



Islamabad POST

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Australian Prime Minister confirms China visit

Detailed News On Page-08

EU chief visits UAE meets MBZ

Detailed News On Page-0



Estonia 'concerned' about hybrid attack, says FM

Detailed News On Page-08



To curb smuggling

Crackdown yields results, says Kakar

Resolution of business community's problems was among the government's priorities, said PM

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday said that the crackdown by the government on smuggling during the last 48 hours brought positive outcomes and was also welcomed by the authorities of neighboring countries. The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that an operation against the smuggling had been launched across the country, particularly in the border areas. He said the consultation was underway to promote trade with neighboring countries which had also welcomed the government's crackdown against smuggling. He said the resolution of business community's problems was among the government's priorities. The prime minister welcomed the proposals by the delegation and assured implementation of the practicable ones. He told the delegation that after assuming the office, he interacted with the business community and listened to their issues. He appreciated the business community's role for economic development and provision of job opportunities. Prime Minister Kakar said the government was reforming the taxation system through digitalisation. He said the economic development was not possible unless the tax collection was increased. He said the government would bring in the economic stability by winning confidence of traders, industrialists and investors. The reformation process in the power sector was also going on and action was being taken against those involved in the power theft. The prime minister said that consultation with all the stakeholders was essential for issues resolution and the Commerce Ministry would regularly seek suggestions from the chambers. He directed the authorities concerned to submit a report on expansion of FBR's Point of Sales system besides improving the performance of commercial attaches in Pakistan's diplomatic missions. The prime minister also instructed the Capital Development Authority to improve its working and include the business community in the consultation process. Besides, the CDA should also digitize the provision of facilities to the citizens as well as the land record. Federal Secretaries of commerce and industries, chairmen of FBR and CDA attended the meeting.

Political turmoil, rising terrorism: PTI

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Keeping in view of the fast growing political turmoil in the country, rising scourge of terrorism as well as the precarious security situation at borders, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson urged the state and the government to take urgent course correction steps and redefine their priorities to tackle these looming threats, posing serious threats to national security, with collective wisdom. In a statement on Thursday, PTI Spokesperson expressed deep concerns over the widespread despondency, disenchantment and political uncertainty coupled with the resurgence of the menace of terrorism. He stressed the need that the state and the government should take immediate course correction measures and shun the repressive policy of political victimization and adopt a serious and unified approach to protect the national security. PTI Spokesperson paid glowing tributes to the soldiers who bravely and successfully fought and repulsed the terrorists' attack on the Pak-Afghan border. He said the soldiers, who sacrificed their lives while foiling the evil designs of the terrorists, were the heroes of the nation. "We salute our martyrs and express our heartfelt sympathy and solidarity with their families," he added. PTI spokesperson stated that national security was the most sensitive and serious matter, the clouds of uncertainty hovering over it was a matter of concern for the state and the government, as alarming upsurge was witnessed in the number of terrorists' attacks across the country, especially in the border areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Foreign Minister, Jalil Abbas Jilani calls on Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. – DNA

Rupee gains Rs2.03 against US Dollar

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Corrective measures taken by the government have started yielding results as the Pakistani Rupee on Thursday gained Rs2.03 against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs304.94 against the previous day's closing of 306.97. The buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market came down to Rs305 and Rs308 from Rs313 and Rs316 respectively, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP). The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 2.81 to close at Rs326.67 against the last day's closing of Rs329.48, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen came down by 02 paisa and stood at Rs2.06, whereas a decrease of

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Election within 90 days Lawyers hint at launching mass movement

Lawyers' convention demands case against the Chief Election Commissioner

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: In a hard-hitting speech, Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Abid Zuberi on Thursday said that Article 6 of the Constitution – which deals with treason – should be applied on Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja for violating the top court's order and the Constitution as he failed to hold elections within 90 days after an assembly's dissolution. On March 1, the SC, in a split verdict, ruled that elections for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Punjab assemblies should be held within 90 days. The direction was given by the apex court in the suo motu notice verdict which was announced by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial. In light of the SC's ruling, President Arif Alvi announced April 30 as a date for the Punjab polls after consulting the ECP. Later, the electoral watchdog announced the

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Contempt case DC, 3 police officials indicted

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday indicted Deputy Commissioner (DC) Irfan Nawaz Memon and three police officials including Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Jameel Zafar in a contempt case pertaining to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shehryar Afridi and Shandana Gulzar detention under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance. On August 16, the IHC suspended the detention orders of the PTI leaders and ordered their immediate release.

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SC takes up Jaranwala case today

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A three-member bench of the Supreme Court (SC) will take up the case of arson and rampage in the Christian neighbourhood in Jaranwala town of the industrial district of Faisalabad, the latest incident of violence against the religious minority. On August 16, a crowd vandalised several churches and set scores of houses on fire in Jaranwala after clerics made announcements in the mosques inciting the mob to attack the Christian community under allegations of blasphemy. The violent mob that committed arson, also looted valuables from the Christian houses that had been abandoned by their owners after the calls of protests from the mosques.

