



Islamabad POST

Friday, September 15, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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President Joe Biden brushes off House impeachment inquiry

Detailed News On Page-08

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Detailed News On Page-07

Carlos Alcaraz ruled out of Davis Cup

Detailed News On Page-06

Briefs

Hamdullah injured in Mastung blast

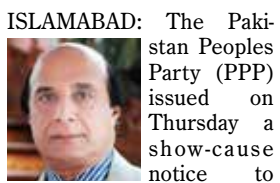
DNA



MASTUNG: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) leader Hamdullah on Thursday sustained injuries in a blast that took place in Mastung, Balochistan. According to initial reports, the blast took place near a vehicle which injured Hamdullah and several others. Police rushed to the site of the incident and cordoned off the area. Mustang Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razaq Sasoli said several people were injured in the Mustang blast and added that the three injured including the JUI-F leader had been shifted to a hospital in Quetta. The official said the JUI-F leader was provided initial medical aid in Mastung before being shifted to the provincial capital for further treatment. He said the JUI-F leader's condition is out of danger. Speaking to media, JUI-F spokesperson Aslam Ghauri said Hamdullah sustained injuries but his condition is not critical.

Latif Khosa served show-cause notice

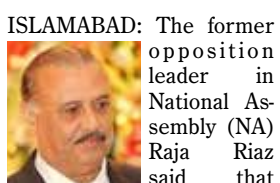
MEHTAB PIRZADA



ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) issued on Thursday a show-cause notice to senior party leader and lawyer Sardar Latif Khosa for violating the party policy by defending the head of another political party – the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The notice, issued by PPP's Secretary General Nayar Bokhari, asked Khosa to explain why disciplinary action should not be taken against him. "You being a member of Central Executive Committee of Pakistan [Peoples Party] are defending/pleading/representing a head of another political party without prior approval of leadership in corruption cases in which he has been convicted and in a case against him under official secret Act, while delivering a speech in lawyers function you criticized the state policy regarding cipher," said the notice.

President suggested date 'under pressure'

DNA



ISLAMABAD: The former opposition leader in National Assembly (NA) Raja Riaz said that President Arif Alvi suggested the date of elections 'under pressure'. As per details, CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja called on Raja Riaz to discuss the matter related to the general elections schedule. The former opposition leader said that the president did not announce the poll date he suggested the date instead. Raja Riaz said that he sees the general elections are likely to be held in the mid of February 2024 however the ECP is yet to announce the poll date. Yesterday, President Arif Alvi suggested November 6, 2023, as the date for general elections in Pakistan in a letter addressed to CEC.

Brotherly Connection Kakar for deeper coop with Turkiye

Prime Minister directed Fawad Hasan Fawad to complete process of privatisation of PIA on a fast track basis

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday stressed the need to enhance bilateral cooperation with Turkiye in multiple sectors including trade, agriculture, energy, mining, IT and defence. Talking to Ambassador of Turkiye in Pakistan Mehmet Pacaci here, the prime minister said Pakistan was keen to attract foreign investors and the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) had been established to generate new and attractive investment opportunities in priority sectors. He said in addition to having strong and time-tested bilateral relations, Pakistan and Turkiye shared convergence and cooperate closely on a wide range of regional and multilateral issues, including efforts to combat Islamophobia. He appreciated Turkiye's reconstruction efforts following the tragic earthquake of February 2023 and reiterated Pakistan's readiness to continue extending all possible support to the Turkish people. The prime minister thanked President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Turkish leadership for their warm messages of felicitations on his assumption of office. He said the people of Pakistan enjoyed a historic, cultural and fraternal relationship with Turkiye. President Erdogan enjoyed the same popularity in Pakistan as in his own country.

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PM to raise Kashmir issue at the UNGA

NEWS DESK



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar will address the annual UN General Assembly session on September 22. At the weekly news briefing here on Thursday, Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the caretaker premier would be accompanied by interim Foreign Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani during the visit to New York. She said the interim prime minister would outline Pakistan's perspective on a range of regional and global issues of concern, including Jammu and Kashmir dispute, which was amongst the longstanding unresolved items on the UN Agenda. He would elaborate on the significant measures being taken by the caretaker government to consolidate Pakistan's

Continued on Page 06

PML-N ready to make Nawaz return historic

DNA

LAHORE: Welcoming the announcement of Mian Nawaz Sharif's return to Pakistan, a crucial meeting of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, held under the chairmanship of party's chief organiser and Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz, affirmed Thursday that the three-time prime minister would pull the country out of the crises it was in. The meeting, which took stock of the preparations and arrangements being made to welcome party head Mian Nawaz Sharif, warned the nation to beware of the tricksters, liars, fraudsters and the propaganda run by Toshakhana thieves. The participants of the meeting, including former members of the National and Provincial assemblies and party ticket holders, were of the considered view that only Nawaz Sharif could offset the dark clouds of economic woes, inflation and unemployment blanketing the country. In their fiery speeches, the PML-N leaders asserted that only Nawaz Sharif could alleviate the economic sufferings of the masses, arguing that he was the only one who delivered on his promises. They said that the people of Punjab - once considered the power bastion of the PML-N - were waiting anxiously to accord a rousing welcome to their friend.

Continued on Page 06

ECP fails in fulfilling constitutional duty

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson strongly condemned the induction of PDM's staunch loyalists and persons of known political allegiance into the caretaker federal cabinet. Reacting to the inclusion of PDM's loyalists into the federal cabinet, PTI spokesperson said that after the induction of controversial persons in the illegal and unconstitutional caretaker set-ups of Punjab and KP, the same formula was now being applied in the federal cabinet as well. He stated that the induction of those persons having close association with the PDM parties in the provincial and federal cabinets put a question mark on the credibility and integrity of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). PTI spokesperson reminded that the induction of persons of known political affiliation and controversial characters into the

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US urges 'timely, free and fair' elections in Pakistan

As we do with countries around the world, we urge Pakistan to hold a free and fair - free and fair and timely elections, and to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law: Miller

CENTRELINE REPORT

WASHINGTON: Amid uncertainty surrounding the election schedule, the United States (US) has urged Pakistani authorities to hold "timely, free and fair" elections in line with the country's laws. State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller stated this while responding to a question related to President Arif Alvi's suggestion that elections should be held no later than November 6 - the 89th day since the dissolution of the National Assembly. "As we do with countries around the world, we urge Pakistan to hold a free and fair - free and fair and timely elections, and to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law," Miller told the journalists. The State Department spokesperson also urged Pakistani authorities to move forward with the electoral process in a manner consistent with Pakistan's laws, "as we do with countries around the world".

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Torkham border to reopen today

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Torkham border crossing is set to reopen once more, with the decision made for it to resume operations on Friday. According to Customs authorities, commercial activities will commence at 8 am on today (Friday), and immigration authorities have announced that passengers can travel to Afghanistan starting at 7 am today. The Torkham border was closed on September 6 after at least two people, including a Frontier Corps (FC) official, were injured when a gun battle erupted between Pakistan and Afghan border forces.

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkiye Mehmet Pacaci calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar at PM Office. - DNA

Rupee gains 87 paise against US Dollar

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 1.08 to close at Rs319.88 against the last day's closing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani Rupee on Thursday witnessed the seventh consecutive recovery session as it gained 87 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs297.95 against the previous day's closing of Rs298.82. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs297 and Rs 300 respectively.

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Petrol, diesel expected to see another hike

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Another massive hike is expected in the prices of petroleum products in the upcoming fortnightly review amid rise in global oil prices, a private newspaper reported on Thursday. However, according to industry officials, a recent depreciation in the value of the rupee against the dollar in the interbank market may weaken the price hike. The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) is expected to announce new prices for petrol, diesel and other petroleum products on September 15, based on the average international

Continued on Page 06

SC returns PTI plea seeking polls within 90 days

Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Abid S Zubairi had filed the same petition in the apex court

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) petition seeking nationwide elections in the country within 90 days was returned by the registrar of the Supreme Court with objections on Thursday. The plea was returned as the former ruling failed to approach the relevant forums before coming to the apex court. The PTI had also included President Arif Alvi as a respondent but the registrar was of the view that the head of the state cannot be made part of the petition under Article 248. "The petition did not mention which fundamental right of the petitioner was violated. The petition does not meet the requirements seeking the court's intervention under Article 184/3," the registrar of the Supreme Court further said. Last month, the PTI had moved the top court seeking its directives to hold

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PPP CEC taking up inflation, polls

DNA

KARACHI: The Central Executive Committee (CEC) of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has been deliberating upon the ongoing political situation, inflation and elections, Shazia Marri said on Thursday. Flanked by Faisal Karim Kundi and Shehzad Saeed Cheema, Shazia told the media that the CEC moot was a continuation of the Karachi sitting and it will hold another session tomorrow as well. Chaudhry Manzoor was asked to submit a report on the flood, she said, adding that various proposals are being given in the

Continued on Page 06

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Gender Equality is fundamental human right

DNA

KARACHI: Majid Aziz, Former President, Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP), has said that Gender Equality is a fundamental human right and essential for promoting equitable, inclusive, and sustainable economic development. He pointed out that in Pakistan, women's participation and contribution to economic development is far less when compared to other regional countries and is mainly due to the lack of access of women to education, training, and economic opportunities. He was chairing the Stakeholders Consultation on Gender Equality at the Workplace organized by Employers' Federation of Pakistan with the support of ILO.

"Business has a responsibility to create an enabling environment and provide equal opportunities to women in employment to promote Gender Equality in the Workplace. He demanded that the incoming Parliament must support and ratify ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work." Syed Nazir Ali, Secretary General EFP, while welcoming the participants from companies, NGOs, and professionals, said that Gender Equality is crucial for creating safer and healthier societies and economic prosperity. He informed that the EFP is revising its Gender Equality Policy and aligning it with the new legislations, ILO Conventions, and International Labor Standards.

AKF organizes mass wedding ceremony

PESHAWAR: Al-Khidmat Foundation (AKF) organized a mass wedding ceremony for 21 destitute couples of the five districts of Malakand division. The mass wedding ceremony of the orphans and destitute couples was organized in Riwayat Wedding Hall at Thana town of district Malakand, said a press release issued here on Thursday. More than 800 guests including the relatives of the couples attended the Walima ceremony. So far 497 families have benefited from the mass wedding facility under the auspices of the foundation. Provincial president, AKF KP, Khalid Waqas presided over the ceremony while Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP) Siraj-ul-Haq was chief guest on the occasion. Prominent among those who attended the Walima of mass wedding ceremony were included vice president AKF Pakistan, Zakirullah Mujahid, General Secretary Haji Rizwanullah Mohmand, Mohammad Haleem Bacha, former KP minister Shah Raz Khan, former MNA Syed Bakhtiar Maani.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Women are taking interest in painting during exhibition entitled "Seeking the Truth" as Organized by Nomad Gallery at Pakistan National Council of Arts in Federal Capital.—Online

Kristin Hawkins enchanted by Lahore Fort's mysteries

MEHTAB PIRZADA

LAHORE : United States (US) Consul General to Lahore Kristin Hawkins has said she is fascinated by the rich cultural heritage, religious artefacts, architectural magnificence, historicity and inter-faith harmony illustrated through worship places of different religions within the ramparts of the Lahore Fort.

Talking to the media during a visit to the iconic Lahore Fort, she said: "I had heard about the rich history and culture of Lahore as well as Punjab when I was posted here, and I am privileged to be here to see the magic casements of history and culture." The newly-appointed US consul general was visiting the Lahore Fort on the invitation of the Agha Khan Cultural Services, which had been entrusted with restoring and preserving the seven endangered sites within the Lahore Fort under the US government's Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP). About her impressions of the 500 year old fort, the consul general said: "It was such an amazing experience to visit the Lahore Fort and see diversity of the historic site", adding that she was impressed with the relics from the Muslim, Hindu and Sikh religion, which illustrated the rich cultural diversity and inter-faith experience that Pakistan had for the past so many centuries. Earlier, Ms. Hawkins expressed her delight for the fact that the US government was able to support cultural preservation in Pakistan along with its partners like the Agha Khan Cultural Service and the Walled City Authority Lahore (WCLA), adding the US government had invested one million dollars to restore and preserve seven sites at the Lahore Fort. She said similar 32 projects worth US\$7.6 million were being undertaken across Punjab to preserve Pakistan's diverse and rich cultural history for future generations of Pakistan.—APP

UN holds dialogues about sustainable development

They are an urgent call for action by all countries to work together towards ending poverty while improving health and education, reducing inequality, spurring economic growth and tackling climate change.

