. China is Apple's third-largest market, accounting for 18 percent of the company's sales revenue. Its China sales increased 8 percent on an annual basis to \$15.76 billion in the last quarter, making it Apple's fastest-growing market around the world. China always treats foreign companies with openness and welcomes them to seize the opportunities presented by China's development and to share the fruits of the country's economic growth. The US on the other hand has introduced "rip and replace" bans on Huawei and ZTE equipment, and it is attempting to ban TikTok, the short video sharing app, at local, state and federal levels. In keeping with its actions targeting China, the Joe Biden administration has seized on the report as another opportunity to smear Beijing. It has sought to muddy the waters and exploit the WSJ report as evidence that the Chinese government is trying to squeeze foreign companies out of the Chinese market. "It seems to be a piece of the kinds of aggressive and inappropriate retaliation to US companies that we've seen from the PRC in the past, that's what this appears to be," National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters at a news conference, claiming "that we don't have perfect visibility on exactly what they're doing and why". In fact, Mao Ning couldn't have made it any clearer. While China attaches great importance to cyber and information security, it treats all Chinese and foreign companies as equals. So long as cellphone companies abide by China's laws and regulations, such as the Data Security Law and the Personal Information Protection Law and ensure the security of users' information they are welcome in China.



Governments urged to act on Earth's limits

THE climate is changing more quickly now than it has done for tens of millions of years. This was the blunt conclusion to the recent Earth series, which sought to convey to viewers how cataclysmic the disruption caused by global heating could be. Chris Packham, its presenter, described the tipping points that were reached 56m years ago, when, over the course of a few thousand years, temperatures climbed by 5C. Fossil records from this period are one resource that modern scientists use when trying to predict the consequences of the much faster heating that is now under way. Planetary boundaries, about which scientists this week issued an updated warning, are another tool for thinking about the environment. These are a set of parameters defined at the Stockholm Resilience Centre, led by Prof Johan Rockström, in 2009. They are limits within which changes to the Earth's life support systems, which have been relatively stable for 10,000 years, can be considered manageable. Once the boundaries are breached, however, everything becomes much more extreme, unstable and threatening. As well as an attempt at quantifying the disruption that natural systems can withstand, the nine boundaries represented an attempt to broaden understanding of the risks. One key message was that global heating caused by greenhouse gases trapped in the atmosphere is not the only threat. The latest assessment, that six out of the nine boundaries have been broken, is yet another wake-up call. For the first time, scientists assessed the situation across the whole world and are particularly concerned about their findings with regard to biodiversity, freshwater and land use. Along with phasing out fossil fuels, they argue that ending destructive farming practices – which cause deforestation, habitat loss and pollution on a massive scale – is now the most urgent priority. Prof Simon Lewis describes the boundaries framework as a "heroic attempt to simplify the world". As such, it has something in common with Kate Raworth's doughnut economics. But, however valuable such concepts are, ultimately they will be judged on whether they can help prompt the imposition of actual limits on fossil fuel production, and other damaging activity, that can only be imposed by governments. The phasing out of coal, oil and gas was dropped from last year's Cop27 climate summit. This week, Fatih Birol, who heads the International Energy Agency, said that it must be back on the agenda at Cop28, which opens in Dubai in two months. Confidence in the UN climate process was damaged by the appointment of Sultan Al Jaber as this year's president. He also heads the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company. Currently, the UAE is planning a massive expansion of oil and gas. But opposition to the UAE's plans, and those of Saudi Arabia and western oil businesses, is growing. Rishi Sunak is expected to miss a climate ambition summit hosted by the UN secretary general, António Guterres, next week. His enthusiasm for new oil and gas investments may have disqualified him from attending. But other leaders will be urged to seize the chance to set the world on a path to a transformed energy system.

International collaboration vital in space realm

Khaled Abou Zahr

This situation illustrates how technology from commercial and private space companies, even in telecommunications, can have dual-use capabilities.

This means that this technology can give clear advantages to the country that possesses it and hence there is sensitivity around it. This also shows that, in this new era, private companies are faced with decisions that never existed in the past, putting the large ones in a sovereign playground. This also applies to the large social media platforms when it comes to information or disinformation campaigns. More importantly, this indicates the absolute need for any country to protect its infrastructure and supply chains and for it to be able to maintain its own sovereign access to space and to satellites. When looking at the importance of satellites and the use...

HERE is no doubt that Elon Musk has, with SpaceX, transformed the space landscape. There is also no doubt that this was possible thanks to a new approach by NASA and other US institutions. SpaceX has pioneered the use of private, reusable rockets to service America's space program and more. In short, NASA, instead of using its own rockets, decided to outsource its supply missions to the International Space Station and the launch of satellites into orbit. This venture marked a break with tradition. NASA engaged entrepreneurs in a way that allowed it to satisfy its needs and let commercial industry gain a foothold. It has had a profound impact on the way NASA does business and the space industry as a whole. It unleashed the age of commercialized space. This is why there is today a vibrant landscape of space companies on both sides of the Atlantic that is empowering an age of innovation and competition. As greater payload capacity was developed, this reduced costs and also allowed for new businesses such as Starlink. For those who do not know, SpaceX's Starlink uses satellites to provide internet services. By reading the description on their website, it is clear that neither the company nor its founder, Elon Musk, anticipated being drawn into the Ukraine conflict. Starlink describes itself as the world's first and largest satellite constellation. It uses a low Earth orbit to deliver broadband internet that is capable of supporting streaming, online gaming, video calls and more. As the conflict with Russia has devastated Ukraine's infrastructure, Starlink terminals have proved to be essential for preserving internet connectivity and communication in the country. It has also been used by the Ukrainian army in its activities. Thousands of Starlink terminals have been delivered to Ukraine by SpaceX since February last year. Last week, it was claimed that Musk tempo-

rarily blocked the service last September as the Ukrainian military launched a surprise attack on Russian forces in Crimea. In response, Musk stated on X, formerly known as Twitter, that SpaceX "did not deactivate anything" because it was never activated in certain places to begin with. He clarified: "There was an emergency request from government authorities to activate Starlink all the way to Sevastopol." And added: "If I had agreed to their request, then SpaceX would be explicitly complicit in a major act of war and conflict escalation." There is a vibrant landscape of space companies that is empowering an age of innovation and competition. This situation illustrates how technology from commercial and private space companies, even in telecommunications, can have dual-use capabilities. This means that this technology can give clear advantages to the country that possesses it and hence there is sensitivity around it. This also shows that, in this new era, private companies are faced with decisions that never existed in the past, putting the large ones in a sovereign playground. This also applies to the large social media platforms when it comes to information or disinformation campaigns. More importantly, this indicates the absolute need for any country to protect its infrastructure and supply chains and for it to be able to maintain its own sovereign access to space and to satellites. When looking at the importance of satellites and the use of GPS, for example, an attack on such assets would automatically prevent most apps from functioning, as well as affecting the financial system. To present this as a sovereign issue, Europe is currently without a rocket to use for launches. This has grave implications. Indeed, will the Galileo global satellite navigation system be dependent on the goodwill of the US to remain in service beyond 2024? Thierry Breton, the European commissioner in charge of EU space poli-

cy, will have to decide this autumn: choose SpaceX for a 2024 launch or wait for an Ariane 6 flight in 2025. French media outlets have described this as one of the most explosive and complicated issues Breton has to deal with.