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UK, Europe Pakistan sees chances of flight restoration

The PIA spokesperson had said that the applications will be submitted to the national airline's country manager in France

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan has set expectations high for the restoration of direct flight operations in the United Kingdom (UK) and Europe after the upcoming visits of their aviation audit teams, a private news channel reported on Thursday. A delegation from the British safety agency, Department for Transport (DfT), will visit Pakistan at the end of Octo-

ber. During its visit, the DfT team will conduct an audit of the safety management system, flight data monitoring and aircraft, sources told ARY News. The DfT will conduct the audits of both Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). The PIA spokesperson said that the airline management completed all preparations ahead of the DfT team's visit to Pakistan.

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Briefs

No ban on Rs 5000 note

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Thursday that notification regarding the ban on Rs 5,000 currency notes was fake. In a post on X, formerly Twitter, the minister said that the government would take strict action against those spreading such fake notifications. The fake notice, dated September 7, 2023, stated that the said currency note will be banned by the end of this month under a "significant policy change" by the government. "In pursuance of sub-section (2) of Section 323 of Pakistan Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860), the Federal Government is pleased to announce a significant policy change aimed at strengthening the financial system and curbing illicit financial activities.

Use of force not a solution

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid said on Thursday the arrests and use of force were not a solution to all the issues. "Everyone has to come together to find a solution to the economic crisis," he said. In his message on the social networking site X (Twitter), the former interior minister said the problem was economic, and not political. Rashid said, "People are the state; if the people are happy, the state will be happy."

259th CCC held Army reiterates resolve to defend state sovereignty

Forum resolved that all terrorists will be dealt with full might of the state



RAWALPINDI: Chief of the Army Staff General Asim Munir addressing the Corps Commanders conference, on Thursday. – DNA

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) presided over the 259th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) held at GHQ. Forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhadas including officers and men of

the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies and Citizens who laid their lives for the safety, security and territorial integrity of the country. Fateha was offered for the martyrs and it was reiterated that the State of Pakistan and Armed Forces will continue to hold the Shuhadas and their families in

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To save energy

Markets to be closed at sunset

A similar announcement was also made by the previous Shehbaz government regarding the closure of markets by 8pm across the country under the 'energy conservation plan' which did not work

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The caretaker government has ordered measures to conserve energy, including closing all malls and markets at sunset to mitigate the effects of energy crisis, a private news channel reported. A similar announcement was also made by the previous Shehbaz government regarding the closure of markets by 8pm across the country under the 'energy conservation plan'. On June 6, the former federal minister made the announcement while talking to journalists after a meeting of National Economic Council (NEC) chaired by then prime minister Shehbaz Sharif. "The NEC has approved an energy conservation plan under which shops and commercial centres would be closed by 8pm,"

he had announced, noting that energy has become a huge challenge for Pakistan due to global prices. However, no implementation was made on the measures announced by the previous govt. Sources told that the implementation of the current energy conservation plan will start from October 1 to February 15. According to the sources, the administration of the four provinces will implement the decision, while a draft is also being prepared for permanent legislation. The closure of markets at sunset would save 1500MW of electricity, sources say. Meanwhile, consultations have also been started with all the chambers federation and business communities to close the markets early. It is pertinent to mention here that the inflated power bills triggered

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Chelum of Hazrat Imam Hussain observed

DNA

SUKKUR : Like others part of the country, the Chelum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) was observed at Sukkur, Khairpur, Ghotki, Shikarpur, Jaccabad, Kashmir, Noushehroferoze and other parts including Rohri, Pano Aqil, Kot Diji with religious spirit, devotion and respect on Thursday. In this connection the Majlis Aza programmes, seminars and conferences were held in the various areas/towns to highlight the sacrifices and the services of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) for Islam. Speakers paid rich tributes to the Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), and his 72 companions who sacrificed their lives for the holy cause. Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) was the younger grandson of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), and the younger son of the Hazrat Ali (RA) and Hazrat Fatima (RA). In all parts of the northern Sindh mourning processions were taken out to highlight the importance of the day and pay rich tribute to the Karbala martyrs.

On the occasion Chelum, the prominent speakers said that Azadari is the strongest citadel and most effective spiritual weapon against international colonial powers. Addressing in Majlis-e-Aza, the participants, and speakers said Azadari is echoes of Zainab (RA) and Zain-ul Abideen (RA). They said Azadari-e-Imam Hussain (RA) preaches courage and bravery and the lesson of sacrifice with the spirit of sacrifice. In Khairpur and other districts, speakers said that Nawasa-e-Rasool Al-Saqain Shahzade-e-Konain Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) sacrificed his life along with 72 near and dear ones in Karbala for protecting Islamic values, supporting human dignity, and defending religion and Shariat rather he took religion, Shariat to new heights.