DNA

QUETTA :The eighth of a series of 12 dialogues on sustainable development was held on Thursday in Quetta, Balochistan, by the United Nations and the district administration. In total, more than 1,000 local leaders living in 12 major cities across six provinces and territories are discussing the development challenges which they face, and how they impede economic and social progress in their districts. The dialogues are

being held in the different languages spoken across Pakistan. "These dialogues bring the United Nations closer to the people and the local governments that we serve, said Julien Harneis, UN Resident Coordinator in Pakistan. "We are actively listening to their concerns and their ideas. They will work together, and with us, on accelerating progress to bridge inequalities and reduce poverty. We will share their suggestions with the federal Government as we focus on returning to sustainable development." In Quetta, the

discussions focused on four topics chosen by the participants ahead of the event: governance, digital transformation, youth employment and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Nearly 100 local leaders – women and men, including youth – participated together with senior officials from Quetta, the United Nations Resident Coordinator, and other UN staff. The 12 dialogues are engaging local leaders around development issues such as access to basic social services; gender equality and women's empowerment; climate

change; sustainable, inclusive economic growth and decent work; and basic social services. All are key to Pakistan's progress towards the achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nearly 100 local leaders – women and men, including youth – participated together with senior officials from Quetta, the United Nations Resident Coordinator, and other UN staff. The 12 dialogues are engaging local leaders around development issues such as access to basic social services; gender equality and women's empowerment; climate

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ISLAMABAD : Executive Director General, information service academy (ISA), Dr. Tariq Mahmood Khan distributing certificates among the participants of 37th MCMC Domain specific training.—DNA

Chinese group plans electric vehicle plant in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD : A Chinese Electric Car manufacturing Group – Xinjian Jingyi Cheng Group – Announces to Establish Electric Vehicle Plant in Pakistan and Showrooms in Big cities. This announcement was made yesterday delegation of the Chinese Electric Car Manufacturing Group – Xinjian Jingyi Cheng Group, led by Assistant Chairman, GU Xongquan, during the meeting with Mr. Amin Ullah Baig, Vice President of FPCCI and chairman of Capital Office at FPCCI Capital Office Islamabad on Thursday. During the meeting, they held an extensive discussion about the investment landscape of Pakistan. The assistant chairman of Xinjian Jingyi Cheng Group, Mr. GU Xongquan briefed their company and entering the Pakistani market and interest in setting up their manufacturing unit and Showrooms in Pakistan and said that is a large owned enterprise group engaged in five industries, i.e., the electromechanical and hydraulic industry, light power industry, vehicle industry, international trade industry, and production & service industry. Jincheng Corporation is a hi-tech enterprise.—APP

Torkhem Border closure results in truck backlog

PESHAWAR :The closure of the Torkhem border for passage of all kinds of traffic between Pakistan and Afghanistan for the last seven days has caused the lining up of thousands of trucks laden with goods in both countries. "The impasse following a firefight between security forces over the construction of an unlawful structure at zero point has inflicted a loss of around three million US dollars on businessmen by destroying perishable goods including fresh fruit, vegetable, poultry, meat, eggs, juices and others," claims Director Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi in a press statement issued here on Thursday. From Torkhem zero point to Landi Kotal, more than 1500 to 2000 trucks are parked in queues on both sides of the road waiting for the opening of the border, Zia said. Similarly, on the Afghanistan side, the number of stranded trucks is more than 2000 to around 2500 because of the season of fresh fruit export to Pakistan. Zia said big quantities of perishable goods loaded in trucks including fresh fruit like grapes, bananas, citrus, melon dew and vegetables like lady's finger, and tomato have become rot. Apart from transit trade goods, a large quantity of import and export goods from both countries has become wasted and is stranded due to the closure of the border. Around 150 to 200 trucks of soapstone and 100 trucks of coal come on a daily basis to Pakistan from Afghanistan. The number of trucks carrying fresh fruit and vegetable are more than the above-mentioned figure, he went on to say. While a large number of trucks cross the border to Afghanistan carrying export goods from Pakistan like cement, structural iron (sarya), poultry, meat, eggs, banana, potato etc., he continued. Director PAJCCI urged the quarters concerned to take measures for early resolution of disputes because permanent closure of the border is not a solution and is detrimental to the economies of both the countries and regional trade. He said some elements are raising allegations of misuse of transit trade facilities and smuggling of exported goods back to Pakistan. Zia said four to five different departments are working on border security and it's their duty to increase surveillance and monitoring of incoming and outgoing goods instead of complete closure of commercial activities. Director PAJCCI added that the export of Pakistan to Central Asian countries is dependent on passage through Afghanistan and the closure of the border is not only affecting bilateral trade but also regional trade.—DNA

حکومت پنجاب کا انقلابی قدم

اب گاؤں چمکیں گے

پروگرام

نگران اعلیٰ پنجاب
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کی تعیناتی

ہر گھر سے کوڑا اٹھانے اور
ٹھکانے لگانے کیلئے
ٹی یونین کونسل ضروری مشینری
کی فراہمی

انگھامی کمیٹی کے ممبران کی تہلہ بخش
کارکردگی پر مہمات کی فراہمی

مقامی افراد پر مشتمل ونچ
کمیٹیوں کی تشکیل

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

September

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

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



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



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



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

Water Tank
Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Ambassador-designate to explore new avenues of trade with Iraq

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that Pakistan and Iraq have good potential to develop strong cooperation in diverse fields including trade & industry, agriculture, tourism, energy, health, defence production

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan wants to strengthen its bilateral trade and investment relations with Iraq in the traditional and non-traditional sectors that would be mutually beneficial for both countries and Pakistan embassy in Iraq should cooperate with the business community in achieving this goal. He said this while talking to Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed, Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Iraq during his Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). Ahsan Bakhtawari said that Pakistan and Iraq have good potential to develop strong cooperation in diverse fields including trade & industry, agriculture, tourism, energy, health, defence production. He said that Pakistan can export many products to Iraq including textiles, pharmaceuticals, rice, food products and can import oil from Iraq. He stressed that the Pakistan embassy in Iraq should identify the demand for Pakistani products and manpower in the Iraqi market and share such information with ICCI so that the business community could capture better market share in Iraq. Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed, Pakistan's Ambassador-designate said that he would make all possible efforts to explore new avenues for



promoting Pakistan's trade and exports with Iraq. He said that Iraq is developing as a new market for investors. China has made big investments in Iraq and Pakistani investors should also explore Iraq for business partnerships and investment. He said that Iraq is in a reconstruction phase with huge demand for skilled manpower and Pakistani skilled workers can find

good opportunities in Iraq. He said that ICCI should share a list of sectors that have good potential to do business with Iraq and he would cooperate in connecting them with relevant Iraqi counterparts for business cooperation. He also discussed various possibilities with the business community to further improve bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Iraq.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan needs to focus on regional trade to improve its economy and said that Pakistani diplomats in Iran, Iraq and Turkey can play a positive role in promoting Pakistan's trade with this regional block. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General

UBG Pakistan stressed the need of direct air links between Pakistan and Iraq to improve people-to-people and trade ties between the two countries. Raja Imtiaz, Maqsood Tabish, Sheikh Muhammad Ejaz, Muhammad Shabbir, Khalid Chaudhry and others also shared useful ideas to improve Pakistan-Iraq bilateral trade ties in various sectors.

AIOU holds training session on Organic Kitchen Gardening

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A one-day hands-on training session on "Organic Kitchen Gardening" was held in Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) yesterday. Around 800 participants including students and their parents, teachers and university staff members attended the session. Chairman, Department of Agricultural Sciences, Prof. Dr. Sher Muhammad was

the resource person who shed light on the methods of natural cultivation of vegetables free from pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Dr. Sher explained how to grow healthy organic vegetables at home, how to make natural fertilizers, how to prevent pests and diseases through botanical methods, etc. This training session was organized by the Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC)

and the Department of Agricultural Sciences. AIOU pays special attention to co-curricular activities to keep the students engaged in different healthy activities as per the vision of the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood. Additional Director ORIC, Dr. Saima Nasir and Chairperson, Department of Nutritional Sciences and Environmental Design, Prof. Dr. Hajra Ahmad also addressed the event. They said

that 40% of children in our country are suffering from stunted growth and 17% are severely malnourished. They added that to live a healthy life, we need kitchen gardening and there is a need to promote and highlight this concept and create awareness. Dr. Sher Muhammad gave a detailed lecture on the importance of organic agriculture and organic resources and nutrients available in Pakistan.

Dar appreciates UNCTAD's contribution

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in Senate Senator Ishaq Dar Thursday appreciated the contribution of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in highlighting global development challenges and the technical, policy and capacity building support it had provided to Pakistan. During a visit to the UNCTAD Secretariat along with Senator Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah and Senator Kamran Murtaza on sidelines of the meeting of World Trade Organization's Public Forum, he commended that the UNCTAD's advocacy efforts for addressing systemic imbalances embedded in the global financial architecture including for debt relief for developing countries, fair allocation and enhancement of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and mobilization of climate finance for disproportionately, affected developing countries, including Pakistan, said press release issued here by the Senate Secretariat. Deputy Secretary General UNCTAD, Pedro Manuel Moreno briefed the delegation on key tracks of UNCTAD's work in the areas of technical assistance, research and analysis, and consensus building on key global trade and development issues.—APP

British Pakistanis playing key role in developing relations

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani has said that the 1.6 million British Pakistanis were an asset for the country as they were playing key role in developing bilateral relationship between the two countries. He said that Pakistan and Britain were good friends and close partners, and the friendship between the two countries was based on common heritage, values and mutual goodwill. He was speaking at a reception jointly organized by the government of Pakistan and British Council in honor of the delegates participating in Commonwealth youth ministers meeting held in London, according to a press release received here on Thursday. The reception was attended by the youth ministers of the commonwealth member countries, representatives of different organization, and a number of Pakistani community members. Foreign minister appreciated the commonwealth secretariat, Secretary General Petreica Scotland and its team and also thanked the British Council and the British government for cooperating Pakistan to successfully organize the event. Commonwealth Secretary General Patricia Scotland appreciated the talent of Pakistani youth and appreciated the cultural beauty of Pakistan.—APP

PRCS conducts understanding climate change training workshop

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), AJK Chapter under its Climate Advocacy & Coordination for Resilient Actions (CACRA) project and with the generous support of the German Red Cross concluded a comprehensive two-day training workshop aimed at enhancing the understanding of climate change, climate-smart disaster risk management (DRM), and small grant proposal development. The training was held here at a local hotel and was attended by fifteen volunteers of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society from five districts of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (Neelum, Jhelum Valley, Rawalakot, Haveli and Mirpur). The training program was part of the PRCS AJK Chapter's ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacity of local communities to adapt to the challenges posed by climate change and to build resilience against natural disasters. The training program was led by experienced facilitators and subject matter experts in climate change, DRM, and proposal writing, from Pakistan Red Crescent Society National Headquarters Islamabad ensuring that participants received instructions about subject matter. In the training, Participants were provided with an in-depth understanding of climate change, its causes, and its impacts on communities, particularly in the AJK region.—APP

CDA seals numerous unauthorised expressway structures

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA), in collaboration with the local administration, sealed numerous under construction buildings along the Expressway on Thursday due to violations of building regulations. During an operation along the Expressway, it was discovered that five buildings were under construction without the approval of the CDA. As a result, these structures have been sealed, and notices have been issued to their owners. Furthermore, notices have been sent to 13 building owners in F-17, a sector made up of private societies, due to non-conforming use. With the assistance of the District Administration and Islamabad Police, the Enforcement Directorate of the CDA took action against illegal constructions and violations of building by-laws in Islamabad. The CDA emphasized its commitment to an ongoing anti-encroachment campaign aimed at transforming Islamabad into a city free of encroachments. It's worth noting that over the past several months, the CDA has been actively conducting operations to address encroachments, illegal constructions, and violations of building bylaws in Islamabad.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Morocco, Muhammad Karmon calls on Sindh Governor, Kamran Khan Tessori.—APP