Technology from commercial and private space companies, even in telecommunications, can have dual-use capabilities. Galileo and the Copernicus Earth observation program are flagships of the EU's space policy. They provide valuable services that enable more accurate navigation and timing, as well as delivering valuable data about the Earth. However, if Europe lacks space access, it puts the entire continent in a precarious position. Even among friends, this poses a dilemma. Satellites are also used for intelligence purposes and for the protection of nations. So, being dependent on another country presents a vulnerability. But should it?

Launches into space are such a difficult task that there should be broad collaboration between partners and friends. Let us not forget that, before NASA shifted its working model and SpaceX became operational, it had to rely on Russian Soyuz rockets after abandoning its own launches in 2011. Last year, despite the conflict in Ukraine, NASA and Russia's space agency Roscosmos signed a long-sought-after agreement to integrate flights to the International Space Station. This allows Russian cosmonauts to fly on US-made spacecraft in exchange for American astronauts being able to ride on Russia's Soyuz. As we say in Arabic, sometimes you hate something, and it is good for you. Maybe Musk's actions served Ukrainians more than they think. And the same could apply to international collaboration, as it avoids isolated and dangerous decisions. In the realm of space, it should be about partnerships and collaboration among friends.

– Sourced by Arab News*

How SA has emerged as a green energy leader

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

Saudi Arabia is clearly leading the way on this issue. There are an increasing number of projects and initiatives related to renewable and green energy in the Kingdom. For instance, Saudi Arabia has pledged to increase the proportion of its energy mix that comes from renewable sources. It has also announced hugely ambitious plans to build NEOM, the world's first city without roads – a clear signal of its intention to change course in a more environmentally friendly direction

BASED on the latest developments, Saudi Arabia is clearly emerging as a global leader when it comes to green energy and eco-friendly practices. This is due to the Kingdom's long-term and practical green vision, which is anchored in creating a brighter future that is also environmentally sustainable and friendly. Saudi Arabia and the US last week formalized a bilateral agreement through a memorandum of understanding in order to cooperate with each other in the creation of intercontinental green transit corridors that run through the Kingdom's territory, according to a press release issued by the US State Department. Saudi Arabia welcomed Washington's role in facilitating and supporting the negotiations in order to set up this important project. This development is significant due to the fact that it facilitates environmentally friendly corridors to connect the continents of Europe and Asia through Saudi Arabia by railway. In other words, the green corridors' transit protocol will make it much easier for engaged countries to participate. Through this initiative, the sharing of renewable electricity and clean hydrogen between countries will become possible and easier. This critical initiative will also involve cables and pipelines, as well as the development of railway connections. Another key benefit is that the implementation of this agreement will help in advancing economic diversification. In addition to the role that this bilateral agreement will play in promoting clean energy, it will also most likely increase and strengthen trade between nations due to the construction of railways linkages, and by connecting railways to ports. Fiber optic cables will also help further expand the digital economy, as they facilitate the transfer of data. It is worth noting that economic diversification has been a key goal of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states ever since they began pumping oil out of the ground. There are an

increasing number of projects and initiatives related to renewable and green energy in the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia is clearly leading the way on this issue. There are an increasing number of projects and initiatives related to renewable and green energy in the Kingdom. For instance, Saudi Arabia has pledged to increase the proportion of its energy mix that comes from renewable sources. It has also announced hugely ambitious plans to build NEOM, the world's first city without roads – a clear signal of its intention to change course in a more environmentally friendly direction. One effective green energy program, launched in 2021 by Saudi Arabia, is called the Middle East Green Initiative. This is a regional effort led by the Kingdom in order to "mitigate the impact of climate change on the region and to collaborate to meet global climate targets. By increasing regional cooperation and creating the infrastructure needed to reduce emissions and protect the environment, (the initiative) can amplify impact in the global fight against climate change, whilst creating far-reaching economic opportunities for the region." Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman announced in November last year that Saudi Arabia would establish and host a dedicated Middle East Green Initiative Secretariat and allocate \$2.5 billion to support its projects and governance. Furthermore, the cooperation between the US and Saudi Arabia will benefit Washington and other nations considerably, as it will reduce fluctuations related to the energy process. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic gave us the first glimmer of price fluctuations in the energy sector. This is why the expansion of green energy and the development of domestic, knowledge-based green industries have arguably become an urgent economic necessity, rather than a welcome add-on. While Saudi Arabia is known for its abundance of oil, it

is also richly endowed with renewable energy resources. The agreement between the US and Saudi Arabia also shows positive partnerships can be found in various areas, particularly green energy, renewables and the solar industry. President Joe Biden has frequently made much of his environmental intentions. In his initial flurry of executive orders upon taking office, a return to the Paris Agreement on climate change was one of his most prominent decisions. The president clearly sees placing green energy and climate change high on the agenda as a vote-winner, especially among younger, more liberal-minded voters. In addition, it is important to point out that cooperation in solar power between these two countries is critical for both nations and is an obvious common ground. The US is the world's second-largest producer of solar energy, while Saudi Arabia is a gateway to the Middle East, which is an obvious candidate for the mass deployment of solar power as a source of renewable energy. Furthermore, countries such as Saudi Arabia have invested, or are planning to invest, billions of dollars in developing high-tech innovation hubs that could prove attractive to American companies interested in developing advanced clean technology. It is worth noting that, while Saudi Arabia is known for its abundance of oil, it is also richly endowed with renewable energy resources, such as wind and solar. As it is located in the center of the so-called sun belt, the Kingdom has great potential to produce solar power. Jeddah, Riyadh and Dammam, which are three of the largest cities in the Kingdom, enjoy an average irradiation of 5.78 kilowatt-hours per sq. meter per day, considerably more than the global average. In other words, green energy is an obvious choice for shared economic as well as political development between the US and Saudi Arabia.

Sourced by Arab News*

Briefs

SC verdict
reopens
cases...

FROM PAGE 01
CJP Umar Ata Bandial, and comprising Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Ijazul Ahsan — declared the PTI chief's petition admissible. The Supreme Court declared nine out of 10 amendments null and void while Justice Shah issued a dissenting note in the case. The apex court ordered restoring all graft cases worth less than Rs500 million that were closed down against the political leaders belonging to different political parties and public office holders and declared the amendments void. The verdict on Khan's appeal further added that the NAB amendments under question affected the rights of the public listed in the Constitution. The verdict has some far-reaching consequences as the striking down of the amendments would mean that references against some of the country's political bigwigs will once again land in the accountability courts.

PTI
welcomes
apex verdict

FROM PAGE 01
bureau to a puppet institution. He recalled that those who looted and plundered the national treasure ruthlessly were got themselves dry-cleaned by securing NRO-2 after ousting PTI's well performing government through regime conspiracy. PTI spokesperson said that after giving relief to looters like Shehbaz Sharif, Hamza Shehbaz, Maryam Nawaz, Ishaq Dar and Asif Ali Zardari, a fugitive was given assurance to be imported from London, adding that SC threw the self-proclaimed NRO-2 into the trash, which was given to the gang of criminals.

Torkham
border
crossing...

FROM PAGE 01
the construction, citing it as a violation of international law, an official performing duty at the Torkham border had told The News on the condition of anonymity. However, the Afghan authorities did not heed this request. Consequently, the border was closed due to the escalating tensions stemming from this construction dispute. Speaking about the attack ahead of the border's closure, the on-duty official at the border said several mortar shells were fired from the Afghan side, which landed at the offices of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Customs and other official workplaces.