Strict actions taken against electricity thieves

DNA

LAHORE : The district administration has prepared a comprehensive plan to nab electricity thieves, and in this regard a district enforcement committee has been set up for the provincial capital. The committee includes Additional Deputy Commissioner Headquarters, Revenue, Assistant Commissioner and LESCO members, which met Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider here at her office on Thursday. Rafia directed the committee members to use all means to tighten the noose around the power thieves and said that crackdown would be conducted under the supervision of the assistant commissioner concerned. She said that surveys were being conducted and home work has been completed while full scale operation would be started soon. DC Lahore Rafia Haider said that as per the instructions of the Punjab chief secretary, performance of the enforcement committee would be reviewed daily. The federal and Punjab governments have issued instructions to all divisional commissioners and regional police officers (RPOs) to launch a full-scale crackdown on electricity thieves.

British high commissioner calls on Air Chief

DNA

ISLAMABAD : H.E. Ms. Jane Marriott, British High Commissioner to Pakistan, met with Air Chief Marshal Zaeher Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, in a highly significant meeting held at Air Headquarters today. The discussion focused on key areas of mutual interest, with a special emphasis on the contemporary geo-political situation and emerging regional security challenges. High ranking military dignitaries from British Armed Forces were also present during the meeting. The Air Chief accentuated the cordial relations that exist between the two nations while emphasizing his steadfast determination to elevate the existing



GUJRAT: Maj Gen Muhammad Shamraiz GOC, 17 Div Kharian taking interest in pieces of art during an exhibition arranged by Farooq Riaz, on the occasion of Defence Day of Pakistan. —DNA

Past two years

MoIB releases details of payments made to media

MoIB released details of the payments made to electronic, print and digital media in terms of advertisements during the past two yearsDNA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoIB) on Thursday released details of the payments made to electronic, print and digital media in terms of advertisements during the past two years. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has conducted media campaigns for different initiatives and events including Kissan Package, the

PM's Youth Programme, Benazir Income Support Programme, national days, and foreign visits, said a news release. The MoIB issued advertisements in classified and unclassified (display) categories.

The Press Information Department played its role in paying the advertising bills of 437 federal departments and agencies.

From July 2021 to June 2022, payments of Rs 2,47,50,53,713 were made during the tenure of the Pakistan Democratic Movement

government in terms of advertisements issued by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf regime. From July 2022 to June 2023, the Ministry of Information made payments worth Rs 2.93 billion in the form of advertisements issued by the MoIB. From July 2022 to June 2023 which was tenure of the PDM government, the federal ministries and departments paid Rs 98,73,18,074 to print and electronic media. The PDM government received

bills worth Rs 2,74,11,04,091 from print, electronic, digital media and outdoor media. These bills were received in the form of advertisements issued from July 2021 to June 2022. Under the bills received for the period from July 2021 to June 2022, the MoIB made payments worth Rs 2,47,50,53,713. From July 2022 to June 2023, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting received bills to the tune of Rs 3,97,25,55,654 in the

form of advertisements. Under the bills received for the period from July 2022 to June 2023, payments worth Rs 2.93 billion were made. From July 2022 to June 2023, bills worth 1,86,21,46,890 were received and payments amounting to Rs 98,73,18,074 were made for the advertising campaign of other federal ministries/departments and institutions. All these data are already in the public domain.

Saudi envoy calls on Health Minister

MUHAMMAD ADIL

ISLAMABAD : Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, Nawaf Saeed A Al Malkiy called on Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan to discuss issues of mutual interest and further enhancing bilateral cooperation. The Saudi ambassador congratulated him on assuming

portfolio of the Ministry of Health. The appointment of Global Health Expert is a good omen. "I pray for your success," said the Saudi Ambassador. The minister acknowledged and appreciated Saudi Arabia's deep commitment to Pakistan and the welfare of its people. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had historical and religious fraternal relations,

he added. In every hour of difficulty, Saudi Arabia has supported Pakistan. The hearts of the people of both the countries beat in unison. The minister elaborated his integrated agenda for development of the health sector as per the vision of the Caretaker Prime Minister. He shared that Pakistan was the first country in the world to organize the Glob-

al Health Security Summit. "We have formulated an integrated strategy to increase the export of the pharma industry," he added. Effective measures were being taken to increase the capacity of pharma industry, the minister said.

It was agreed to promote medical tourism in this sector, which has vast potential for investment. The recently established Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) is a good initiative. This initiative will promote investment in the country. The ambassador remarked that his country would benefit from Pakistan's medical sector.