German companies keen to joint ventures, investment in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of German companies led by Muhammad Usman, Country Representative for Pakistan of German Chambers of Commerce Abroad visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and showed interest in joint ventures and investment in Pakistan in areas of their respective fields. The delegation was representing various sectors including telecommunication, automobile, construction, logistics, energy and financial services, said a press release issued here Thursday. Addressing the German delegation, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan and Germany have great potential to increase bilateral trade in many areas as the current level of two-way trade of around US\$ 4 billion is not matching with the actual potential of both countries. He said that both countries are doing trade in limited items as Pakistan's main exports to Germany include textiles, leather goods, sports goods, footwear and medical instruments, and its main imports from Germany include machinery, chemical and electrical goods, motor vehicles and iron goods. He stressed that both countries should strengthen business linkages between their private sectors to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that over 40 German companies are doing successful business in many sectors of Pakistan's economy including telecommunication, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, automobile, automotive, wholesale and stressed that more German companies should explore JVs and investment in Pakistan, which is a huge market of over 240 million consumers. He assured that ICCI would connect German investors with the right partners in Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, the representatives of German companies said that Germany wants to diversify foreign trade and the purpose of their visit to Pakistan is to develop networking with Pakistani counterparts and explore potential areas of joint ventures and investment. They said that the world's leading agriculture machinery trade fair AgriTechna will be held in Hanover, Germany from November 12-18, 2023 and invited the ICCI delegation to participate in it to discover new innovations, technologies and machinery in the agriculture sector. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that German investors from automobile and other sectors should transfer technology and set up business partnerships in Pakistan to export their products to Central Asia and other markets.—APP

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Briefs

Pakistan and China to step up Artificial intelligence cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: AI, a core driving force in the new wave of technological revolution and industrial transformation, has the potential to propel social productivity to new heights. As a late starter, Chinese AI development has achieved significant milestones in recent years. After receiving several requirements from Pakistani companies to cooperate with Chinese companies in AI field, China-Pakistan Cooperation Center on Technical Standardization held a China-Pakistan Artificial Intelligence Industry Cooperation Matchmaking meeting on September 13th, according to Gwadar Pro. On the meeting, 5 Chinese companies and 5 Pakistani companies introduced their business and requirements. They showed their latest technologies including digital human, chatbot and AI transformation services. "Our institute and the Institute of Quality and Technology Management (IQTM) of University of the Punjab co-established the China-Pakistan Cooperation Center on Technical Standardization in 2020. Since then, we have closely cooperated in multiple fields including traditional Chinese medicine, food, and information technology, etc," said Huang hao, president of Chengdu institute of Standardization. He noted that this meeting is the first of five IT subsector meetings that the center plans to arrange in the next few months. "I noticed that in Pakistan, there're more service companies that provide AI services, while in China there are more AI products provider. The exchange could help us know the requirements of each other and what can be provided. This is one aspect of potential Pak-China cooperation in AI sector," said representative from Tkelx company, one of Pakistani participants. "Another potential is that we can find a way to develop something new together."

Chor Chowk 'chehlum' procession

RAWALPINDI: Over 176 City Traffic Police (CTP) personnel would be deployed to ease traffic flow in the Chor Chowk area on Friday as the 'Chehlum' procession was to be taken out on September 15 from Peshawar Road. According to a CTP spokesman, the traffic police, on the directives of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan, had finalized all the arrangements to regulate traffic and facilitate road users on September 15 in the Chor Chowk area. He informed that a comprehensive traffic plan had been devised to ensure security and facilitate the mourners as well as the road users. The charring cross to Pirwadhai Mor Road would remain closed from morning until the conclusion of the 'Chehlum' procession. Diversion points would be set up in the circle to ensure security and facilitate motorists. Saddar to Peshawar bound traffic would move through Westridge Road, Atta ul Haq Road, Najam Shaheed Road, Westridge-III Road, APS School, Marble Factory, and IJP Road.—APP

Minister, Denmark envoy discuss energy conservation

During a meeting, the minister and the ambassador also discussed projects and initiatives being carried out under the Danish Energy Transition Initiative (DETI) and Investment Fund (IFU), a fund for Developing countries in Denmark, were discussed in the meeting

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister of Energy Muhammad Ali and Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan Jakob Linulf Thursday discussed opportunities for Green energy initiatives and energy conservation in Pakistan. During a meeting, the minister and the ambassador also discussed projects and initiatives being carried out under the Danish Energy Transition Initiative (DETI) and Investment Fund (IFU), a fund for Developing countries in Denmark, were discussed in the meeting. During the interaction, the opportunities and mechanisms for wind energy in Pakistan were also discussed in detail. The Envoy said that there has been an increase in the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Denmark particularly in the textile sector. "The next focus will be on strengthening the bilateral relations in the green and sustainable energy sector. This will extend to the energy



conservation measures in Pakistan as well" the ambassador said. A cross-functional team of the power sector for the future discussion and joint workshop at the Conference of Parties (COP) was proposed. Denmark has been smooth in its transition to sustainable energy. Denmark's goal has been to go green and reduce the dependence on fossil fuels and it has led smooth transition in 34.

Two days PIDE's RASTA conference kicks off

RASTA boasts participation from over 60 universities, collaborating with more than 10 international institutes, and involving a talented cadre of over 2,300 researchers and academicians

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), under its Research for Social Transformation and Advancement (RASTA) program, kicked off its 3rd RASTA conference at the Country and Gun Club, Islamabad. The research moot comprised diverse themes, including energy issues, urban development, technology, public service delivery, social sector development, markets and regulation, the political economy of development and reform, and sludge - the administrative burden. While inaugurating the conference, in his inaugural address, Dr Naadeem ul Haque, Vice-Chancellor PIDE and Chairman RAC referred to one of his papers "Developing Research and a Research Culture: Results from a

Pilot Project in Pakistan" as the genesis for the RASTA program. He said that the 'enlightenment movement' was nothing but the exchange of ideas among the great intellectuals of the time. Ideas bring change, however, ideas must be indigenous. Without exchange, ideas don't refine, and without refinement reaching a conclusive solution becomes exceedingly difficult. The Vice-Chancellor apprised the participants that we still have not been able to free ourselves from the colonial clutches. Our research is primarily driven by actors that are alien to our situation. Outsiders are driving our research, with perhaps vested agendas. Though, the onus is on Pakistani researchers. Why they are being silent spectators? Why don't they question things around us? PIDE's RASTA is one such platform it has provided the space for our local researchers to come up with innova-

tive ideas and local solutions. Through RASTA, we have also proved that we can do better than those who steer local research from outside. Earlier, Dr Faheem Jehangir Khan, Project Director of RASTA, presented highlights of the RASTA journey comprising over 3 years. PIDE's RASTA is a multi-year competitive grants program for policy-oriented research in Pakistan, under the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) of the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, the Government of Pakistan. The mission is to develop an extensive research network of academia and think tanks across Pakistan producing high-quality, evidence-based policy research to inform Pakistan's public policy process, he stated. Moreover, the program seeks to develop local thought communities and generate contextualized knowledge. Substantial outputs are to be completed

in important areas of public policy that would produce insightful research and facilitate goals that the Government wants to achieve according to its vision. RASTA, Pakistan's premier economics and public policy research grants programme, continues to make substantial strides in shaping the future of policy discourse in the country. With a robust 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, collaborating with more than 10 international institutes, and involving a talented cadre of over 2,300 researchers and academicians. RASTA's unwavering dedication to the pursuit of knowledge-driven solutions is propelling Pakistan towards a brighter and more prosperous future.

17 outlaws held in last 24 hours

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Police (ICP) apprehended 17 outlaws including six professional beggars during the last 24 hours from different areas of the city and recovered liquor and weapons with ammunition from their possession. A Public Relations Officer (PRO) Thursday said, "Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city." Following these directives, the Shalimar police team arrested an accused namely Usama Usman, and recovered one 9mm pistol with ammunition from his possession. The Aabpara police team arrested an accused namely Arslan Masih involved in illegal cylinder gas refilling, he added. Likewise, the Ramna police team arrested an accused namely Bham Khan, and recovered one 9mm pistol with ammunition from his possession. The Sumbal police team arrested an accused namely Hakeem and recovered 550 gram hashish from his possession. Similarly, the Tarnol police team arrested an accused namely Safer Ahmed, and recovered 640 grams of hashish from his possession. The Khanna police team arrested an accused namely Ayaz and recovered 312 grams of heroin from his possession. Moreover, the Kirpa police team arrested an accused namely Nasir Ahmed, and recovered 1100 grams of heroin from his possession. The Humak police team arrested an accused namely Zarak Khan involved in illegal cylinder gas refilling. Furthermore, the Phulgran police team arrested an accused namely Zeeshan Latif, and recovered one 30-bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. The Bani Gala police team arrested an accused namely Atif Hussain and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. During the special campaign against professional beggars and their handlers, the police team arrested six professional beggars. Cases had been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation was underway. Islamabad Capital City Police officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan directed all senior officials to effectively crack down against the accused involved in criminal activities.—DNA

Purchasing power of people lowest in the region

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Iqbal Sheikh on Thursday said that inflation has increased a lot while the purchasing power of the people has become the lowest compared to other countries in the region. In these circumstances, the increase in wages has become inevitable to enable the masses to bring food to the table, he said. Raising wages will increase inflation, but inflation is the only option we have to fight merciless inflation, he added. Atif Iqbal Sheikh who has also served as President ICCI and Chairman PVMA said in a statement issued here today that the Central Bank is ready to increase interest rates while the government is mulling to increase the fuel price by Rs 10 per litre. The SBP wants to increase interest rates to combat inflation and stabilise forex reserves but this will only increase the problems of the government as the cost of borrowing and debt servicing will increase. Such a move will put a dent in the confidence of the business community and it will multiply their problems, he observed. On the other hand, the government has decided to increase the price of oil by ten rupees per litre, which will increase inflation in the country while the people and businesses will be badly affected.—APP

Islamabad Police launch 'School Chalo' initiative

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police have officially initiated the "School Chalo" campaign to address the issue of students who are frequently absent from their educational institutions and can often be found wandering in recreational areas and other public spaces. In a proactive move under the guidance of Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), the "School Chalo" campaign specifically targets students who are found absent from school or college, often seen loitering in recreational areas, markets, and other public spaces identified through the city's Safe City camera network. These students are swiftly escorted to various police stations with the support of Dolphin squads and Safe City smart vehicles.

The army has accomplished what politicians could not

ISLAMABAD: Saifuddin Sheikh, Executive Director of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) said on Thursday that all the credit goes to the Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir for the continuous increase in the value of the rupee and the decrease in the price of sugar. He has also taken important steps to eliminate smuggling, money laundering, and speculation, which is restoring the confidence of the public and the business community, he said. He added that more measures should be taken to provide relief to the public and keep the dollar under control. In a statement is-

sued here today, Saifuddin Sheikh said that the army chief has done in a few days what politicians and bureaucracy could not do in decades. He supported the massive crackdown and showed 'zero tolerance' towards smuggling and hoarding of essential commodities, due to which the price and availability of sugar are gradually becoming stable. However, he expressed shock over the Punjab government's decision regarding the procurement of sugar at a significantly higher price of Rs 140 per kg from mill owners. Political conveniences have damaged the country's economy, he

said, adding that merit has been compromised everywhere and many important institutions have become recruitment centres for political parties, due to which trillions of rupees are being lost annually. However, now the people have hope that General Asim Munir will change the situation, as he is determined to improve the economy and bring 100 billion dollars of foreign investment to Pakistan. Saifuddin Sheikh said that the role of the central bank and commercial banks in the foreign exchange market has increased while the exchange companies are being monitored.—APP

NPO to organize webinar on peace, justice and strong institution

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) will conduct a webinar on 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institution' on September 22. The objective of the workshop is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusion institutions at all levels," according to an NPO document shared here Thursday. The workshop will provide information about peace, justice and strong institutions.—APP

Paradigm shift in political system must: Speakers

ISLAMABAD: The speakers at a seminar on democratic governance on Thursday said a paradigm shift based on reforms and rapprochement among the institutions forming the political system to strengthen democracy was a must to save the country from irrevocable crises. The Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) organised a one-day seminar on "Democratic Governance for Peaceful and Inclusive Societies" which was held in connection with the upcoming International Day of Democracy. Professor of Political Science, LUMS, Dr Muhammad Waseem in his keynote address said there was a clash of institutions in the administrative troika that had weakened the Parliament whereas the latter was a microcosm of a society in different countries. He added that the elected representatives in the Parliament reflected the society who were weaker and hence, the Parliament was becoming weak in the aftermath. He regretted that the outgoing parliament led by the coalition government had passed an unprecedented number of bills in the shortest span of time which was horrendous as it left the lawmaking body inefficient in dispensing its duties. Prof. Dr Waseem underlined that the process of electing representatives had shifted to the electable that belonged to the traditional elite symbolising the status quo. He pointed out that the non-permanent parliament (in terms of tenure) was working along a permanent bureaucracy that left the legislator toothless, hence comprising its service delivery that was termed governance in the democratic system. He added that poor governance and weaker political institutions allowed non-democratic actors to intervene which was detrimental to democracy. During the panel discussion titled Democratic Governance and Peace in Pakistan, CEO Vision 2047, Zafar Ullah Khan said the previous regime of coalition parties tried to establish weak impediments through legislation against the Constitution that brewed the prevailing constitutional crisis. He mentioned that the prevailing political scenario did not conform with the demography of the country. "We need to be pragmatic and realistic in our approach to promote democracy. I am hopeful that the citizens of Pakistan will reclaim their democracy whereas institutional reforms could help Parliament to reclaim its position." Former Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Justice, Mehnaz Akbar Aziz said the role and representation of women parliamentarians was important as the situation had transitioned from mere representation to their performance in the Parliament. She said there was a need for reorganisation of the political parties to ensure women's inclusion at important decision-making fora like the National Security Council where they lacked representation. She opined that youth engagement and listening to their demands was crucial to ensure inclusive and informed policymaking. Mehnaz Akbar Aziz added that the absence of local governments was also an impediment to the flourishing democracy in the country which needed to be reformed on modern lines. President, PILDAT Ahmed Bilal Mehboob said at present there was a hybrid system prevailing in the country that comprised of democratic and non-democratic forces which was making democracy weaker in the country by every passing day. He was of the view that in order to put an end to the prevailing uncertainty and political deterioration it was important to abolish this hybrid system and implement a pure democratic system with the input of the masses. Senator Sana Jamali was of the view that there was no other solution than democracy for the country's prevailing challenges as growing political intolerance, unemployment and economic crunch were scaling up at an alarming pace. In his concluding remarks, Secretary General, HRCP, Harris Khaliq said the country needed constitutional amendments and major reforms in key national institutions to ensure the inclusive strengthening of democracy in the country. Earlier Executive Director, CPDI, Mukhtar Ahmed Ali delivered his welcome note and moderated the panel discussion.