Elections
date beyond
mandate...

FROM PAGE 01
PM House today, PM Kakar once again ruled out the prospect of declaring the poll date. In response to a question, he said, "If I were to announce elections, I would be engaging in an unlawful act, and as a journalist, you should be aware that if you steer us towards illegal actions and pose questions that might tempt us to break the law, then what should my response be?" Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar also warned a consistent crackdown on illegal trade and said an effective management plan was being implemented to control cross-border smuggling. "We have zero tolerance for those involved in the 'smuggling industry' and the law will take its course," he said at a press conference held at PM House. The PM statement came in response to a question on Pakistan's steps to control cross-border smuggling as the Torkham border with Afghanistan reopened this morning after nine days. Kakar said detailed deliberations were held on the Afghan transit trade and the reopening of Torkham border.

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

Indonesia to face Pakistan in
Davis Cup on 16-17 September

Davis Cup World Group-II tie match between Indonesia and Pakistan will kick off on 16-17 September at Aisam-ul-Haq Tennis Pavilion, Pakistan Sports Complex in Islamabad. The Davis Cup final match will see Indonesia and Pakistan's finest tennis talents competing on grass courts

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The two-day Davis Cup World Group-II tie match between Indonesia and Pakistan will kick off on 16-17 September at Aisam-ul-Haq Tennis Pavilion, Pakistan Sports Complex in Islamabad. The Davis Cup final match will see Indonesia and Pakistan's finest tennis talents competing on the grass courts, promising fans an exhilarating display of skill, passion, and sportsmanship. On the opening day, 1st singles followed by 2nd singles will be played and doubles match followed by 1st and 2nd reverse singles will be played the next day. Chargé d'affaires of The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, Mr. Yusran Hadromi expressed appreciation to Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) for hosting and facilitating Indonesian players for Davis Cup in Pakistan and extended heartfelt wishes to both teams as they prepare to compete in this exciting and prestigious two-day



match. The Indonesian team landed in Islamabad on Monday, consisting of three players, one captain, and three other team members. David Agung Susanto, Ignatius Anthony Susanto, and Gunawan Trismuwantara are among the visiting players, with Bonit Wiryawan serving as captain

who is a well-known former Davis Cup player with more than 16 Davis Cup victories, he retired as Indonesia's most successful doubles player in the history. Speaking on the press conference he said "Sports, particularly tennis, serve as a unifying force that transcends borders, fostering mutual respect and admiration for both brotherly countries."

President of the Pakistan Tennis Federation, Senator Salim Saifullah Khan, remarked, "May this match be remembered as a celebration of tennis and friendship between Indonesia and Pakistan, and deep-rooted sportsmanship expressing en-

thusiasm for their friendly rivalry." Tennis enthusiasts and fans across the globe eagerly await this thrilling competition, where Indonesia and Pakistan will battle it out for Davis Cup supremacy. Stay tuned for more updates and exciting developments as we countdown to the highly anticipated matches.

Injured Rauf, Naseem still
in WC 2023 contention

DNA

COLOMBO: Pakistan captain Babar Azam said on Friday that injured pace bowlers Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah remained central to his team's ICC ODI World Cup 2023 plans after their absence saw the team crash out of the Asia Cup. Babar Azam's men went down to fellow co-hosts

Sri Lanka by two wickets Thursday in a last-ball thriller of a rain-shortened Super Four knockout game in Colombo. Both Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf were injured in the Super Four loss to India in the 50-over tournament, a tune-up for the ODI World Cup in India starting next month. "Haris Rauf is not bad, he has a little bit side strain but will recover before the

World Cup," said Azam. "Naseem Shah has missed a couple of matches but I don't know about his recovery. But in my opinion he will be in the World Cup." The pace duo's absence was felt when Pakistan failed to defend 252 in their 42-over-a-side match against Sri Lanka. Charith Asalanka steered his side home in that game, hitting a four and a double off the

last two balls, bowled by debutant Zaman Khan. "Definitely when you lose your best bowlers, that costs you and your team," Azam said after the match. "We were not short of effort but didn't finish well." Zaman, a fast bowler who made an impression in the Pakistan Super League, needed to defend eight runs and bowled the first four for just two, including a wicket. But the left-handed Asalanka, who made 49, had the home crowd rejoicing with his winning strike to take Sri Lanka, who won the last edition of the tournament, into their 11th Asia Cup final. Azam said the team would learn from their mistakes to put on a better show in India next month, where they will meet the hosts in a hotly anticipated October 14 clash in Ahmedabad. "In fielding we lacked the kind of response that we should have got. In the bowling, there is an issue in the middle overs," said Azam. "We will try to learn from them and will clear them before going into the World Cup."

Kuss closes
in on Vuelta a
Espana glory

BARCELONA: Sepp Kuss took a big step towards winning the Vuelta a Espana as the American kept the red jersey after stage 18, won by Remco Evenepoel in another solo triumph on Thursday. Jumbo-Visma rider Kuss, usually a domestique for star team-mates Jonas Vingegaard and Primoz Roglic, was helped by the more illustrious duo to hold on to his slender lead on the last major mountain stage of this Vuelta. The Dutch team seem to have decided that Kuss should win a Grand Tour for the first time, after he took the general classification lead and held it from stage eight onwards. The slender climber Kuss increased his lead on second placed Vingegaard by nine seconds after the back-to-back Tour de France winner eased up in the finale to leave the American with a 17 seconds advantage atop the overall standings. Third is three-time Vuelta winner and Giro d'Italia champion Roglic, one minute and eight seconds behind Kuss, with Jumbo-Visma set to become the first team to win all three Grand Tours in a single year. Soudal-QuickStep rider Evenepoel, who finished four minutes 44 seconds ahead of second placed Damiano Caruso, recorded his 50th career victory. The tricky 179 kilometre run in Asturias from Pola de Allande to La Cruz de Linares with five classified climbs promised excitement. A strong early breakaway roared off ahead, including Evenepoel, who has clinched the blue and white jersey for the Vuelta's best climber. The reigning champion eventually dropped most of the break with Caruso and 20-year-old Max Poole sticking with him for a while. Evenepoel, whose Grand Tour defence collapsed last week on Tourmalet, has been reborn since and captured his third stage win on Thursday — nobody has more. The Belgian tapped his head as he headed to the line in the Vuelta's final mountain finish as he also assured the King of the Mountains jersey. — Agencies

Moscow says
won't boycott Paris
Olympics 2024

PARIS: Russia's Olympic Committee has clarified that Moscow will not boycott the 2024 Olympics in Paris stating it "leads to nowhere". In a briefing on Thursday, Stanislav Pozdnyakov, President of the Russian Olympic Committee, said "boycotting the Games leads to nowhere." Russian athletes will have the choice to participate or not under a neutral banner, he added. Despite the sanctions placed on athletes from Russia and Belarus due to Russia's conflict with Ukraine, the International Olympic Committee has recommended allowing them to compete as individual neutrals in international competitions. Pozdnyakov emphasized the importance of individual choice, stating, "We live together in a free state. Every person can, if they so wish, take the path of competing under a neutral banner." He also mentioned that Russian President Vladimir Putin has made it clear that this decision is a matter of personal moral choice. However, Pozdnyakov expressed concerns about the current recommendations, describing them as prohibitive and potentially preventing a significant number of Russian athletes from participating in the Olympic Games. — Agencies