PAJCCI urges resolution of border dispute between Pak-Afghanistan

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR : Director Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi has urged upon concerned authorities in Pakistan and Afghanistan to take urgent measure for amicable resolution of ongoing dispute between the two countries at Torkhem border post, disrupting passage of people and commercial activities from both sides. In a press statement

issued here on Thursday, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi, who is also central leader of All Pakistan Custom Clearing Agents Association, said that closure of border for all kind of traffic has badly impacted bilateral trade between the two countries. It merits a mention here that Torkhem border post in Khyber District of Pakistan has been closed after a clash broke out between security forces of both the countries on Wednesday. Zia said long queue of trucks loaded with export

goods on both sides of the border has been seen waiting for permission to cross the border. Among these export goods, a number of trucks are carrying perishable goods including fresh fruit, poultry and other eatable items which are at risk of getting rot, inflicting huge losses on businessmen. He said trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan is in a dismal state, plunging from billions of dollars to millions during the last several months, and such impediments will cause

further drop in trade volume and commercial activities in the region. Apart from loss to business, closure of border has also caused humanitarian crisis in shape of restriction of a number of patients from Afghanistan side who come on daily basis to Pakistan for treatment. He again urged concerned authorities to take urgent measures for ending this standoff and restore cross border trade and movement of people between the two neighbouring countries.

Punjab governor inaugurates 3-day exhibition

LAHORE : Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman inaugurated the three-day International Food Technology (IFTEC), Plastics and Pack exhibition at the Expo Centre, here on Thursday. Addressing the audience, he said promotion of industry and trade was very important for prosperity and development of the country, adding promotion of industry leads to socioeconomic development of the country and also generates employment opportunities. He said organisation of such international exhibitions bade well for bolstering the industry. Appreciating contribution of businessmen to society, the Punjab governor said businesspeople were not only contributing to development of the country by paying taxes, but also through their welfare works. He said that such exhibitions would give an opportunity to people associated with the plastic and packaging industry to expand their businesses. The governor said that such exhibitions would have a positive impact on business development and the country's economy. He said that such event also play an important role in promoting the latest technologies by bringing together diversified exhibitors from all over the world.—DNA



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For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman
Mobile: 0300 8553342

Arrangements finalized to conduct ETEA

PESHAWAR : Educational Testing and Evaluation Agency (ETE) have finalized arrangements to conduct entry tests for all public and private sector medical and dental colleges of the province. According to Executive Director ETEA, Muhammad Imtiaz Ayub as many as 46439 candidates would appear in the entry test that would be held on September 10. He said that 43 centres have been established in eleven cities of KP. He said that air-conditioned halls had been selected for the test that would continue for three and a half hours. He said that walkthrough gates have been installed and all the needed security measures including deployment of bomb disposal squad have been made. Action would be taken against those found guilty of violating instructions that were issued by the Board of Governors ETEA to ensure fair and transparent conduct of the test, he told.—DNA

Signal-free underpass constructed in 90 days

LAHORE : A signal-free two-lane underpass will be constructed at Khalid Butt Chowk, whereas the three-lane flyover will be constructed at Ghora Chowk, Defence Morr, within 90 days, Lahore Development Authority (LDA) sources told APP on Thursday. According to the sources, the Punjab government had approved changes to Gulberg signal-free corridor, i.e. construction of underpass at Khalid Butt Chowk will be carried out by the LDA while construction of Ghora Chowk flyover would be done by Central Business District (CBD) Punjab. The construction of the two mega projects has been inaugurated, which will help improve traffic flow in the provincial capital and provide facilities to citizens.—APP

National Days and Armed Forces Days

September

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

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange.....9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Pakistan Air Force pays homage to its martyrs

Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force was the Chief Guest during a Martyrs' Day Ceremony held at Air Headquarters, Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD Pakistan Air Force observed 7th September as Martyrs' Day at all PAF Bases throughout the country. The day commenced with a solemn observance, including special Du'aa and Quran Khawani, dedicated to the martyrs of the 1965 & 1971 Wars, as well as those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty since the establishment of Pakistan. Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force was the Chief Guest during a Martyrs' Day Ceremony held at Air Headquarters, Islamabad. Addressing on the occasion, the Air Chief said that PAF has a proud history of sacrifice, valour and professionalism. He highlighted that the Martyrs' Day is an embodiment of exceptional bravery, flawless professionalism, and an unparalleled spirit of sacrifice of the Armed Forces of Pakistan. Hailing the glorious deeds of heroism displayed by the Martyrs of Pakistan Air Force, the Air Chief said, "We owe our heroes an eternal debt of gratitude for what they have done for us, setting a supreme example of sacrifice for generations to come. On this solemn occasion,



we extend our heartfelt tributes to those heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice for our motherland." Chief of the Air Staff also expressed solidarity with Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their indigenous

and just struggle for self-determination. In his concluding remarks, he reiterated his resolve to make all-out efforts for the progress and development of Pakistan in the constantly evolving global land-

scape and pledged that Pakistan Air Force would continue to strive hard for the advancement in space, electronic warfare, cyber, niche technologies and indigenous defence capability to

ensure sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan. Later, to pay homage to the martyrs, the Air Chief laid floral wreath at the Martyrs' Monument and offered Fateha.