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Human activity amplified Libya's recent flooding

The devastation wreaked by floods in eastern Libya is nothing less than apocalyptic. In Derna, where two dams burst after torrential rains, a wall of water deluged the city and sliced out the land from beneath its inhabitants. Entire neighbourhoods were swept into the sea, which is now dumping bodies along the shore. More than 6,000 have died there, and 10,000 people are said to be missing, but because entire families were washed away, there may be no survivors to report some losses. With other towns and settlements inundated, too, tens of thousands are displaced. The horror and despair of Libyans is matched by their fury at the rival governments that have split the country and pursued power and profit while ignoring the people's needs. Storm Daniel is a natural disaster, wrote Elham Saudi, the director of Lawyers for Justice in Libya, but the ensuing catastrophe "is manmade: corruption; lack of infrastructure; impunity; shutting down frontliners in civil society... Be angry at a system that has enabled this tragedy." It is too soon to say whether, or how far, Storm Daniel's terrifying impact is related to the climate crisis. But it is clear that global heating is increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, including flooding. In the last fortnight alone, Hong Kong has seen its heaviest rainfall since records began in 1884, with metro stations inundated, and in Greece, torrential rain triggered landslides and infrastructure collapse. These scenes, like the summer's extreme rainfalls in China, the US and Spain among others, are a warning of what awaits many more of us, and highlight the need for mitigation measures as well as slashing carbon emissions. Libya shows the disastrous consequences when governments not only fail to protect their citizens but also put them into greater danger. Muammar Gaddafi's corrupt regime has been followed by more than a decade of revolution, civil war and political deadlock. Essential infrastructure has not only been neglected – one of Derna's dams had reportedly not been maintained since 2002 – but also plundered by the powerful and their cronies. Even when disaster loomed, the authorities in eastern Libya, controlled by the warlord Khalifa Haftar, failed in their most basic duties. As Anas el Gomati of the country's Sadeq Institute has pointed out, this is not like the earthquake that struck without warning in Morocco last week, killing at least 2,900 people. Officials saw Storm Daniel's impact in Greece and had days to plan an evacuation. Some people were apparently told to leave, but others were reportedly ordered to stay at home even as water swelled behind the dams. In the aftermath, with children crying for help in the wreckage, rescue and relief efforts continue to be hampered by politics as well as the destruction of essential infrastructure. There is widespread cynicism about the willingness of the internationally recognised government in Tripoli and Mr Haftar's rival government to truly put the suffering first. Key figures in civil society, precisely the people who might mobilise relief efforts, languish in jail while their compatriots need them. But there is also anger that most other governments appear slow to respond to this catastrophe.

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 Off 11: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



EU Chief sparks protectionism concerns

With the European Union holding Parliamentary elections next year, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen seems intent on striking a combative stance toward China, announcing an anti-subsidy probe into Chinese electric vehicles on Wednesday. Since "global markets are now flooded with cheaper electric cars, and their price is kept artificially low by huge state subsidies", an investigation is needed to decide whether punitive tariffs should be imposed to protect European EV producers, she said. Such a combative posture as a champion of European business might in some ways be intended to present a tough image as a champion of EU interests, thus securing her a second term. But it will also undermine the EU's longstanding role as a leader of global free trade and hinder the development of the European EV industry and be a drag on the bloc's green transition. While she claimed that "Europe is open to competition", the European Commission chief also said that "Europe will do whatever it takes to keep its competitive edge" giving the impression she would not mind becoming less than open when it comes to competition with Chinese EV makers. It is true that Chinese EVs have witnessed a phenomenal surge in overseas markets recently. According to European Commission data, Chinese-made EVs account for 8 percent of the EU market now, and may reach 15 percent in 2025. The country has surpassed Japan to become the world's largest auto exporter in the first quarter of 2023, with Chinese auto exports registering a stunning 31 percent rise last month, according to the China Passenger Car Association. In addition to their industry-leading battery technologies, the EVs are generally 20 percent lower in prices than EU-made models. While the Chinese government does implement an industrial policy that encourages environmentally friendly industries including EVs, it is unfair to attribute the competitive edge of Chinese EV exports entirely to subsidies. The Chinese Commerce Ministry contends rightly that the sector's competitive advantage is not due to subsidies, and that the EU is seeking to protect its own industry in the name of "fair competition" with protectionist measures that will seriously disrupt and distort the global automotive industry and supply chains and will have a negative impact on China-EU economic and trade relations. It is thought-provoking that even Germany, the foremost European automaking country and exporter of automobiles, is against the approach. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz stated just last week that "Fair competition stimulates the economy... Competition should spur us on, not scare us." European critics of the investigation are correct in pointing out the dangers of Europe abandoning its "path of virtue" in defending free trade. EU auto companies have invested and operated in China for many years, and the Chinese market has become the largest overseas market for many EU car companies. There is actually much space for the Chinese and European automotive industries to cooperate. This would be more mutually beneficial for the two sides than the measures proposed by Von der Leyen.

Shazia Iqbal: A tireless advocate for literacy in Sahiwal

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Madam Shazia Iqbal, as the Literacy Officer of the District, transcends the mere role of an officer; she embodies the spirit of a dynamic and fervent advocate for education. Her relentless exertions have wrought a substantial transformation upon the literacy panorama of the district

In the realm of education and literacy, there emerge certain individuals who shine as exemplars of unwavering dedication and inspiration. One such luminary figure is Shazia Iqbal District Education Officer (literacy) Sahiwal, the esteemed Literacy Officer of Sahiwal. Her ceaseless endeavors, resolute commitment and remarkable administrative acumen have played a pivotal role in the amelioration of the literacy panorama in Sahiwal. She stands as a formidable presence and has devoted her life to the noble cause of elevating literacy rates in the District Sahiwal. Madam Shazia Iqbal, as the Literacy Officer of the District, transcends the mere role of an officer; she embodies the spirit of a dynamic and fervent advocate for education. Her relentless exertions have wrought a substantial transformation upon the literacy panorama of the district. She is an individual of visionary stature who firmly believes in the catalytic potential of education. Her journey as a literacy officer was initiated by an impassioned commitment to combat the inescapable illiteracy endemic to District Sahiwal. Her steadfast conviction lies in the belief that education is a master key that unlocks the latent potential of individuals and communities beyond the urban area. The tenure of Madam Shazia Iqbal as the Literacy Officer of Sahiwal is characterized by an unflinching commitment and an unswerving dedication to her mission to serve the nation and state. She has implemented a diverse array of initiatives designed to invigorate the literacy environment of the district. Madam Shazia recognizes the imperative of engaging the local community in the pursuit of enhanced literacy. She has orchestrated numerous awareness campaigns and workshops aimed at encouraging parents to enroll their children in schools while extolling

the virtues of lifelong learning. Acknowledging that the illiteracy is not confined to the younger generation, Madam Shazia has launched adult literacy programs in the district as well. With the support of civil society she has managed many programs and activities to solve their problems and empowers the adult populace of Sahiwal with indispensable reading and writing skills, enabling them to access superior employment opportunities and engage more actively in societal affairs. That's why the society and those who are associated with her office respect her.

She has introduced innovative pedagogical methods within educational institutions to render the learning experience more captivating and efficacious. Encouraging educators to incorporate interactive and technology-driven teaching tools, she always seeks to ignite the imaginative teachers and students. Madam Shazia Iqbal is renowned for her boundless energy and indefatigable work ethic. She has toiled tirelessly to uplift the educational ground of Sahiwal and her enthusiasm for her vocation is contagious, galvanizing a shared sense of purpose within the entire community. Madam Shazia comprehends that education transcends mere numerical statistics; it is about effecting transformative change in the lives of Sahiwal's youth. Efficiency is the cornerstone of Madam Shazia's administrative approach. She possesses an unparalleled aptitude for strategic planning and the execution of initiatives that yield tangible results. Her acumen in identifying critical areas for enhancement and devising effective solutions has been instrumental in elevating the literacy rate in Sahiwal. Under her stewardship, literacy programs have been streamlined, resources judiciously allocated and educational institutions empowered to thrive. Madam Shazia's exceptional

ability to connect with the public and her subordinates is truly commendable. Her approachability, empathy and attentive listening have enabled her to cultivate robust relationships within the community, fostering a climate of trust and cooperation. Sahiwal residents feel at ease approaching her with their concerns and ideas, secure in the knowledge that they have a dedicated advocate in the person of Shazia Iqbal. She epitomizes administrative excellence in the literacy department of District Sahiwal. Her meticulous planning, scrupulous attention to detail, and adept management of complex processes have significantly enhanced the literacy rate and improved the operational efficiency of the education department in District Sahiwal. Under her guidance the administrative impediments of the department have been minimized and affording teachers opportunity to devote greater attention to imparting knowledge to their students in the deprived area. Madam Shazia Iqbal is not merely a Literacy Officer; she embodies a beacon of hope and progress for population of Sahiwal. Her tireless efforts, adept leadership and exemplary public relations have indelibly marked the educational system of the district. Through her unwavering dedication and visionary outlook, the literacy rate in Sahiwal has witnessed remarkable enhancements, positively impacting innumerable lives. The transformative endeavors of Shazia Iqbal District Education Officer literacy serve as a poignant reminder that dedicated individuals such as her constitute the driving force propelling the educational advancements that shape the future of our society. Her commitment to elevating literacy in Sahiwal stands as an inspiration to all, underscoring the incontrovertible truth that positive change is attainable when fervor meets purpose within the empire of education.

India's Tejas: A strategic investment or a legacy liability?