Lamine Yamal star rising as
Barcelona host Real Betis

SPAIN: Young Barcelona winger Lamine Yamal broke records for Spain in the past week and can continue to add to his collection against Real Betis on Saturday. The winger became Spain's youngest-ever player, starter and goalscorer during the international break at 16 years old, and is establishing himself as important for club and country. Lamine Yamal became Barcelona's youngest debutant at 15 years and 290 days old against Betis in April last season. This season he went on to become La Liga's youngest starter in the 21st century, and also the youngest assist provider in the same time frame. Lamine Yamal has not scored for Barcelona yet but if he does this season, he can overtake Ansu Fati's club record — or the overall record for youngest La Liga scorer, set by Malaga's Fabrice Olinga at 16 years

and 98 days old. The winger was man of the match in Barcelona's 4-3 win at Villarreal in August and has started the club's last three games, all victories. Barcelona, third, trail rivals and league leaders Real Madrid by two points after four matches, because of their opening day draw at Getafe. That was the match which prompted Xavi to turn to Yamal to offer some creative spark, as well as a red card for Raphinha opening up a position on the right flank. Ousmane Dembelle's departure to Paris Saint-Germain in the summer was another factor in giving Yamal an opportunity at such a tender age. "He's a mature player despite being 16," said Barca coach Xavi earlier in September. "He's conscious of what he's going through and he's happy, the management (of the situation) is very good and for now, there are no problems." — Agencies

'Imran can't
be allowed
to speak...

FROM PAGE 01
argued that jail rules do not allow the accused facing charges under the Official Secrets Act to speak over phone. He further contended that the court order permitting Khan to contact his sons was not violated. "According to the Prisoners Act, 1978, prisoners are not allowed to make calls on foreign telephone numbers," he wrote. The presiding judge then directed the jail superintendent to present his arguments on September 18 before the court. Khan has been incarcerated in Attock prison since his arrest on August 05 after a trial convicted him in the Toshakhana case. After the Islamabad High Court (IHC) suspended his sentence in the Toshakhana case, the authorities arrested him in the cipher case wherein he is in judicial custody till September 26. Last month, he was granted permission by the special court, formed to hear cases registered under Official Secrets Act, to speak to his sons.

ECP gears up
for general
elections...

FORM PAGE 01
the ECP sources said that the Election Commission of Pakistan has the authority of announcing the election date. The ECP is likely to announce the schedule of general elections in the first week of December 2023. Earlier, President Arif Alvi suggested November 6, 2023, as the date for general elections in Pakistan in a letter addressed to Chief Election Commissioner. President Arif Alvi noted that the National Assembly was dissolved on Prime Minister's advice on August 9, 2023, and the Constitution of Pakistan empowers the president to announce a date for general election "not later than ninety days from the date of the dissolution of Assembly i.e. Monday, November 06, 2023.

Only polls
could take
country...

FROM PAGE 01
is officially published." With elections potentially just a few months away, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has been engaging in public gatherings and organising party meetings as part of the party's electoral preparations of late. One such highly-anticipated meeting of the PPP's Central Executive Committee was held today. Speaking to the media after the meeting, Bilawal said the announcement of an election date and schedule was the only way to dispel the "confusion and atmosphere of instability and insecurity" prevalent in the country.

Nawaz will
return as
per schedule

FROM PAGE 01
Nawaz Sharif will travel to Pakistan on October 21 as scheduled. Muhammad Zubair expressed that the Supreme Court's decision regarding the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Amendments case was anticipated. He emphasized that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had no objections or concerns regarding this particular judicial decision. Earlier in the day, corruption cases against several politicians including former prime ministers Nawaz Sharif, Yousuf Raza Gillani, former President Asif Ali Zardari and others have been restored after the Supreme Court struck down NAB amendments made during PDM govt tenure. The Supreme Court of Pakistan struck down amendments made to National Accountability Bureau (NAB) laws as it announced its reserved verdict on the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman's plea.

Commerce Minister visits Air Headquarters, meets CAS

CAS reiterated PAF's resolve to work hand-in-hand with sister services in order to ensure impenetrable defence of Pakistan. He also shared his vision to broaden the efficacy and capacity building of PAF in face of contemporary challenges through synergy and joint efforts

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Commerce Minister, Dr. Gohar Ejaz, visited Air Headquarters, Islamabad to call on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force. During the meeting, matters pertaining to evolving geo-strategic environment and regional security situation were discussed. During the meeting, CAS reiterated PAF's resolve to work hand-in-hand with sister services in order to ensure impenetrable defence of Pakistan. He also shared his vision to broaden the efficacy and capacity building of Pakistan Air Force in the face of contemporary challenges through synergy and joint efforts. The Air Chief briefed the visiting dignitary about the newly established National Aerospace

Science and Technology Park (NASTP) which is an integral project of Pakistan Air Force. Sharing his views about NASTP, Chief of the Air Staff said, "The project

provides world class state-of-the-art ecosystem of all required elements for nurturing design, R&D and innovation in the aviation, outer-space, information technol-

ogy and cyber domains." The Air Chief further highlighted that the project has been put under the newly-formed Special Investment Facilitation Council

(SIFC) for attracting foreign direct investment and is bound to bring economic, security and scientific dividends for the country. The Commerce Minister commended the efforts made by Pakistan Airforce in indigenization of the defence production and termed NASTP a project of strategic national importance. He said that the project would help in creating opportunities for collaboration between government, industry, and academia. Praising the vision of PAF leadership the Commerce Minister further said, "Pakistan Airforce has one of the best quality indigenous production in the world which presents prospects for exporting these capabilities, that would not only contribute to the country's foreign exchange reserves but, more significantly, enhance the honor and prestige of the Pakistan Air Force."



Briefs

Greta Thunberg charged for second oil port blockade

DNA

STOCKHOLM: Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has been charged with disobeying a police order to leave a protest at a busy port in Sweden, months after she was convicted of a similar offence. She was fined in July for refusing to leave a protest on a road for oil transport from Malmö harbour. After the verdict, Ms Thunberg and other activists returned to the port and were again removed by police. Her second trial is scheduled for 27 September. In a statement, Swedish prosecutor Isabel Ekberg said the demonstration on 24 July had not been authorised and had disrupted traffic. Ms Thunberg was demonstrating at the port in southern Sweden alongside the group Reclaim the Future. They attempted to prevent traffic from getting in and out, in order to protest the use of fossil fuels. The protest took place hours after Ms Thunberg had been convicted and fined 2,500 Swedish Krona (£180; \$224) for a protest in the same port on 19 June.