Ethiopia, Pakistan enjoy excellent ties: Ambassador

DNA

ISLAMABAD. Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan Jemal Bekir Abdula visited the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) Capital Office in Islamabad and called on Vice President FPCCI Umar Masood ur Rehman, Convenor, Syed Asad Mashadi. They discussed wide-ranging trade, industry, and commercial avenues of cooperation, investments, and joint ventures. On behalf of the business and trading community, Mr. Jemal Bekir Abdula, Ethiopian ambassador, said that a preferential trade agreement between Pakistan and Ethiopia is indispensable for the promotion of mutual trade. "Bilateral trade between the two countries is minimal and amounts (only) to \$78 million; however, my target is to take it to \$300 million by the end of 2023. Pakistani textiles, medicines, and other products will have more space in the Ethiopian market. The Ethiopian ambassador, Mr. Jemal Bekir Abdula, remarked that the world should not see Pakistan through a Western media

lense. Pakistan is a peaceful, culturally rich, and diversified country with immensely strong social values and huge economic potential, he remarked. He stressed the bilateral trade relations, and stated that Ethiopia is an attractive market for Pakistani agricultural, pharmaceutical, and technological products while Ethiopia is critical to Pakistan's food security in terms of import of pulses, chickpeas and red kidney beans. He urged Pakistani businessmen to explore Ethiopia's potentially lucrative markets. Abdullah said that Ethiopia wants to establish strong economic relations with Pakistan, and there are vast opportunities for Pakistan to promote exports with Africa. "Pakistani textiles, pharmaceuticals and other products are in great demand in Ethiopia, Pakistan's business community must try to take full advantage of the opportunities." He said that Pakistani textiles, medicines, and other products will have more space in the Ethiopian market. He said that confidence-building measures would be taken for Pakistani traders so

that trade between the two countries could go to the next level on the occasion, Vice President FPCCI Umar Masood ur Rehman said that Pakistan and Ethiopia should sign a preferential trade agreement to improve mutual trade adding that the agreement will significantly improve bilateral trade. He said that Pakistan has made a Look Africa Policy to explore huge untapped region of Africa for trade and exports and close cooperation between Pakistan and Ethiopia would help in getting better access to African market. He said that many Pakistani products including marble & granite, pharmaceuticals, cement, leather, rice and sports goods can find a good market in Ethiopia and urged the Ethiopia to focus on Pakistan for imports. He urged that Pakistan and Ethiopia to consider negotiating a preferential or free trade agreement to promote trade relations up to their actual potential. He said that both countries should encourage regular exchange of trade delegations to explore all potential areas of mutual

cooperation. He further said that FPCCI would like to work closely with the Ethiopian Embassy to promote business relations between Pakistan and Ethiopia. Vice President FPCCI said that the true potential for bilateral trade is much higher in Pakistan & Ethiopia. He suggested preferential or free trade agreement to promote trade relations up to their actual potential. Many Pakistani products including marble & granite, pharmaceuticals, cement, leather, rice, and sports goods can find a good market in Ethiopia and urged Ethiopia to focus on Pakistan for imports. He said that investment cooperation is other area in which both countries could collaborate for mutual benefits. Bilateral trade between the two brotherly countries can be increased manifold. Pakistan is a big potential market and economic and trade relations are in the interest of both countries. He said that frequent exchange of business delegations are the options that can bring people of both the countries closer to each other that would eventually enhance the mutual cooperation between Pakistan and Ethiopia.

ICCPO reviews diplomatic enclave security

The ICCPO also ordered to record the video of the movement of entry and exit points of the high-security zone through cameras

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan evaluated the security measures in place at the diplomatic enclave and discussed strategies for their enhancement. In a meeting held at the Central Police Office, he gave directions to ensure the effective security of residential foreign diplomats, ambassadors, and offices of international organizations. The meeting was attended by the officers of NLC, Police and CDA. The meeting assessed the complete security of the diplomatic enclave and decided to take measures for its improvement. During the meeting, ongoing construction work in the diplomatic enclave was also reviewed, emphasizing environmentally-friendly construction practices and minimizing damage to natural beauty such as trees and greenery. The ICCPO further recommended the construction of protective towers and barriers to ensure the effective security of residential foreign diplomats, ambassadors, and offices of international organizations. Additionally, unnecessary decorations and expenditures were discouraged, said a police source. The ICCPO also ordered to record the video of the movement of entry and exit points of the high-security zone through cameras. He further said that cameras will be installed for diplomatic enclave protection which would be linked with Safe City. Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan emphasized that Islamabad Capital Police is taking multiple initiatives for the effective security of foreigners adding that the officers would regularly review the progress of the ongoing works and personnel on duty should be briefed on daily basis.