Nasser ul Haq Wyne

Though India has consistently promoted Tejas for export, potential buyers remain hesitant, perhaps influenced by the fact that only a limited number have been inducted into the IAF's own fleet. Initiated in the early 1980s, the LCA project aimed to replace India's aging Mig-21 fleet. However, its maiden flight did not occur until 2001, nearly two decades later. Given the swift pace of technological advancements worldwide during this period, by the time the LCA took to the skies, it was arguably already behind in terms of modern aviation innovations. It was not until 2021

When the Indian Airforce (IAF) Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas showcased its capabilities at the prestigious Bahrain International Air Show, all eyes were on it, especially since the Chief of Air Staff of the Pakistan Airforce (CAS PAF) was also in Bahrain for an official visit. The international media was abuzz, waiting with bated breath for the CAS PAF's assessment of the LCA Tejas. In his frank and candid response, the CAS stated, 'After witnessing the LCA's performance, the PAF sees no reason for concern.' Despite subsequent appearances both domestically and internationally, the LCA Tejas has struggled to gain significant traction. Though India has consistently promoted Tejas for export, potential buyers remain hesitant, perhaps influenced by the fact that only a limited number have been inducted into the IAF's own fleet. Initiated in the early 1980s, the LCA project aimed to replace India's aging Mig-21 fleet. However, its maiden flight did not occur until 2001, nearly two decades later. Given the swift pace of technological advancements worldwide during this period, by the time the LCA took to the skies, it was arguably already behind in terms of modern aviation innovations. It was not until 2021, another two decades later, that the Indian Ministry of Defense repositioned the LCA project. Instead of it solely serving as a replacement for the Mig-21, it was now being seen as part of the broader IAF modernisation plan. This shift in perspective suggests that the LCA project, now over 40 years in the making, requires significant reassessment and technological upgrades to remain relevant and effective. The Tejas, since its inception, has faced numerous operational and technical challenges. Despite its induction into the IAF around seven years ago, several critical issues continue to overshadow its potential: Operational Challenges Serviceability and Availability: The LCA has a notably low serviceability rate. This deficiency means that a significant number of Tejas aircraft are unavailable for both training and operational flying for extended periods. Consequently, this impacts the readiness of the IAF as neither training nor operational benchmarks are consistently met. Range and Payload Limitations: Structurally,

the LCA is a smaller platform with a relatively delicate build. As a result, it possesses restricted range and load carriage capabilities. Its limited fuel capacity necessitates frequent stopovers during extended flights, presenting a tangible operational constraint and potentially exposing the aircraft to more risks in real-world scenarios. Weapons and Systems: An analysis comparing the LCA Tejas with its contemporaries



reveals a gap in the advanced weapons and systems it offers. The absence of state-of-the-art armament and technology compromises its target engagement abilities, which is a critical factor in aerial combat scenarios. Cost Considerations: When juxtaposed against its capabilities, the LCA Tejas emerges as an expensive investment. Furthermore, the Tejas programme has been plagued by cost overruns. The initially estimated budget for the programme has exceeded by a considerable margin, exacerbating the financial challenges associated with the aircraft. This cost-benefit disparity not only impacts its potential for export due to competitive pricing pressures but also challenges its large-scale domestic induction. Given the financial ramifications, domestic and international stakeholders are now deeply wary of committing to or procuring the aircraft at its staggering cost. The viability of the entire programme stands on a knife's edge! In light of these operational problems, while the LCA Tejas represents an ambitious project for India, deeper analysis indicates the need for substantial enhancements to make it a viable, cost-effective competitor in

the modern aviation market. Technical Issues LCA is also confronted with a host of technical problems; only a few are described below: Engine Concerns: At the heart of any aircraft is its engine and airframe, setting the foundation for its performance and reliability. Powering the LCA is the GE F404-IN20 engine, which has unfortunately encountered issues such as overheating and flameouts. Not only have these engine troubles caused significant delays in the Tejas programme's progression, but they have also stoked apprehensions about the aircraft's overall safety in flight scenarios. Software and Integration Challenges: The avionics and software of the Tejas have presented their own set of challenges. Specifically, the aircraft has faced difficulties in seamlessly integrating new weapon systems, an aspect crucial for its combat-readiness and adaptability in the evolving landscape of aerial warfare. Structural Issues: The airframe of the Tejas, a fundamental element determining its durability and longevity, has shown structural shortcomings. Such issues don't just extend the Tejas programme's timeline but also cast doubts about the aircraft's resilience, especially in high-intensity operations. In short, these technical challenges not only jeopardise the Tejas' performance but also its credibility as a modern fighter jet in a highly competitive global market. Conclusion India needs to indulge in serious retrospection! LCA Tejas is a complex aircraft, and it is not surprising that it has faced many technical and operational problems since its development. The IAF and HAL are contending with a design concept that is now 45 years old. To put that into perspective, within such a timeframe, most fighter aircraft would typically complete their service life and retire. No wonder then that the longevity and viability of the Tejas have become a point of intense scrutiny. Given this context, the question does arise; is it worthwhile for India to invest in an aging, costly and outmoded project and also expect others in the global defence marketplace to do so?

—The writer is a Director at the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies, Islamabad, Pakistan. He can be contacted at: casstt@casstt.com.

Briefs

Kakar for deeper coop with Turkiye

FROM PAGE 01

PM Kakar also praised Turkiye for its long-standing and steadfast support to Pakistan on the Jammu and Kashmir issue. Earlier, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Thursday directed Caretaker Minister for Privatization Fawad Hasan Fawad to oversee the process of privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and complete it on a fast track basis. Chairing a meeting on matters related to PIA, the prime minister said process needed to be expedited urgently so as to provide a reliable service to the users and to raise the standards of the national flag carrier to match the global airline standards. He directed all the relevant stakeholders to find an immediate solution to the matters related to the privatization. During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on the progress of privatization process of PIA.

US urges 'timely...'

FORM PAGE 01

A day earlier, President Arif Alvi wrote a letter to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja, mentioning the cut-off date for elections. The president said that in the light of Article 48(5) of the Constitution, he has the authority and mandate "to appoint a date not later than 90 days from the date of dissolution [of assemblies], for holding of a general election to the assembly." President Alvi said that the National Assembly was dissolved by him on the advice of the then-prime minister Shehbaz Sharif on August 9, 2023. [...] in terms of Article 48(5) the general election to the National Assembly should be held by the eighty-ninth day of the date of dissolution of the National Assembly, i.e. Monday 6th Day of November 2023," the letter stated.

PML-N ready

FROM PAGE 01

The speakers also observed that in the past leaders and workers of the PML-N were penalised for their selfless service to the nation. "The people of Pakistan, especially those living in the Punjab and Lahore, are still bearing the brunt of the very sentence handed down to Mian Nawaz Sharif." The participants of the meeting paid tribute to the struggle of Nawaz Sharif and his companions, and averred to advance towards achievement of the goal of public development and progress with the same passion and vigour.

ECP fails...

FROM PAGE 01

Caretaker cabinet was a clear violation of Article 224 of the Constitution and Section 230 of the Election Act. He went on to say that it was clearly mentioned in Section 230 of the Election Act that neutral and apolitical should be included in the caretaker government. PTI spokesperson said that after in two provinces, the constitutional concept of a neutral, impartial and uncontroversial caretaker cabinet has been completely destroyed in the center as well. He shocked that after inducting political loyalists into the illegal and unconstitutional caretaker cabinets of Punjab and KP, persons of known political allegiance were also accommodated in the federal cabinet.

Rupee gains

FORM PAGE 01

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 1.08 to close at Rs319.88 against the last day's closing of Rs320.96, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged at closed at Rs2.02, whereas a decline of 48 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs372.12 as compared to the last closing of Rs372.60.

Azerbaijani IDPs appeal to international community

Armenia is circulating false propaganda that only Armenians allegedly lived in those regions. They are even denying the fact it was Azerbaijanis who had historically lived there

BAKU: Azerbaijani Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from the city of Khankandi, Khojaly, Khojavand districts and other territories of the Garabagh region, currently under the temporary control of Russian peacekeepers have made an appeal to the international community. The appeal reads: "We – the internally displaced persons from Khojaly, Khankandi, Khojavand and other districts of the Garabagh region currently under the temporary control of Russian peacekeepers – declare to the international community that although the Garabagh conflict ended three years ago, in 2020, we are still unable to return to our cities, districts, villages, homes and native lands. Armenia is circulating false propaganda that only Armenians allegedly lived in those regions. They are even denying the fact it was Azerbaijanis who had historically lived there. This is a bogus claim! We are the true native residents of Khojaly, Khankandi, Karkijahan, Malibayli, Gushchular, Meshali, Garadaghlil! As a result of Armenia's policy



of aggression against Azerbaijan, we experienced tremendous tragedies, acts of genocide and mass killings. They tried to erase our memory by pursuing a policy of ethnic cleansing, our mosques and graves of our relatives were destroyed and desecrated, our houses were razed to the ground. Our homelands were given fictitious names. Countless people have left this world longing for their homeland. It causes us immense pain and suffering to look at our native homes only in photos and videos. The once happy places have now become a "barren land". The remains of

the Armenian army should be completely removed from these territories, the remnants of the puppet junta created and still being supported by Armenia should be dissolved, and the illegal armed groups should be disarmed. This is our demand! This is the demand of the entire Azerbaijan! The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan was fully restored by the establishment of a checkpoint in Lachin in April this year. The courageous and thoughtful policy of Victorious Commander-in-Chief, President IlhamAliyev has brought us these happy days! Garabagh and Eastern Zangezur

are now being turned into paradise. The overwhelming joy of the people of Zangilan, Lachin, Fuzuli, and Tartar returning to their homes inspires us and gives us even more hope that we too will soon become a part of this Great Return! Therefore, the sovereignty of Azerbaijan over Khojaly, Khankendi, Khojavand and other areas that have now become a "barren land" should be ensured. We appeal to the Armenians living in the Garabagh region: you can live happily under the flag of Azerbaijan, under the Constitution of Azerbaijan and in accordance

with laws of Azerbaijan! Do not allow your own fate, the fate of your children and future generations to be poisoned by Armenia and the illegal junta regime it supports! Garabagh should become a place of peace, coexistence and prosperity! The "barren land" cannot remain as such forever, it is unacceptable that we are still unable to return to our homes! We hereby declare that each of us believes in Victorious Commander-in-Chief, President IlhamAliyev! We believe that we will return to Khojaly, Khankandi, Khojavand, Aghdara! For more than 30 years, we did not lose faith in that for a single day. We live with a



BRUSSELS: Ambassador Amna Baloch presents credentials to King of Belgians in Brussels. She conveyed warm greetings from leadership and reaffirmed commitment to further strengthen friendship. – DNA

Pak to face Indonesia in Davis Cup on Sept 16

ISLAMABAD: The two-day Davis Cup World Group-II tie between Pakistan and Indonesia will kick off on Saturday at Aisam-ul-Haq Tennis Pavilion, Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad. The Pakistan team, spearheaded by seasoned Aisam ul Haq Qureshi and Aqeel Khan, also includes Muhammad Shoab, Muhammad Abid, and debutant Barkat Ullah, a Pakistan Tennis Federation spokesman said on Thursday. Former Davis Cup player Mushaf Zia is the coach of Pakistan team, while Muhammad Shahid will be the team physio. The Indonesian Davis Cup team, comprising three players, one captain and one coach arrived in Islamabad on September 11. The team consists of David Agung Susanto, Ignatius Anthony Susanto and Gunawan Trismuwantara. Wirjawan Sugiharta is the playing captain, whereas Suharyadi (Manager), Robby Sudrajat (Strength and Conditioning Coach), and Suharto (Masseur) make up the squad. The ITF Referee, Hany Hamied Ali ElKhafief from Egypt arrived on September 12 to supervise the tie. Chair umpire Gianluca Mosearella from Italy arrived on Thursday, whereas the second chair umpire Ivan Yovchev from Bulgaria will be arriving Friday. Chief of umpires Essam Maher Mohammad Saleh is scheduled to arrive later today (Thursday). – APP

Canada kick off Davis Cup, Ram saves USA

SPORTS DESK

PARIS: Canada opened their title defence by downing Italy as Great Britain upset Australia on the second day of Davis Cup final group stage action. The Czech Republic won their tie against a Spain side sorely missing world number two Carlos Alcaraz, while US Open men's doubles champion Rajeev Ram helped the United States team battle past Croatia. The top two from each of the 16-team four group round robin will move into the knockout phase in Spain in November. Canada stayed on course for the grand finale in Malaga next month courtesy of straight set wins in the opening singles by Alexis Galarneau and then Gabriel Diallo. Galarneau and Vasek Pospisil then claimed a tense 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) win over Matteo Araldi and

Simone Bolelli to defeat the Italians 3-0 in Bologna. Canada are trying to become the first nation in a decade to win the tournament back-to-back. The last country to achieve the feat, the Czech Republic in 2012-2013, exploited the absence of Alcaraz in Valencia to beat Spain 3-0 and join Serbia at the top of Group C. Over in Manchester the Great Britain captain Leon Smith's gamble in opting to select Jack Draper and Dan Evans in preference to his highest-ranked team member Cameron Norrie or experienced veteran Andy Murray as his singles players paid off handsomely. Davis Cup debutant Draper, who made it through to the US Open fourth round, repaid Smith's faith in him with a 6-7 (6/8), 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) win over Thanasi Kokkinakis. In front of a 9,000 crowd Draper broke Kokkinakis when his Australian rival was serving for the match, and then

fired a final backhand winner down the line to clinch the deciding tie break after almost three hours play to get the hosts off to a dream start. Evans then got the better of world number 12 Alex de Minaur 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 to sink last year's finalists. Last year's runners-up Australia took the doubles to leave the home side 2-1 winners, with the 2015 champions second to France, who beat Switzerland 24 hours earlier, in Group B. Draper was buzzing from his first taste of Davis Cup competition. "There's nothing better. It was a real battle, massive crowd in here," he said on court. "It's amazing to play my first Davis Cup tie in the UK in this sort of arena. I'm just so happy to be here and grateful Leon trusted me and put me out here today." He added: "I knew I'd played some tough matches at the US Open and I felt really good about my tennis."