Dominican Republic to close all borders with Haiti

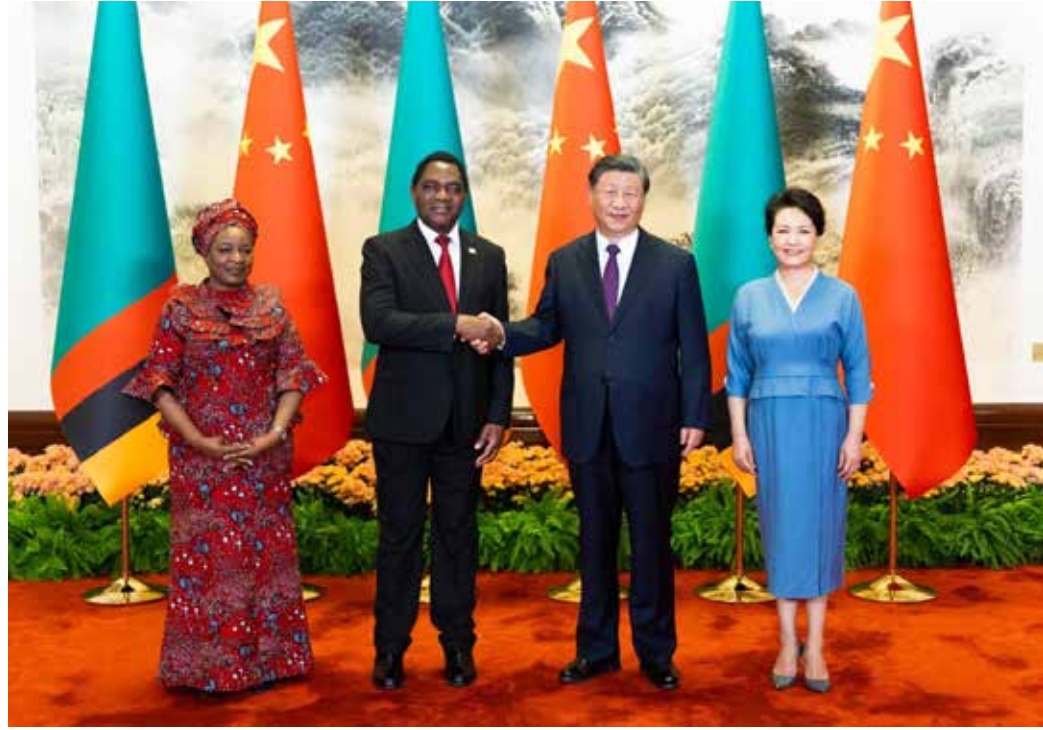
BOGOTA : The Dominican Republic will close its air, land and sea borders with neighboring Haiti on Friday, President Luis Abinader announced in the wake of a conflict arising from the construction of a water canal originating from a shared river. "As of 6 a.m. (1000GMT), tomorrow, Friday, the entire border of the Dominican Republic – both land, sea and air – will be closed," Abinader said Thursday at a military camp, where he delivered 20 armored command and transport vehicles to the army. "It will be closed for as long as necessary for this provocative action to stop," he added. Officials from both nations convened on Wednesday in the Dominican Republic to address a dispute that arose from the use of the Massacre River, which runs along their shared border on the island of Hispaniola. Dominican authorities claim the canal would divert water from the river, causing harm to local farmers and the environment. Santo Domingo had already suspended the issuance of visas to Haitian nationals earlier in the week and closed the Dajabon border crossing, one of the most important, where a binational market operates twice a week. "It is a totally inadequate construction, without any kind of engineering." —APP

UN weather agency warns climate threatens

UNITED NATION: The UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has, in a report released on Thursday, warned that insufficient progress towards climate goals is slowing down the global fight against poverty, hunger and deadly diseases. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres echoed that message, warning that record temperatures and extreme weather were "causing havoc" around the world. The global response has fallen "far short", the UN chief insisted, just as the latest UN data indicates that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are only 15 per cent on track at the midway point of the 2030 Agenda. According to WMO, a Geneva-based agency, current policies will lead to global warming of at least 2.8 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels over the course of this century – well above the Paris Agreement target of 1.5°C. This year's northern hemisphere summer has been the hottest on record, prompting the UN chief last week to reiterate his call for a "surge in action". —APP

Xi, Hichilema announce elevation of China-Zambia ties

Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan pose for a group photo with Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema and his wife Mutinta before the talks between Xi and Hichilema in Beijing, capital of China, Sept. 15, 2023. Xi held talks with Hichilema, who is paying a state visit to China, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Friday.



BEIJING : Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks with his Zambian counterpart, Hakainde Hichilema, in Beijing on Friday. The two heads of state announced the elevation of the China-Zambia relations to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership. Xi said that the traditional friendship forged by the two countries' older generations of leaders has stood the test of the changing international landscape, and the Tanzania-Zambia Railway has become a symbol of China-Africa friendship. Xi said China has always viewed and developed China-Zambia relations from a strategic and long-term perspective, and stands ready to work with Zambia to transform the profound traditional friendship into a strong driving force for win-win cooperation in the new era and push bilateral relations to a new level. The Chinese president said China supports Zambia in safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests and exploring a development path suited to its own conditions. He expressed China's willingness to strengthen inter-party exchanges and exchanges of state governance experience with Zambia. The two countries should support each other on issues related to their respective core interests and major concerns. The success of Chinese modernization shows the diversity of modernization

models in the world, and China's high-quality development and modernization process will continue to bring new opportunities to all countries including Zambia, Xi said. China hopes to jointly build the Belt and Road with Zambia and expand cooperation in infrastructure construction, agriculture, mining and clean energy to achieve common development and revitalization, Xi said.

Xi said China encourages more quality Zambian products to enter the Chinese market and supports more Chinese enterprises in investing in Zambia. He called on the two sides to make a success of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties next year, and step up exchanges and cooperation in education and training, health care, culture, tourism and other

of the two countries and other developing countries. Hichilema said Zambia cherishes the friendship forged by the older generations of leaders of the two countries. China's development has led to the progress of countries in the Global South, increased their representation and voice in international affairs, and promoted the development of international order in a more just and rational direction, Hichilema said. Hichilema said Zambia thanks China for supporting the African Union's entry into the G20 and China's positive role in resolving the Zambian debt issue. The Zambian side abides by the one-China principle, highly appreciates the guiding philosophy and principles of Chinese modernization, and hopes to learn from China's development experience. Full text: Joint Statement between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Zambia on Establishing the Comprehensive Strategic and Cooperative Partnership. Chinese President Xi Jinping holds a welcoming ceremony for his Zambian counterpart Hakainde Hichilema at the square outside the east entrance of the Great Hall of the People before their talks in Beijing, capital of China, Sept. 15, 2023. Xi held talks with Hichilema, who is paying a state visit to China, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Friday.

Iran seizes 2 foreign tankers in fuel smuggling

TEHRAN : Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) seized two foreign-flagged oil tankers allegedly smuggling more than 1.5 million liters of fuel in the Persian Gulf.

The tankers with Panama and Tanzania flags were held by IRGC Navy, Iranian media quoted Adm. Mohammad-Sharif Shirali, deputy commander of the IRGC Navy's Third Naval Zone, as saying. He said the 37-member crew on board the two vessels were handed to judicial authorities for necessary legal procedures. The official, providing details of the operation, said the IRGC Navy stationed in Mahshahr Port in southern Khuzestan province had for the past two days closely monitored the two foreign oil tankers and eventually seized them on judicial orders. Iranian naval forces have on several occasions in recent years seized foreign-flagged vessels in the Persian Gulf for alleged smuggling of fuel or violation of maritime rules. In July, a Bahamas-flagged oil tanker Richmond Voyager was seized after it allegedly ran into an Iranian vessel in the Sea of Oman in southern Hormozgan province. After the incident, the US Navy issued a statement saying it sent a guided-missile destroyer USS McFaul in response to a distress call from the Bahamas-flagged tanker after Iranian authorities asked the tanker to stop and fired shots at it.—DNA

Hungary criticizes unjust accusations in NATO

LONDON : Hungary's foreign minister slammed Swedish politicians for making "unfair and unjust" remarks about the state of democracy in his country, saying this "definitely does not help" along the ratification process for Sweden's bid to join NATO. In a letter to his Swedish counterpart Tobias Billstrom, Peter Szijarto said he previously spoke with him about "biased, negative, (and) unjust accusations" by Swedish politicians against his country. He informed Billstrom that Hungarian lawmakers had read in the news that "as part of your school curriculum... serious accusations and fake information are being spread to the students in the schools of Sweden suggesting that democracy has been on a backslide in Hungary in recent years." "You urge our parliamentarians to ratify your accession to NATO while you continue to accuse them of destroying democracy in Hungary," said Szijarto. "This contradiction... definitely does not help your continuously raised demand to be fulfilled," he added. Sweden applied for NATO membership along with Finland shortly after Russia launched its war on Ukraine in February 2022.