PIDE roundtable meeting on fixing the fiscal policy

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Macro Policy Lab recently hosted the "Fixing Fiscal Policy" Round Table Conference in Islamabad. The event addressed the persistent challenge of fiscal indiscipline in Pakistan and sought to chart a visionary path for the nation's fiscal policy. Distinguished participants included senior economists, researchers, and fiscal experts from various institutions across the country, such as the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, P&D Baluchistan, QAU, SZABIST, the US Embassy, ADTMA, P&D Punjab, IUI, NUST, and COMSATS. In his introductory remarks, Dr. Nasir Iqbal, Associate Prof. and Chief of Macro-Policy Lab, PIDE said that the Round Table Conference, "Fixing Fiscal Policy," aims to unite policymakers and thought leaders to foster collaboration and develop local solutions in the fiscal framework of Pakistan. By bringing together academia and policymakers, we seek to chart a visionary path of fiscal policy in Pakistan for the future, transcending from short-term approaches and firefighting. In his opening remarks speaking at the occasion Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, VC PIDE said that three things need to be focused on for the fixation of fiscal policy. Firstly, the role of the government is crucial in

ensuring effective fiscal management. Secondly, taxation and expenditure must be carried out in a transparent manner with accountability. This includes how to collect taxes, how to spend them, and where to allocate funds. Lastly, debt management is also an important aspect that requires attention. Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan, Principal of the School of Social Sciences & Humanities, NUST while speaking at the roundtable meeting said that to address economic challenges, it is important to immediately reset the role of the government from being an active player to a facilitator. This would involve eliminating the current regulation-based regime and transitioning towards a rule-based economy. The use of a regulatory guillotine would help in the elimination of unnecessary No Objection Certificates (NOCs). A rule-based approach, coupled with monitoring and evaluation, would ensure a more efficient and effective economic system. In the first session titled "Role of Government and Economic Stagnation" while presenting the detailed presentation Muhammad Shaaf Najib, Research Fellow, PIDE said that Interest Payments account for a significant portion of the targeted tax revenue, amounting to 77.5%. The total federal liabilities, including Interest Payments, Pensions, and Grants to provinces, stand at PKR 9512 billion. These liabilities exceed the tar-

geted tax revenue, indicating a lack of a sufficient revenue base to support the functioning of the civil government, subsidies, and development spending. As a result, all development expenditure is entirely financed through debt. The remuneration of civil servants involves a basic salary and significant monetary and non-monetary benefits. The total reward is significantly higher than the base reward stated in the contract. However, the cost to the government for senior civil servants is much higher than the benefits they provide. In his detailed comments, Dr Ashfaq Hasan Khan made a comment on the presentation and stated that "Within the constitutional limits, without improving the NFC Award, we cannot adequately address our fiscal issues. The speakers while commenting on the session, said that the significant government intervention in economic activity/market, both as an active economic agent and through a regulatory regime, has been a prominent feature in the economy. PIDE research suggests that the government has a footprint of over 60% of the GDP and there are more than 200 Federal State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), many of which are loss-making entities. The Privatization Commission has been inefficient in dealing with these issues. The government's presence is hindering competition and market growth. On the regulatory front, the large size of

the government is evident with over 120 regulatory authorities in Islamabad alone, according to PIDE research. This abundance of registrations, licenses, certifications, and other permissions (RLCOs) has resulted in a high cost of regulatory sludge, which accounts for 45% of the GDP in only 24 activities. The second session began with the presentation of Dr Khalid Mahmood, Senior Research Economist, PIDE on "Taxation and Tax Administration". He stated that taxes often take the spotlight in media discussions; however, the tax policy in Pakistan is marred by arbitrary revisions, mini budgets, and IMF conditionalities. Additionally, tax administration inefficiencies require attention. The round table conference aims to explore long-term reforms for a modern tax policy. Consequently, it is evident that tax collection primarily burdens the unprivileged while benefiting the privileged class. The implications of the tax structure include exploitative tax composition, complex tax principles, excessive withholding regime, high compliance cost, fragmented tax system, and hindered growth, as well as low fiscal resource mobilization. Furthermore, Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio has been declining, indicating a lack of tax efforts, policy, political will, and tax morality. The speakers said that overall, the federal government relies heavily on indirect taxes, resulting in overwhelming collective revenues. The tax mix is not ideal,

and there is a need to reconsider functional assignments and the experience of GST on services. The provincial tax efforts also contribute to this burden on the economy. Indirect taxes, such as customs, federal excise tax, and sales tax, outweigh direct taxes, creating distortions and discriminatory resource allocation. The effective tax to GDP-ratio, which considers compliance cost, scrapping non-economic taxes, and tax expenditure cost, is calculated to be 14.23% for 2019. To address these issues, it is recommended to upgrade both tax policy and authority. The focus is on "Doing Taxes Better" to achieve higher taxes and higher growth. Efforts are being made to improve the overall tax policy, and a few recommendations have been put forth. Essentially, we need to work on creating a clean system of documentation. Filing should not be solely based on the rate differential but should be made mandatory for all items. Additionally, income tax should not be segmented; it should be universal and cover agriculture income tax on the sales tax side. Instead of having too many revenues, the withholding tax (WHT) regime needs simplification. The economy would benefit from reducing withholding to improve efficiency. The process of refund adjustment should be made easier, and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) should prioritize streamlining the online refund process to minimize economic costs.