190 Pakistani athletes set for upcoming Asian Games

POA has finalised a contingent of 262 athletes and officials for the upcoming Asian Games, which is scheduled to be held in Hangzhou, China

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: The Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) has finalised a contingent of 262 athletes and officials for the upcoming Asian Games, which is scheduled to be held in Hangzhou, China, from September 23, 2023. The contingent includes 137 men and 53 women athletes, along with a total of 72 team and contingent officials. However, Pakistan will now compete in 24 sports, instead of 25 as the country's E-sport team withdrew from the competition. An official of POA confirmed to Geo News that the E-sport team informed them of their withdrawal; however, the team had not cited finances as the reason for its missing the continental sporting pinnacle. "They withdrew after one of their members expressed inability to join them for Asian Games and following to that, they were unable to play a full team there," the official said. Earlier, the 12-member E-sport squad was named to represent Pakistan in the Asian Games. However, the POA official

confirmed that 5 athletes and 2 officials of the Fencing team withdrew from the Asian Games as they were unable to find sponsors. Pakistan will now be represented by only one athlete in Fencing – Mujadid Awan. Najia Rasool, who was earlier named

the official with the Taekwondo squad, has also been withdrawn after the athlete Fatima tuz Zehra was ruled out of the Asian Games due to an injury. Gold player Yasah Shah, Rowing official Rizwan ul Haq, Swimming official Uzma Preto, and three

Hockey coaches – Rehan Butt, Ayaz Mehmood, and Saqlain – who were removed by Pakistan Hockey Federation, are also withdrawn from the final squad list. Earlier, the provisional list of 280 athletes and officials along with 14 other contingent officials was sent to the Asian Games Organizing committee for accreditation of players. The biggest representation by Pakistan in the Asian Games will be from Cricket, which has named 39 players and officials for the extravaganza, in men's and women's competitions. Athletics will be the second biggest representation with 22 players and officials representing in country in various disciplines followed by Hockey which has named 21 members to represent Pakistan at the Asian Games 2023. Meanwhile, the POA has named Hamdan Nazir – the president of the Pakistan Rowing Federation and VP of Railways Sports Board – as chief de mission of Pakistan's contingent. Munir Ahmed is named deputy chef de mission. The first batch of Pakistani athletes comprised of players and officials from Sailing and Volleyball will arrive in Hangzhou on 15th of September.



PM to raise Kashmir...

FROM PAGE 01

economic recovery and efforts to mobilize domestic and external investments, the spokesperson added. Ms Baloch said Kakar would also participate in a summit on the sustainable development goals and other high level meetings to be organised under the auspices of UNGA. She said these would afford valuable platforms to deliberate on effective measures required at the global level to addressing the most pressing economic and development challenges confronting the global South in the wake of Covid-19, geopolitical contestations and climate change. The spokesperson said that on the sidelines of the UNGA, the caretaker PM would also hold bilateral meetings with counterparts from various countries as well as heads of international organisations, philanthropic organisations and corporate leaders. Responding to a question, the spokesperson said Jammu and Kashmir was an internationally recognised disputed territory whose final disposition was to be made in accordance with the relevant UNSC resolutions and aspirations of Kashmiri people.

Torkham border ..

FROM PAGE 01

Officials in Pakistan blamed the other side for starting the midday firefight, which lasted for around two hours and came after the Afghan authorities started building a checkpoint on their side in a prohibited area, close to the main border crossing. The Afghan authorities already had a checkpoint, commonly known as the Larram Post, in the vicinity, but they started building another post over a small hill without discussing it with the Pakistani side. On September 11, a meeting between Pakistani and Afghan border security officials to reach an agreement over the reopening of the border remained inconclusive.

SC returns...

FORM PAGE 01

general elections in the country within 90 days of the dissolution of the National Assembly. The petitioner, who is PTI's Secretary General Omar Ayub, requested the apex court to direct President Alvi to give a date for the polls and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to issue an election schedule accordingly. The petition was filed under Article 184(3) of the Constitution prays to declare as illegal and void ab initio the decision of the Council of Common Interest (CCI) dated August 5, 2023, approving the census. This was the second petition filed with the apex court.

PPP CEC ...

FROM PAGE 01

CEC and the final decision will be taken after deliberations. "In Pakistan People's Party, everyone, including the workers, has the right to give their opinion." About the election, she said the PPP talked about elections in 90 days under the constitution. The PPP leader lashed out at the president for, what she called, playing a game. "The president does not have the authority to give an election date. He should act under his constitutional domain instead of issuing controversial statements."

Petrol, diesel ...

FROM PAGE 01

crude oil prices and exchange rate fluctuations in the first 15 days of September. The petrol price may jump by Rs16 per litre in the next fortnight review of the petroleum prices, while the price of high-speed diesel (HSD) is likely to go up by Rs13.66 per litre, industry estimates showed. The ex-depot price of petrol has been calculated at Rs321.35 per litre for the next fortnight compared to its existing price of Rs305.36 per litre.

Briefs

68 Chinese warplanes detected near island: Taiwan

TAIPEI: Dozens of Chinese warplanes and 10 navy ships were detected around Taiwan, Taipei authorities said on Thursday after warning that Beijing was conducting air and sea drills in the Western Pacific. China claims self-ruled Taiwan as part of its territory and relations have soured since Taiwan's independence-leaning President Tsai Ing-wen came to power in 2016, with Beijing ratcheting up military and political pressure on the island. Taiwan's defense ministry said in a statement that 68 Chinese aircraft and 10 naval vessels were detected near the island between Wednesday morning and Thursday morning. Taipei had already said some of those planes and warships were heading to an unspecified area of the Western Pacific to "conduct joint sea and air training" with China's Shandong aircraft carrier. The Shandong, one of two operational aircraft carriers in the Chinese fleet, was detected Monday around 60 nautical miles (110 kilometers) southeast of Taiwan heading into the Western Pacific, Taipei authorities said. Japan's defense ministry also said Wednesday its navy had detected six ships — including frigates, destroyers, one fast combat support ship and the Shandong — sailing through waters some 650 kilometers (400 miles) south of Miyakojima island, east of Taiwan. It also confirmed that jets and helicopters had been detected taking off and landing from the Shandong. Taipei warned this week that China was stepping up "grey zone" activities around the island, accusing Beijing of seeking to raise regional tensions and pressure the territory while avoiding all-out conflict. China's military "has been tasked to develop capabilities to take over Taiwan," one expert said.—APP

Ukraine launches multiple drone attacks in Russia

MOSCOW: Eleven Ukrainian drones were shot down over the Crimea Peninsula early Thursday, the Russian Defense Ministry said. "On Sept. 14, at about 5:30 Moscow time (0230GMT), an attempt by the Kyiv regime to carry out a terrorist attack by an aircraft-type UAV (unmanned aerial vehicles) on objects on the territory of the Russian Federation was stopped. On-duty air defense destroyed 11 unmanned aerial vehicles," said a ministry statement. Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula has been under Russian control since 2014, when it was illegally annexed by Moscow. Another attack on the Black Sea Fleet also was foiled when Ukraine's armed forces tried to sink the patrol ship Sergey Kotov with five unmanned boats, which were destroyed, it added. The ministry also said four drone attacks were repelled in Russia's Bryansk region bordering Ukraine.—Agencies

Russian journalist's phone hacked with Israeli spyware

NEW YORK: A leading Russian journalist has had her phone compromised using Israeli spyware, researchers said Wednesday, the latest sign that phone hacking tools are being used to spy on media workers and opposition figures worldwide. A joint investigation by Canadian Internet watchdog Citizen Lab and digital rights group Access Now found that the phone of Galina Timchenko had been infected using spyware built by the Israeli company NSO Group. The infection began on or around Feb. 10, 2023, the researchers said. They did not identify who they had deployed it. Timchenko — the co-founder and publisher of independent Russian news outlet Meduza — was in Berlin at the time of the hack, the researchers said.—APP

Erdogan vows concurrent fight against illegal migration

President Erdogan underlined on Thursday that Türkiye would not be a hub for illegal migrants, but it would also not tolerate racist attacks against legal migrants and refugees by far-right groups

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: As racist messages perpetrated by far-right groups against refugees and migrants flood social media, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan reiterated Türkiye's stance on the issue. He stressed that they would not tolerate illegal migration but would also stand against racist behavior and attacks targeting migrants, as well as millions of refugees who fled the war in neighboring Syria. Erdoğan was addressing prospective district governors at an event in the capital Ankara on Thursday as he highlighted his government's stand on the issue. "We see efforts on social media to drive our nation to pessimism. Fugitive members of FETÖ (Gülenist Terror Group) and some politicians in Türkiye perpetuate this," he said. He was referring to a veiled campaign by far-right groups claiming an influx of migrants and refugees, peppered with racist messages. "These puppets on social media and elsewhere, knowingly or unknowingly, serve the enemies of this country," he added. He said that the Turkish nation had



a "heart big enough to embrace everyone" and was known for its tolerance in the world. "Our history has no stain of colonialism, neither the stain of racism or fascism. We have a long-held tradition of coexistence, helping the needy and treating people well. We will not allow sinister plots to take root here," Erdoğan said. Türkiye hosts the world's largest refugee population, mostly made up of 3.6 million Syrians living

under temporary protection. It's been more than 10 years since the first group of Syrian refugees, consisting of 250 people, entered Türkiye, starting their new lives in the country after fleeing the war and persecution of the Assad regime. It is also a favored destination for illegal migrants from Asia and Africa as they strive for reaching to Europe via Türkiye. An apparent increase in the number of migrants gives fodder to

far-right groups and perpetuates disinformation on social media. In some cases, refugees or migrants are accused of committing crimes through fake videos. Ümit Özda, head of the anti-refugee Victory Party (ZP), is among the sources of this disinformation campaign. Most recently, Özda helped a fake report spread on social media. The report, accompanied by a video, shows a group of young men in civilian clothes engaging

in physical workouts on a seaside promenade in Istanbul's Pendik district in the company of a trainer shouting instructions. Özda claimed it was Afghan migrants undergoing military training. It turned out that the people in the video were members of the naval forces of Pakistan who were staying at a nearby shipyard where a battleship for the Pakistan Navy was being built.

The ZP was repeatedly criticized in the past for its actions toward migrants and refugees, including videos Özda shared, showing him "interrogating" refugees he came across, "recommending" them to leave Türkiye "as soon as possible" and his tweets about what critics call "false propaganda" against refugees.

The party came under fire from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working for refugee welfare when its supporters last year released a short film entitled "Silent Invasion" depicting a future Türkiye with more Arabs than Turks. The ZP is regarded as a fringe party, and the main opposition, the Republican People's Party (CHP), is also a proponent of mass deportation, though it uses softer rhetoric.

US worries over Russia, North Korea defense ties

If 2 sides reach agreement, White House will deal with arms deal between Moscow and Pyongyang 'appropriately,' says US national security spokesman

WASHINGTON: White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters the United States has concerns about any kind of potential defense cooperation between Russia and North Korea. Kirby said the U.S. is carefully monitoring the contacts between Moscow and Pyongyang. "No nation on the planet, nobody should be helping Mr. Putin kill innocent Ukrainians. And if they decide to move forward with some sort of arms deals, well, obviously we'll take a measure of that, and we'll deal with it appropriately," he said. Russian President Vladimir Putin met Wednesday with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at Russia's most advanced spaceport amid warnings from the U.S. and South Korea against a potential arms transfer. Kim pledged his "full

and unconditional support" for "all decisions" by Putin, in an apparent reference to Russia's war on Ukraine, during talks at the Vostochny Cosmodrome in the Amur region of Russia's Far East, near the Chinese border. "Kim Jong Un courteously invited Putin to visit the DPRK at a convenient time," according to KCNA, referring to North Korea by its official name. Earlier, media reports quoted unidentified Western officials as saying Russia hopes to receive North Korean artillery shells for use in the war in Ukraine, while Pyongyang appears to want advanced technology for its satellites and nuclear-powered submarines, as well as food assistance from Moscow. "We need to discuss the issues of economic cooperation and humanitarian issues, as well as the situation in the region," Putin told Kim.