Billion of people face high levels of acute food insecurity

LONDON : Around 238 million people face high levels of acute food insecurity in 48 countries in 2023, according to the Global Report on Food Crises released Thursday. Based on data available as of early August, the 2023 mid-year update showed that some 33.64 million people face "emergency conditions" in 36 countries while 128,600 people face "catastrophe conditions" in four countries. The report's findings indicated that South Sudan has the highest share at 63% followed by Yemen (52%-55%), Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Haiti and Sudan each have more than 40% of their population in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Phase 3 or above. "In these 48 countries, 21.6 million more people face high levels of acute food insecurity than in 2022 (a 10 percent increase), bringing the number to 238 million," it said.—APP

Global aid effort intensifies for flood-stricken Libya

NEWS DESK

DERNA A global aid effort for Libya gathered pace after a tsunami-sized flash flood killed at least 4,000 people, with thousands more missing – a death toll the UN blamed in part on the legacy of years of war and chaos. The enormous surge of stormwater burst two upstream dams late Sunday and reduced the city of Derna to an apocalyptic wasteland where entire city blocks and untold numbers of people were washed into the Mediterranean. "Within seconds the water level suddenly rose," recounted one injured survivor who said he was swept away with his mother in the late-

night ordeal before they both managed to cling onto and scramble into an empty building downstream. "The water was rising with us until we got to the fourth floor, the water was up to the second floor," the unidentified man said from his hospital bed, in testimony published by the Benghazi Medical Center. "We could hear screams. From the window I saw cars and bodies being carried away by the water. It lasted an hour or an hour and a half – but for us, it felt like a year." Hundreds of body bags now line Derna's mud-caked streets, awaiting mass burials, as traumatised and grieving residents search mangled buildings for missing loved ones and bulldozers clear streets of debris

and mountains of sand. In one shattered home, a rescue team pumped out the water to reveal a woman's lifeless arms still clutching her dead child, an AFP correspondent reported. This disaster was violent and brutal," said Yann Fridez, the head of the Libya delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which had a team in Derna when the floodwaters hit. "A wave seven metres (23 feet) high wiped out buildings and washed infrastructure into the sea. Now family members are missing, dead bodies are washing back up on shore and homes are destroyed." Access to Derna in the east remains severely hampered as roads and bridges

have been destroyed and power and phone lines cut to wide areas, where at least 30,000 people are now homeless. The catastrophe's true death toll remained unknown, and officials have provided conflicting numbers. A total of 3,840 bodies had been recovered, said Lieutenant Tarek al-Kharraz, spokesman for the interior ministry of the administration ruling eastern Libya. But many more people may have been washed out to sea or buried in the sand by the wall of muddy water that tore through the city overnight from Sunday to Monday, peaking as high as the second storey of buildings.

Ukraine troops retake Bakhmut village

KYIV: Ukraine said on Friday it had recaptured the devastated eastern village of Andriivka, setting the stage for further advances on the southern flank of Bakhmut, the city that fell into Russian hands in May after months of heavy fighting. Kyiv's troops were securing their foothold in the area, while Russian forces suffered significant casualties and lost equipment, the Ukrainian General Staff said in a morning report. There was no immediate comment from Russia. "In the course of assault operations, they seized Andriivka in Donetsk region," the General Staff said. The village of Andriivka lies south of Bakhmut, the site of the fiercest and longest battle since the invasion by Russia in February last year. The General Staff also reported "partial success" near Klishchiivka, a village also south of Bakhmut. "Capturing and holding Andriivka – is our path to a breakthrough on the right flank of Bakhmut and the key to the success of the entire further offensive," said the Third Assault Brigade, which took part in the push. Ukraine advanced cautiously in the area to minimize losses from mines and "very active" Russian defenses, brigade spokesman Oleksandr Borodin said. "They defend their flanks very heavily here because they understand if (their) flank falls completely it will create direct problems to hold the city (Bakhmut) itself," he said. "There is no Andriivka left per se... but as a place, as a square, it is an important square," he said in televised comments.—APP

Top US general expresses regrets over Afghanistan

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley expressed "lots of regrets" about the way the US war in Afghanistan concluded and said it did not align with his desired outcome. The top general acknowledged that "in a broader sense, the war was lost." "It didn't end the way I wanted it. That didn't end the way any of us wanted it," Milley said in an interview with ABC News. "Look, at – when the enemy is occupying your capital... that's a strategic setback, strategic failure. And there's no way you can describe that as a strategic success." He said US forces were fighting the Taliban and their allies for more than 20 years. And they prevailed in that capital for a lot of reasons that we don't have time to go over today. But, sure, lots of regrets by a lot of us from, from 9/11 on," he said. Milley said wars are not lost in the last 10 days or 10 months but are the cumulative effect of lots of turns and twists over many. "And this war, when the final history is written, will prove to be the same. Lots of lessons learned. Lots of lefts when you should have gone right. And that'll all come out in due time. But lots of regrets, absolutely, 100%. Every single soldier I lost is a regret," he said. The US lost 2,400 service members in Afghanistan



ISLAMABAD: Kazakhstan Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin called on the Federal Minister for Commerce Dr. Gohar Ejaz to discuss regional connectivity and bilateral trade at the Commerce Ministry.—DNA

Serbia, Kosovo talks break down again: Borrell

The two have been at odds for decades, their 1998-99 war killing more than 10,000 people, mostly Kosovo Albanians

NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS : Talks between the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo on improving ties failed to make a breakthrough after Pristina rejected an EU compromise proposal, the bloc's foreign policy chief said. "We tried hard but, unfortunately, it was not possible to bridge the differences today," said the EU's top diplomat Josep Borrell. Brussels has been trying for years to resolve the long-running dispute between Balkan neighbours that has soured relations since their war more than two decades ago. The EU believed it had broken the logjam by hammering out a plan to normalise ties in March,

but since then there has been minimal progress. Kosovo insists it wants Serbia to make the first move by taking steps towards officially recognising its independence. Belgrade wants to progress first on a deal to create an association of 10 Serb-majority municipalities in Kosovo. Borrell said he had proposed launching the two processes in "parallel" in a bid to make headway. But Kosovo's Prime Minister Albin Kurti rejected this proposal, he said, even though it was accepted by Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic. Vucic said the talks had "ended unsuccessfully" after his counterpart's refusal. Kurti blamed the Serbian side for the failure, insisting there was "full readiness" from the Kosovan

side to implement the March plan. Borrell said there had also been no progress on efforts to defuse the dispute on elections in northern Kosovo that sparked unrest in May. Violence erupted after ethnic Albanian mayors were installed following contentious polls, with 93 NATO peacekeepers injured in clashes with ethnic Serb protesters. Borrell warned that steps taken by Kosovo to de-escalate the tensions by holding new elections "fell very short" of international requests. He insisted the mayors should resign. "We cannot sit and wait for the next crisis," Borrell said. The stalemate was hurting both Serbia and Kosovo's desire to one day join the 27-nation bloc, he warned. "At the end of the day, those who