New Chinese Ambassador to bolster Sono-Pak friendship

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The newly appointed Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong will work for bolstering the robust friendship and enduring strategic cooperation between China and Pakistan. "The recently appointed Chinese ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, arrived in Islamabad on Wednesday to officially assume his role," the Embassy posted on social media. In the statement, the Embassy emphasized Ambassador Jiang Zaidong's dedication to bolstering the robust friendship and enduring strategic cooperation between China and Pakistan. Jiang Zaidong was nominated as the new ambassador to Pakistan in July, filling the position that had remained vacant for six months since the previous ambassador, Nong Rong, returned to China. During this interim period, the Charge d' Affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan Pang Chunxue had been diligently performing the ambassadorial duties, according to the statement, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Thursday.—DNA

Easypaisa partners with Esquare

ISLAMABAD: Easypaisa, Pakistan has partnered with Esquare Services Private Limited to seamlessly facilitate salary disbursements to employees through its digital platform. This integration not only promises efficiency but also empowers employees with timely and convenient access to their earnings. Esquare will now utilize easypaisa's open Application Programming Interface (API) architecture to disburse salaries, advances, and incentives to its workforce. Shahzad Khan, Head of Productive Lending, Channels & Corporate Business, Telenor Microfinance Bank, Omar Aijaz Khan, Head of Corporate Sales & Partnership, easypaisa, and Shayan Ahmed Sheikh, CEO of Esquare Services Private Limited attended the signing ceremony, said a press release. Commenting on the collaboration, Shahzad Khan, Head of Productive Lending, Channels & Corporate Business at TMB/easypaisa said at easypaisa, we are all committed to empowering individuals and businesses with innovative digital financial solutions. Partnering with Esquare is aligned with our commitment to make digital payments seamless, secure and convenient while ensuring that people have easy access to finances.—DNA

Prospect of attracting investments from Gulf states remarkable

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association (PHISA) Shahzad Ali Malik Thursday said the prospect of attracting substantial investments totaling \$100 billion from Gulf states is a remarkable opportunity for Pakistan. Talking to a delegation of industrialists, he said that the investment will be instrumental in bolstering various sectors of the economy, including infrastructure, energy, technology, and agriculture, said a press release. The potential for a direct interaction between national leadership and the business community, as well as the significant investment opportunities from Muslim countries, will yield a positive impact and strengthen the national economy, he added. He said in this context, fostering a direct and open channel of communication between the Army Chief and the business community will be a game-changer. Such interactions can facilitate the exchange of ideas, concerns, and strategies to enhance economic growth.—DNA

Briefs

'Kanwal Lake family park in capital'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 'Kanwal Lake family park' in Shakarparian Islamabad is emerging best popular picnic spot for families and attracting a large number of enthusiast visitors to enjoy various activities, colours of various flowers, and other facilities available on the site.

"The family park and Kanwal Lake provide a peaceful environment for tourists to be close to nature," said a citizen while talking to a private news channel.

Visitors from various parts of the twin cities are flocking and experiencing its breathtaking beauty, which they find truly inspiring, said another citizen of Rawalpindi.

"The lake family park is a beautiful place for enjoyment, said a woman visitor, adding, After spending a hectic day, I rush towards it and become fresh after spending only a few moments here".

Another visitor also demanded that the local administration should develop some other places like this to provide healthy recreational facilities to the people. A tourist suggested to come and visit the family park in Shakarparian to relish the weather rather than spend their time at home. I had visited many lakes in Pakistan and abroad but Kanwal Lake associated with Kanwal Lake was unique and impressive, said another visitor.

CDA officials also commented that the lake and park aim to provide citizens with a resort as well as a peaceful environment.

BJP has lost 'BJP has lost its political ground in Jammu'

ISLAMABAD: The National Conference (NC) President of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Farooq Abdullah, has said that due to the anti-people policies, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has lost its political ground in Jammu as well as in Kashmir valley. According to Kashmir Media Service, Farooq Abdullah addressing a party function in Srinagar said that the BJP had promised a lot to the people of the Jammu region but delivered poorly on the ground. "BJP betrayed the trust of the people in the region, leaving them feeling cheated.

People are suffering due to dilapidated roads, huge power cuts, non-availability of potable drinking water and acute deficiency of teaching staff in the schools," he added. Farooq further said that Jammu and Kashmir had survived numerous conspiracies and ploys to dilute its unique culture and history and that the National Conference would never allow the apologetic proxies of communal parties to divide people for their short-term, electoral and political gains.