The two first toured the spaceport, where reporters asked if Russia would help North Korea build satellites. "That's why we came here," Putin said, according to Russian state media. "The leader of the DPRK shows great interest in rocket engineering; they are also trying to develop space." DPRK refers to North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. People watch a television screen showing a news broadcast with file footage of a North Korean missile test, at a railway station in Seoul on Sept. 13, 2023. As Kim visited Russia, y, North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles into the sea off its eastern coast. South Korea's military said the missiles were launched from near Pyongyang and flew about 650 kilometers. Ahead of the talks, South

Korean officials said they were closely monitoring the first meeting between Kim and Putin in four years. Cooperation between Russia and North Korea should be made in the direction of contributing to peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula while adhering to the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions," a spokesperson from South Korea's foreign ministry said on Wednesday. The U.S. and South Korea have renewed warnings to North Korea not to provide munitions to Russia that could be used in the war in Ukraine. "Any transfer of arms from North Korea to Russia would violate multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions," said U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller during a Tuesday briefing. "We will monitor what happens and will not hesitate to take action to hold those accountable if necessary."—Agencies

Finland govt in eye of racism

HELSINKI: "Democracy is always a wonderful thing," said Sanna Marin when she lost in Finland's elections this April, a result that confirmed Finnish politics' shift to the right. After weeks of wrangling, at the end of June, Prime Minister Petteri Orpo managed to form a coalition government with his conservative National Coalition Party, Christian Democrats, Swedish People's Party, and the controversial far-right Finns Party. The Finns Party even managed to secure high-profile Cabinet posts within the most right-wing government in modern Finnish history. But just three weeks later, the coalition was in turmoil after local media exposed racist comments made by several ministers of the far-right party. Some were even accused of having links to neo-Nazi groups. Officials of the previous left-wing government picked up on these serious allegations and have proven to be an active opposition. Three opposition parties filed a no-confidence motion against the government, as well as Finance Minister Riiikka Purra and Economic Affairs Minister Wille Rydman, both of the Finns Party. Despite the massive racism scandal, the government and ministers survived the vote last week, with 106 members of the 200-seat Parliament backing the right-wing coalition. After the vote, Orpo told local media he was "really satisfied" and asserted that his government "does not accept any form of racism." However, according to Li Andersson, leader of the Left Alliance Party, "xenophobia and racism" have always been a part of the Finns Party's politics. They have survived the no-confidence vote but "this debate and discussion is not over yet" because the Finns "will not change who they are, they will not change what their party is," Andersson told Anadolu. She also pointed out that there is conflict and tension within the right-wing coalition. "We do know that there are very big issues within the government, and I think a lot of analysts and also politicians are not expecting this government to last throughout the term," she added.—DNA

Philippines, US discuss expanding military base access

MANILA: Philippine and US military officials said on Thursday they may look to further expand areas covered in their joint defense agreement, which could give Washington more access to bases in the Philippines at a time when tensions are simmering in the South China Sea. Manila granted the US entry to four more bases in strategic areas of the Philippines earlier this year, a move that riled Beijing as it gives Washington access to a total of nine military sites in the country under their 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. The four new bases are situated in strategic locations, with three of the sites facing north toward Taiwan and one near an island in the disputed South China Sea. US Indo-Pacific Command head Adm. John Aquilino said he and the Philippines' military chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr. have discussed the possibility of expanding the number of bases US forces could access. "Gen. Brawner and I may make recommendations to our senior leaders for the consideration of additional sites, but there's still work to do there before we get to that answer," Aquilino told reporters after their meeting on Thursday. "We are in discussions." Ranking military officials led by Aquilino and Brawner were inspecting two of the four new EDCA sites on Wednesday, where various work is underway, including building a pier and repairing an airstrip. The US has allocated over \$100 million to develop sites in the Philippines, with over 90 projects having already been approved in the new locations.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: The Japanese Ambassador WADA Mitsuhiro called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce, Dr. Gohar Ijaz to discuss opportunities to enhance bilateral trade at the Ministry of Commerce.—DNA

US, Europe reissue IAEA threat to Iran

"If Iran fails to implement the essential and urgent actions contained in the November 2022 Resolution and the 4th March Joint Statement in full, the Board will have to be prepared to take further action in support of the (IAEA) Secretariat to hold Iran accountable in the future, including the possibility of a resolution," the four Western powers said in a statement to the 35-nation IAEA board

TEHRAN: The U.S. and three European allies have threatened Iran with another resolution at the U.N. nuclear watchdog's board demanding action on issues such as explaining uranium traces found at undeclared sites but left open whether or when they might follow through. The warning delivered by Britain, France and Germany — the so-called E3 — and the U.S. to a quarterly International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors meeting published on Thursday comes as the West's standoff with Iran has been com-

pllicated by secret U.S.-Iran talks. A November resolution ordered Tehran to cooperate urgently with the IAEA's investigation into the presence of uranium particles at three undeclared sites, which have since narrowed down to two. Western powers have recently condemned Iran for stonewalling the IAEA on that and other issues like the re-installation of surveillance cameras removed last year and for enriching uranium to up to 60% purity, close to weapons grade. But in parallel, diplomats say the United States

has held secret "de-escalation" talks with Iran, potentially muddying the waters. Those de-escalation talks, which Washington does not acknowledge, cover issues such as Iran's recent slowdown of enrichment to 60% purity, frozen Iranian funds abroad, and a prisoner swap, diplomats say. "If Iran fails to implement the essential and urgent actions contained in the November 2022 Resolution and the 4th March Joint Statement in full, the Board will have to be prepared to take further action in support of the

(IAEA) Secretariat to hold Iran accountable in the future, including the possibility of a resolution," the four Western powers said in a statement to the 35-nation IAEA board. Iran tends to bristle at resolutions against it and respond by expanding or accelerating its nuclear activities. Iran says its nuclear program is strictly for peaceful uses. Western powers say there is no credible civilian explanation for it. The joint statement addressed the re-installation of monitoring equipment such as cameras, but only a fraction of the cameras

the IAEA wants to put in place have been set up. Rather than seek another binding resolution against Tehran for the lack of progress on these issues at this week's IAEA board meeting, the Western powers issued a non-binding joint statement with 59 other countries calling Iran to "act immediately" on issues, including explaining the uranium traces. A total of 22 countries of the 35 on the board backed the statement, fewer than the 26 that supported the resolution in November.—Agencies

Migrants in Italy have clashes with police

LONDON: Migrants in Italy have clashed with authorities after demanding that they be transferred from landing sites to housing across the country, Euractiv reported. Hundreds of new migrants on the island of Lampedusa protested their living conditions at the Favoloro pier, with local police carrying out a "lightning raid" to deter violence. Italy has faced a surge in migration from the Mediterranean, with barges and fishing vessels crossing from North Africa weekly. Lampedusa, south of Sicily and Malta, has proved a popular arrival point owing to its location as the first entry into Europe from the Mediterranean. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said: "The issue of relocation (in other EU countries) is secondary. Very few people have been relocated in recent months. 'The question is not how to unload the problem; it's how to stop the arrivals in Italy, and I still don't see any concrete answers.'" Italy's landing sites are operating at maximum capacity, with reception centers overstretched. Almost 7,000 migrants, including 257 minors, have landed on Lampedusa in recent days. Italian authorities are carrying out emergency migrant transfers off the island to relieve pressure on landing sites and reception centers.—Agencies

Tunisia's Bardo Museum reopens to public

LONDON: The Bardo Museum in Tunis has opened for the first time since closing to the public in 2021, Tunisian authorities announced. "The Bardo National Museum will reopen its doors to the public on Thursday (Sept. 14), from 9 a.m. till 4:30 p.m.," the Tunisian Culture Ministry said. "New spaces have been created in the Bardo National Museum, where archaeological and artistic artifacts, including mosaic paintings and marble sculptures, will be displayed for the first time after restoration and maintenance." The museum, which opened in 1888, is described as "the jewel of Tunisian heritage," and houses one of the world's best collections of Roman items, including thousands of mosaics dating from as early as the second century B.C. The Bardo attracted global headlines in 2015 when a terrorist attack claimed the lives of 20 people. It closed for maintenance amid significant political upheaval in 2021 when President Kais Saied took control of the country.—APP

Qatar registers \$876m in online payments

RIYADH: In a significant development highlighting the acceleration of digital payments, Qatar Central Bank revealed that online transactions in August touched 5.46 billion and totaled 3.19 billion Qatari riyals (\$876 million). QCB further said there were 2.07 million direct debit cards, 690,569 credit cards and 994,167 prepaid cards actively used by consumers. The surge in online transactions also coincides with the adoption of point-of-sale devices nationwide. The number of POS devices hit 68,898 in August, facilitating 27.7 million transactions during that period, accumulating a total value of 6.74 billion riyals. The increase in online and POS transactions indicates a growing digital payments ecosystem, reflective of consumer confidence and the country's ongoing efforts to integrate financial technology solutions. In August, the apex bank notified interested companies to apply for a license to offer buy now, pay later solutions. It stated that firms willing to operate in this sector must apply for a license, adding that the application process will open in September. This move aims to license and regulate the BNPL services in the country as it embarks on a journey to support diversification and innovation within the financial sector under Qatar National Vision 2030.—APP

Briefs

Russian air defence system destroyed in Crimea

DNA

KYIV: Ukraine says it has destroyed a sophisticated Russian air defence system in occupied Crimea. Kyiv's security service (SBU) and navy carried out the attack on a Russian facility near Yevpatoriya using cruise missiles and drones, a Ukrainian intelligence source told media. Video footage on social media showed a fire and smoke near the city, in the west of the Russian-occupied peninsula. Moscow has yet to directly comment on the claim. Instead, the Russian defence ministry said it had shot down several Ukrainian aerial drones and thwarted a separate attack on a naval patrol vessel.

Earlier on Thursday, a number of explosions were reported in the Crimean peninsula, which Russia illegally occupied in 2014. According to the BBC's intelligence source, the Ukrainian operation used drones to take out radar equipment, then cruise missiles to hit air defence missile launchers. "After disabling the radar stations, the navy units hit the S300 and S400 'Triumph' systems, worth \$1.2bn, by two Neptune cruise missiles," the source said.

SBP keeps interest rate unchanged at 22%

DNA

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Monday announced maintaining the key policy rate at 22%. According to a statement issued by the central bank, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to maintain the policy rate at 22%. This decision takes into account the latest inflation outturn reflecting the continuing declining trend in inflation from its peak of 38% in May to 27.4% in August 2023. The MPC - which was constituted as a statutory committee under the SPB Act - noted that even though global oil prices have risen recently and are being passed on to consumers through adjustment in administered energy prices, inflation is projected to remain on the downward trajectory, especially from the second half of this year. The MPC noted four key developments since its July meeting. First, the agricultural outlook has improved, based on the latest data on cotton arrivals, better input conditions, and satellite data indicating healthy vegetation of other crops. Second, global oil prices have been rising and are now hovering over \$90/barrel level.

Philippines, US discuss expanding military base access

DNA

MANILA: Philippine and US military officials said on Thursday they may look to further expand areas covered in their joint defense agreement, which could give Washington more access to bases in the Philippines at a time when tensions are simmering in the South China Sea. Manila granted the US entry to four more bases in strategic areas of the Philippines earlier this year, a move that riled Beijing as it gives Washington access to a total of nine military sites in the country under their 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. The four new bases are situated in strategic locations, with three of the sites facing north toward Taiwan and one near an island in the disputed South China Sea. US Indo-Pacific Command head Adm. John Aquilino said he and the Philippines' military chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr. have discussed the possibility of expanding the number of bases US forces could access.

Iranian ambassador lauds Pakistan's defence capabilities

Ambassador of Iran, Reza Amiri Moghaddam said Iran could help Pakistan in the energy sector being an oil and gas-rich country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Reza Amiri Moghaddam called on Minister for Defence, Lieutenant General (R) Anwar Ali Hyder here on Thursday and appreciated Pakistan's defence capabilities. The Iranian envoy underscored that the two countries have the potential for extensive collaboration in the field of defence, a news release said. The Defence Minister expressed his appreciation for cordial and fraternal ties nourished by centuries-old religious and cultural affinities. He stated that Pakistan is grateful for Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei's strong and unwavering support for the just struggle of the people of Jammu & Kashmir. While expressing the importance of the Joint Border Commission (JBC) the Defence Minister said that Pakistan has taken all necessary measures in the domain of border management and joint efforts in this regard for countering terrorism and dealing with miscreants. Moreover, the Minister for Defence expressed that Pakistan welcomes the Iran-KSA rapprochement. "It is a positive move



for peace and stability in the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz. Chinese mediation is appreciated," he added. Ambassador of Iran, Reza Amiri Moghaddam said Iran

could help Pakistan in the energy sector being an oil and gas-rich country. Both sides showed satisfaction and intended to collaborate in various areas of

common interest, enhancing security, counter-terrorism and ensuring regional economic connectivity as well as enhancing trade and economic activity.