suffer more for the inability of their leaders to stay true to their words are the citizens," he added. "This is particularly worrying at a time when the European Union is so clearly moving forward on enlargement." Historical tensions Kosovo is a mainly ethnic Albanian-populated territory that was formerly a province of Serbia. It declared independence in 2008, but Belgrade has refused to recognise the move. The two have been at odds for decades, their 1998-99 war killing more than 10,000 people, mostly Kosovo Albanians. Serbia has refused to recognise Kosovo's statehood and still considers it part of Serbia, even though it does not have formal control there. Kosovo's independence has been recognised by about 100 countries, in-

cluding the US. However, Russia, China and five EU nations have sided with Serbia. The deadlock has kept tensions simmering and prevented complete stabilisation of the Balkan region after the bloody wars in the 1990s. There are widespread fears in the West that Moscow could use Belgrade to reignite ethnic conflicts in the Balkans, which experienced a series of bloody conflicts in the 1990s during the break-up of Yugoslavia, to draw world attention away from the war. But at the same time, Kurti – a longtime Kosovo independence activist who spent time in prisons in Serbia and Kosovo – has frustrated the Europeans and proven difficult for negotiators to work with since he became prime minister in 2021.

Briefs

McCarthy challenges colleagues to try to oust him

WASHINGTON: Angry, frustrated and unable to lead a fractured and unruly Republican majority, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy on Thursday told the colleagues threatening to oust him: Do it. The embattled Republican leader essentially dared his hard-right flank to quit holding the risk of a vote to remove him from the job. If you're going to do it, go ahead and try, McCarthy told the Republicans behind closed doors. "File the f--- motion," McCarthy said, using a profanity for emphasis, according to those in the private meeting.

With a government shutdown looming, McCarthy is confronting the same stubborn problem that has driven Republicans before him from the speaker's job — trying to lead a ruptured GOP majority that's split between what's left of the traditional party and a harder-right element largely allied with former President Donald Trump.

Even his decision to launch an impeachment inquiry against President Joe Biden did little this week to appease the demands of the Freedom Caucus and others as they threaten to shut down the government in pursuit of deep spending cuts or move to a motion to oust him from office. "I showed frustration in here because I am frustrated with some people in the conference," McCarthy said after the meeting in the Capitol basement as lawmakers were wrapping up for the week. — Agencies

Bangladesh jails activists for reporting killings

DNA

DHAKA: A Bangladesh court has sentenced two prominent human rights activists to two years in jail, in what critics say is part of a crackdown ahead of elections. Aditur Rahman Khan and Nasiruddin Elan from rights group Odhikar always denied decade-old charges that they published a report with false information. But prosecutors said their report on security force killings in 2013 "undermined" the country's image. The two were convicted on Thursday in Dhaka after a 10-year judicial process.

Dozens of international human rights groups have called for the two men's immediate release, saying the pair were denied a fair trial. Both activists have spent decades documenting thousands of alleged extrajudicial killings, disappearances of opposition activists and police brutalities in Bangladesh. They were convicted for a report Odhikar published in 2013 about a protest by an Islamist group which had sought to impose a stricter form of the religion on Bangladeshi society. Their report documented that security forces killed at least 61 people, including children, in an overnight operation in Dhaka to remove protesters.

Speakers stress importance and opportunities of BRI

First diplomats' discourse organized at Foreign Service Academy



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: First Diplomat's Discourse on "Regional Connectivity: In Asian Context" was convened at Foreign Service Academy, Islamabad. Besides several Islamabad based Ambassadors, diplomats, think-tank representatives, serving and former Pakistani Ambassadors, undertraining Foreign

Service of Pakistan officers as well as ASEAN Country diplomats currently undergoing training at the Academy attended the event. One-day event was organized in collaboration with COMSATS University, Islamabad and Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI). Inaugural Session was addressed by Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, newly arrived Ambassador of China to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Jiang Ziadong and Director General For-

eign Service Academy, Ambassador Mazhar Javed. Two panel discussions were held, one themed around BRI and ASEAN and the other on Pakistan as the hub of regional connectivity. Participants included Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Ambassadors of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan in Pakistan, Pakistan Ambassadors to Philippines, Thailand, UAE, Oman and Azerbaijan and former Ambassador of Pakistan to China Ms. Nagh-

mana Hashmi and former Ambassador to Indonesia Mr. Muhammad Hassan. Speakers underlined the importance of Belt and Road Initiative and the opportunities it had for participating countries. Pakistan's potential to become a hub of regional connectivity was highlighted. Progress already made in that direction and what was needed to be done came under discussion. Discussions were followed by a lively question-and-answer session.

Indonesian aircraft grounded at Karachi airport

KARACHI: An Indonesian aviation company's aircraft has been immobilized at Karachi Airport for the past three weeks due to an unexpected technical fault. The ATR aircraft was en route from Indonesia to the United Arab Emirates when it encountered technical difficulties, demanding an unexpected stopover at Jinnah International Airport, Karachi, Pakistan. According to sources, the Indonesian private aircraft initially landed at Karachi Airport for refueling. However, unforeseen technical issues arose during this stopover, preventing the plane from resuming its journey to the UAE. In response to the situation, PIA swiftly mobilized its engineering team to assess and address the aircraft's technical woes. Sources close to the development revealed that the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is closely monitoring the inspection and repair process, ensuring adherence to safety protocols and aviation standards. Remarkably, the flight crew, which had been on board the aircraft during the ordeal, departed for Jakarta, Indonesia, aboard another plane provided by the Indonesian aviation company. — APP

Shamshad sees 'signs of economic recovery'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Finance Minister Shamshad Akhtar has claimed that the current macroeconomic indicators showed that the country's economy is recovering. She made the remarks a day after the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) kept the interest rate unchanged at 22% for the next couple of months. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to maintain the policy rate at 22%. This decision takes into account the latest inflation outlook reflecting the continuing declining trend in inflation from its peak of 38% in May to 27.4% in August 2023. Addressing a joint press conference flanked by caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi and Minister for Energy, Power and Petroleum Muhammad Ali on Friday, Akhtar said: "The macroeconomic indicators, if you view them, you can find some betterment. There are some

signs of economic recovery. Even if it is just starting." While deliberating upon the indicators showing positive development, the finance minister said the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has shortly declined from over 38% in May to 27.2% now, adding this was an important indicator to show betterment. She said the caretaker setup had inherited several challenges, however, it was not frightened by them and tried to deal with them one by one, adding that the government's strategy was to prudently manage the challenges, make efforts to control expenditure and enhance revenues, which would help improve the situation. She said the country had come out of some difficulties and the situation would improve further when 'we go forward.' Akhtar said the productive sectors witnessed betterment, including agriculture, which is expected to yield good output in both minor and major crops that would have a positive impact on the economic growth prospects

of the country. The minister said the industrial sector was also showing improvement, citing growth in the cement industry adding that as soon as the activity picks up gradually the industry would also grow. Talking about the services sector, the minister said it is a very vibrant sector and has been linked with every sector. In addition, she said, the SBP had kept interest rates stagnant which would also help improve the situation by reducing the cost of borrowing by industry and help its revival. She said the government had also talked to donors, expressing the hope that in addition to the normal flows from them, funding in some areas would be fast-tracked. The finance minister said the government was expecting around \$2 billion in assistance on a fast-track basis. "The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is expected to keep its funding under Revitalising Informal Settlements and their Environments (RISE) on fast track."