Most Libya flood casualties could have been avoided: UN

GENEVA: The United Nations said Thursday that most of the thousands of deaths in Libya's flood disaster could have been averted if early warning and emergency management systems had functioned properly. With better functioning coordination in the crisis-wracked country, "they could have issued the warnings and the emergency management forces would have been able to carry out the evacuation of the people, and we could have avoided most of the human casualties," Petteri Taalas, head of the UN's World Meteorological Organization, told reporters in Geneva. His comments came after a tsunami-sized flash flood hit eastern Libya at the weekend, killing at least 5,000 people, with thousands more missing and feared dead. The enormous surge of water burst two upstream river dams and reduced the city of Derna to an apocalyptic wasteland where entire city blocks and untold numbers of people were washed into the Mediterranean Sea. Taalas said lacking weather forecasting and dissemination and action on early warnings was a large contributor to the size of the disaster. - Agencies

Sindh decides military operation against criminals

DNA

KARACHI: The caretaker government in Sindh has decided to launch a massive joint military operation led by the Pakistan Army, police and Rangers to curb incidents of kidnapping by eliminating dacoits from the province's katcha (riverine) areas. The decision was made in a cabinet meeting held at the Chief Minister's House on Thursday with interim CM Justice (ret) Maqbool Bqar in the chair. The cabinet also accorded approval for the extension of Rangers' stay for another 6 months in Sindh - from September 14, 2023 to February 2024. Sindh Inspector General of Police (IGP) Riffat Mukhtar briefed the caretaker cabinet about the overall law and order situation in the province with special reference to kidnapping for ransom cases and informed that during the current year, as many as 218 people had been kidnapped out of them 207 have so far been recovered. There are 11 people still under the captivity of the kidnapers, the IG told the meeting and said of these 11 people seven were from Larkana, 3 from Shaheed Benazirabad

and one from Sukkur districts. The police chief shared the details of the individuals kidnapped from the katcha areas. He said Naveed Lashari was kidnapped from Jacobabad, Sagar Kumar from GarhiYaseen, Qadeer, Zaheer, Gulbahar from Kashmoreand Shahid and Jabbar from Sukkur, Soomar from Qasimabad Hyderabad and while Farhan and Shahid were made hostage by dacoits from NaushehroFeroze. CM Bqar ordered the IGP and other law enforcement agencies to take action for the early release of all remaining hostages from their captors. Justice Bqar also directed the IGP to keep in touch with the family members of the hostages and make them aware of the efforts being made for their release. Moreover, the caretaker chief minister directed authorities concerned for immediate suspension of internet services in the riverine areas of the province. The cabinet was told that there are 238 villages in Sindh's katcha area and eight police stations and 20 police checkpoints have been established by the Sindh Police to provide security to the people living there. CM Bqar directed for the posting of honest and reputable police officers in the Kat-

cha area and those who could not perform well should be removed from the posting. He also sought detailed reports regarding the status of 11 hostages and ordered them to start construction work on Ghotki-Kandhkot bridge over the Indus River so that the law and order situation could be improved. The cabinet also decided to launch a police operation against dacoits and drug mafia in Katcha and other areas of the province with the help of the Pakistan Army, Rangers and Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) as it was the duty of the government in office to provide a peaceful and secure environment to the people of the province. The CM also directed the police and law enforcers to control the street crimes in urban areas of the province and ordered that aggressive operations be initiated against street criminals. Bqar said law and order in the province were not satisfactory as no one could walk freely by taking a mobile phone in one's hands and this situation could not be tolerated. All ministers, advisers, special assistants to CM, Sindh Chief Secretary Dr Fakhar Alam, Principal secretary to CM, advocate general, prosecutor general and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

Biden brushes off House impeachment inquiry

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden late Wednesday brushed off the House Republicans' impeachment inquiry, saying the way he sees it, they launched the investigation against him because they want to shut down the federal government. Biden, speaking at a Democratic fundraiser in Virginia, said that instead of being concerned about the probe, "I'm focused on the things the American people want me focused on." The president's remarks were the first since Speaker Kevin McCarthy announced the launch of a Biden impeachment inquiry while the Republican House leader is also struggling to shore up votes to fund the government and prevent a federal shutdown. "The best I can tell is they want to impeach me because they want to shut down the government," Biden said. He also made a reference to Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., a top ally of his chief rival heading into the 2024 election, Donald Trump. "The first day she was elected, the first thing she wanted to do was impeach Biden," he said. "Look, I've got a job." Biden told his audience. "I've got to deal with the issues that affect the American people every single, solitary day." McCarthy's sudden decision to direct an impeachment inquiry into Biden over the business dealings of his son, Hunter, and the family finances has won over even the most reluctant Republicans, with some GOP lawmakers pushing for swift action while others expect it to drag into the 2024 election year. McCarthy opened and closed a private meeting Wednesday of House Republicans justifying his reasoning for the inquiry sought by former President Trump. The moment is a politically pivotal one for the embattled McCarthy, whose job is being targeted by Trump's right-flank allies. He has already signaled potential charges of abuse of power, corruption and obstruction for possible articles of impeachment. "There's a lot of accusations out there you just want the answers to," McCarthy told reporters at the Capitol. The White House mobilized to fight what it called the "unprecedented, unfounded claims" against the president regarding his son, Hunter, and family finances. In the inquiry, House Republicans are trying to link Biden to the business dealings of his son and deflect attention away from Trump's own legal peril. - DNA

US envoy reaffirms commitment to green shipping with Pakistan

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The United States reaffirmed its commitment to partnering with the Government of Pakistan and the port and shipping industry to develop a national action. This plan will encourage more sustainable shipping practices to prevent global climate change and enhance Pakistan's trade competitiveness. US Deputy Chief of Mission Andrew Schofer co-hosted the second Green Shipping roundtable with Office of the Prime Minister Political Secretary and Chairman for Strategic Reforms Unit Hussain Islam and Ministry of Maritime Affairs Director General for Ports and Shipping Alia Shahid. Together they underlined the need for immediate and collective action to address climate change. Mr. Schofer delivered keynote remarks, underscoring the crucial role of sustainable shipping practices in mitigat-

ing the impact of climate change. Joined by Consul General Conrad Tribble and representatives from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and U.S. Department of Energy, Mr. Schofer emphasized the need for conversations to address these issues. "Given our shared climate challenges, it is imperative that we engage in robust bilateral dialogues. Today is a testament to our commitment to a sustainable and climate-resilient future, one that will benefit not only us but generations to come." The Green Shipping roundtable stakeholders discussed opportunities to reduce carbon emissions in the port, shipping, and logistics sectors in Pakistan. Port authorities, industry, and other key actors in the ports and shipping value chain discussed how to promote environmentally friendly and sustainable shipping practices in Pakistan and ways to support the Green Shipping Challenge at COP28.

FS for exploring new aspects of strategic frontiers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A new book, entitled "Pakistan's Strategic Frontiers" was launched at a ceremony at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI). This was the third edited volume put together by ISSI's Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East, and Africa (CAMEA). The Chief Guest on the occasion was the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Ambassador SyrusSajjadQazi, and the Keynote address was delivered by Ambassador Asif Durrani, Pakistan's Special Representative on Afghanistan. Other speakers included: Director General ISSI, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood; Director CAMEA, Ms. Amina Khan; Mr. Martin Mader, Head of the Asia Pacific Department, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES); Prof. MuresanLivi, President EuroDefense Romania; Ambassador (R) Riffat Masood, former Pakistan Ambassador to Iran; and Mr. Michael Kugelmann, Director and South Asia Senior Associate, Woodrow Wilson Center. The contributors to the book also spoke. Ambassador SyrusSajjadQazi, in his address, stated that Pakistan, a country situated at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, occupies a unique and strategically vital position in the global geopolitical landscape. The term "strategic frontiers" encompasses the geographical, political, economic, and security

dimensions that define Pakistan's role and significance in shaping regional dynamics and global interactions. It is, therefore, important to explore the multifaceted aspects of Pakistan's strategic frontiers, delving into its historical context, the contemporary challenges and opportunities this entails, and its potential to influence the regional environment and global outcomes. The Foreign Secretary underlined that the

region surrounding Pakistan is driven by complex and often volatile dynamics. He added that the book "Pakistan's Strategic Frontiers" provides valuable insights into these varied dimensions, offering a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities that Pakistan faces in navigating the evolving global landscape. "It [the book] underscores the need for strategic foresight, diplomacy, actualization

of pivot to geo-economics, and practical cooperation to ensure Pakistan's continued relevance and prosperity in an ever-changing world," he concluded. DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, speaking on the occasion, said that the book "Pakistan's Strategic Frontiers" is an important addition to the existing literature on Pakistan's place and role in an evolving region and a transforming world. In the rapidly changing milieu, developing better understanding of Pakistan's strategic frontiers and outlook is of crucial importance for the academic and policy communities alike. It is a gratifying that both these communities are sufficiently represented here today. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood added that the world finds itself at a pivotal juncture, today, marked by unparalleled flux and uncertainty. We are indeed at an inflection point - an era has ended; while the contours of a new era have yet to take a definite shape. Moreover, he said that we would do well to recall that assertions of the "end of history" in the aftermath of the Cold War were clearly premature, as historical and geopolitical dynamics re-surfaced almost with a vengeance. Also, the much-debated thesis of 'Clash of Civilizations', propounded in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, acquired wide currency in the post-9/11 era and could well have become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Thankfully, that has not happened thus far.



Kim extends stay in Russia

DNA

MOSCOW:North Korea's leader Kim Jung Un has unexpectedly extended his visit to Russia, where he was meeting President Vladimir Putin for a suspected arms deal. The pair had discussed possibilities for military cooperation on Wednesday. Mr Putin also "gratefully" accepted an invitation from Mr Kim to visit North Korea, a Kremlin spokesperson said. Moscow is buying weapons for its war on Ukraine and any help would violate UN resolutions, the US has warned. Mr Kim was warmly received by Mr Putin at the Vostochny space centre on Wednesday in Russia's far east - the North Korean leader spent two days travelling there in his private luxury bulletproof train. Russian state media footage showed the two leaders grinning as they shook hands, before Mr Putin personally escorted Mr Kim around the space centre. They also exchanged gifts, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. Mr Putin gave Mr Kim a glove from a spacesuit "that had been in space several times" and a Russian-made rifle. Mr Kim gave Mr Putin a North Korean-made gun, among other gifts.

Russia expels two US diplomats

MOSCOW: Russia has summoned the US ambassador to Moscow and expelled two American embassy diplomats accused of working with a Russian spy. In a statement on Thursday, the Russian Foreign Ministry said it had summoned Ambassador Lynne Tracy, telling her that first secretary Jeffrey Sillin and second secretary David Bernstein must leave Russia within a week. Declaring the two diplomats "persona non grata," the ministry said the pair had allegedly worked with a Russian national accused of collaborating for a foreign state. "The named people conducted illegal activity, maintaining contact with Russian citizen R. Shonov, accused of 'confidential cooperation' with a foreign state," the ministry said. Robert Shonov, according to Reuters, was employed by the US Consulate General in the eastern Russian city of Vladivostok for more than 25 years up to 2021, when Moscow prevented the local staff from working for the US mission. "The US ambassador was told that Sillin and Bernstein must leave the territory of Russia within seven days under the status of persona non grata," the ministry added. - Agencies

Nigeria hit by widespread blackout

NIGER: Nigeria has been hit by widespread power cuts following a "total system collapse", electricity distribution companies say. Levels of power being generated fell to zero megawatts early on Thursday. Some supplies have been restored but only a tiny fraction of normal consumption in Africa's most populous country. Power supplies are often erratic in Nigeria, despite its role as a major oil and gas producer. This is the most serious such outage for a year - the West African country's grid collapsed at least four times in 2022, which the authorities blamed on technical problems. Less than 50% of Nigeria's population has access to a regular power supply, with most people dependent on generators, inverters and other sources of electricity. Most homes and office buildings are not solely dependent on the national grid for power supply. The theoretical maximum amount of power Nigeria could produce is 12,500MW, but the country normally produces just a quarter of that, the Reuters news agency reports. On Thursday at around 10:30 local time (09:30 GMT) power levels rose from zero to 273MW, which is still well below the daily average of 4,100MW, data from the Transmission Company of Nigeria showed. - Agencies