UK, Germany and France to keep nuclear sanctions on Iran

LONDON: The UK, France and Germany are to retain sanctions on Iran in an attempt to deter Tehran from selling drones and missiles to Russia. In 2015 Iran agreed to a nuclear deal and, under the terms, some sanctions were due to be lifted next month. However, the European nations believe Iran breached the deal by enriching and storing uranium. Iran says their move is "illegal and provocative" and "clearly violated" the terms of the nuclear deal. European diplomatic sources said the decision was driven not just by a desire to prevent Iran gaining economically, but also to try to reduce the possibility of Tehran transferring ballistic missiles to Russia. Tehran has already sold many drones to Moscow which have been used against Ukraine. The UK, France and Germany said the sanctions were designed "to maintain nuclear proliferation-related measures on Iran, as well as arms and missile embargoes". The European powers - known collectively as E3 - announced that they would incorporate expiring UN sanctions into their own laws. Despite the sanctions, many drones made in Iran have been used by Russia in its war against Ukraine. Separately, the UK has announced sanctions against officials responsible for drafting and implementing Iran's mandatory hijab legislation, including the culture minister and mayor of Iran's capital Tehran. The move comes ahead of the first anniversary of the death of Mahsa Amini. Her killing after being arrested by morality police for allegedly breaking hijab rules kicked off a wave of protests. Iran agreed to the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with a group of world powers known as the P5+1 - US, UK, France, China, Russia and Germany - eight years ago. — Agencies

US envoy questions China defence minister's absence

TOKYO: A top US diplomat has questioned the absence of China's defence minister Li Shangfu, renewing speculation of a possible corruption purge. General Li has been seen in public for about two weeks and has reportedly missed several meetings. Rahm Emanuel, the US envoy to Japan, speculated on Mr Li's absence, tweeting that the "unemployment rate" in the Chinese government was very high. Mr Li's absence follows recent axings of several top military officials. Citing sources in the US and China, The Wall Street Journal reported on Friday that Mr Li is being removed from his post. It also comes months after foreign minister Qin Gang disappeared from public view. Mr Qin's sudden absence and replacement in July has still not been fully explained. In Gen Li's case too, the Chinese government has not said much. When asked about it earlier this week, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman had reportedly said she was "not aware of the situation". Gen Li's last public appearance was three weeks ago - on 29 August - in Beijing at a security forum with African nations. It is not unusual for defence ministers to be absent from the public view for a few weeks. An aerospace engineer who began his career at a satellite and rocket launch centre, Gen Li has had a smooth ascent through the ranks of the military and Chinese political elite. Just like Mr Qin, he is said to be a favourite of President Xi Jinping. He is also the second cabinet minister and state councillor, after Mr Qin, to have gone missing in recent months. Speculation of a military corruption purge first began to mount online in early August when two generals in China's rocket forces, which control land-based missiles, were replaced. The president of the army's military court was also removed months after his appointment. In tweets last week and on Friday, Mr Emanuel highlighted Gen Li's absence while referring to the disappearance of Mr Qin and the other military officials. He also pointed out that Gen Li had been a "no-show" for a trip to Vietnam and a Beijing meeting with Singapore's navy chief recently, alleging that Gen Li could have been placed on house arrest. — Agencies

PIA to partially halt its domestic, international flight operation

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The debt-ridden Pakistan International Airlines could not fly out of its financial crunch as the national flag carrier has decided to partially ground its domestic and international flight operation, reported a private news channel on Friday. Once vibrant and growing PIA has now stuck into a steep financial debt amounting to billions of rupees that the airlines is even unable to pay salaries to its employees and purchase fuel for its aircraft. The financial crunch has forced the PIA to resort to its Plan B according to which, the airlines will partially bring to halt its domestic and international flight operation. Sources said that the national flag carrier was banking on the interim government but the government could not bail it out, leaving it in the lurch.

According to Plan B, the PIA will limit its flight operation by 15% to 25%. The airlines will reduce its operation on less earning or unimportant routes. Sources said that the national flag carrier will limit its domestic flight operation in the first phase while in the second leg of its operation, the PIA will reduce its international flights. The domestic routes where PIA flights will be reduced include: Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Gilgit and Skardu. In the second phase, the PIA will cut flights on international routes including UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and many other Gulf countries. The debt-ridden national flag carrier has grounded 16 of its aircraft so far. The airlines has paid August salaries only to its lower staff while officers and flight crew have yet to be paid. Sources said that the PIA needs Rs1.40 billion to pay salaries to its employees every month. According to an AFP report, the national flag carrier admitted Fri-

day it was struggling to pay bills and wages after reports said the fleet may be grounded within days. Abdullah Hafeez, spokesman for PIA, said the company was seeking urgent financial help from the treasury, but had secured funds "for the time being". "But we do struggle due to balance sheet challenges," he said. "That is why PIA is seeking balance sheet restructuring support from the owners." Decades of mismanagement and instability have hobbled Pakistan's economy, and this year Islamabad was forced into a deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to avert default. State-run enterprises in particular - long accused of being bloated and poorly run - have found funds drying up as the government struggles with a balance of payments crisis caused by crippling debt repayments. Hafeez said three flights were grounded Thursday and that salaries had been paid late.

MDCAT won't be re-conducted: PMDC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) held a meeting regarding the analysis of the National Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) exam where vice chancellors of the provincial universities were invited. The PMDC president directed the authorities concerned to re-check the question papers, analyse discrepancy in the paper and conduct an inquiry against those involved in using unfair methods in the examination. It was also decided to not reconduct MDCAT.

In the meeting, President PMDC urged the authorities to resolve all exam-related issues on priority basis without any delay. He said the universities should declare their results through their official websites as soon as possible. It was also decided in the meeting that the results would also be available on PMDC websites. Jinnah Sindh University will announce the results after the inquiry and the MDCAT examination will not be re-conducted.

Libya floods: death toll reaches 11,300

DNA

JEDDAH: An unprecedented aid operation was underway in eastern Libya on Thursday amid fears that the final death toll from a tsunami-sized flash flood could be more than 20,000. The enormous surge of storm water burst two upstream dams late on Sunday and reduced the city of Derna to an apocalyptic wasteland where entire city blocks and untold numbers of people were washed into the Mediterranean.

"Within seconds the water level suddenly rose," said one injured survivor who was swept away with his mother before they managed to cling on to an empty building downstream. "The water was rising with us until we got to the fourth floor, the water was up to the second floor." Aid has been sent or promised by regional states including Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Tunisia, Turkey and the UAE.

The US has also pledged to help, and in Europe the aid effort has been joined by Britain, Finland, France, Germany, Italy and Romania. Derna Mayor Abdulmenam Al-Ghaithi said deaths in the city could reach 20,000, based on the extent of the damage. The death toll in Derna is now at 11,300 as search efforts continue following a massive flood fed by the breaching of two dams in heavy rains. Marie El-Dresse, secretary-general of Libyan Red Crescent, said that a further 10,100 are reported missing. The World Meteorological Organization said the huge death toll could have been avoided if Libya, a failed state for more than a decade, had a functioning weather agency. "They could have issued warnings," Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said. "The emergency management authorities would have been able to carry out evacuation of the people. And we could have avoided most of the human casualties."

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