Smuggling of Iranian fuel foiled

ISLAMABAD: The local commissioner claimed to have caught containers carrying bulk quantities of Iranian fuel after erecting a picket at the inter-provincial highway, Quetta Road. According to an official release, Dr. Nasir Bashir moved to the checkpoints along with his team to check vehicles crossing the road. Regional Police Officer (RPO) Sajjad Hussain also reached on the spot. The official team searched out vehicles and checked drivers' licenses for many hours while staying at the place. It caught vehicles filled with Iranian oil crossing check posts at Bawata, Rakhi Gauj, and Sakhi Sarwar. The mobile phones of the drivers and the staff that proved to be involved in smuggling were taken into custody on the spot. It was, however, not ascertained how many trucks loaded with illegal transportation were taken into custody. SHOs of Punjab Police and BMP were also called up on the spot, it was said. Political Assistant Koh-e-Suleman and other officers rushed to the spot as the Commissioner and RPO started checking heavy vehicles moving out of the checkpoints. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Ladies taking interest in various pieces of art on the occasion of the Independence Day of Uzbekistan.—DNA

PPP disappointed over disallowing Senate requisition

Deplores "highly disturbing message sent out to Christians"

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan People's Party is gravely disappointed and dismayed over disallowing requisition of the Senate to discuss the recent Jaranwala mayhem in the name of religion. Twenty seven senators had submitted a signed requisition notice in the senate secretariat on September 1 under clause 3 of Article 54 read with Article 61 of the Constitution. The notice was submitted on their behalf by PPP Senator Shahadat Awan. However, five days later in a letter dated September 6 the senate secretariat said that the signatures of five PPP senators on the requisition

motion "do not match with their signatures on the Roll of the Members" and therefore the "requisition does not fulfill the requirements for summoning of the senate session by the Honorable chairman senate".

The five PPP senators whose signatures allegedly did "not match with their signatures on the Roll of the Members" were identified by the senate secretariat as Farooq H Naek, Mian Raza Rabbani, Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan, Rubina Khalid and Shamim Afridi. In addition the signatures of senator Muhammad Akram were also declared to be not matching with his signatures on the Roll of the Members. Expressing dismay over it PPP Secretary

General and president of the Human Rights Cell former senator Farhatullah Babar said in a statement that it was surprising that the senate secretariat did not call anyone of these six senators to confirm whether they had signed the requisition notice or not. Instead it unilaterally concluded that the signatures did not match and thus the number of senators required to sign a requisition fell below the mandatory number and rejected the requisition notice, he said. "It is unprecedented, inexplicable and betrays more than meets the eye". He said it was a standard practice to check with the purported signatories by placing a phone call to them for verification but for some reasons

it was not done. "It appears that some elements for reasons best known to them did not want to discuss the shameful Jaranwala mayhem marked by the desecration of churches and the loot and plunder of Christians' homes and properties", he said. He said that the parliament has already been gravely undermined by elements inimical to it through both overt and covert means and one looks up to the custodians of the House to lift it from the abyss to which it has been thrown into. However small and insignificant it may appear to be, a requisition notice nonetheless may be viewed as a small bid by the House to assert itself by raising issues of national impor-

ance. "However, when the custodian of the House also appears to be scuttling such a small move and throws the requisition notice in the dustbin the hopelessness increases", he said. He said that by rejecting the requisition notice on flimsy grounds a highly disturbing message had been sent to the Christians and other non Muslim minorities. The PPP deplores the sending out of such an insensitive message, he said. It is most unfortunate that such a message has been sent out during the year of Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Constitution of Pakistan that guarantees their safety and security and the security of their places of worship.

Samina calls for efforts to overcome mental health issues

The First Lady emphasised that bringing people in conflict zones back to normal life was possible, however, it required sustained efforts and resolving conflicts in the world. She said that Pakistan desired to see a peaceful settlement of conflicts around the world

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Alvi has called for sustained measures, global contributions and support to overcome the issue of mental health and well-being of people in the conflict zones. She urged the need to make efforts to resolve ongoing conflicts in the world, adding that promoting peace in the world and working together was essential for the mental health, emotional well-being, and peaceful future of the succeeding generations. She expressed these views in her video message for the 3rd Summit of the First Ladies and Gentlemen in Kyiv, Ukraine. The theme of this year's Summit, which was initiated by Ukraine's First Lady Olena Zelenska, was "Mental Health: Fragility and Resilience of the Future". President Volodymyr Zelensky also delivered a speech at the Summit. The Summit also featured messages from the First Ladies and Gentlemen of Japan, Türkiye, Albania, Germany, Armenia, Macedonia, Poland, Spain, and Sweden among others. In her message for the Summit, Begum Samina Alvi expressed concern



about the mental health and well-being of people in conflict zones, besides conveying her sympathies to the families in Ukraine who had to face physical, emotional and mental stresses due to war. "We in Pakistan can feel their pain and empathize with the people of Ukraine. We feel that it is humanity that suffers during crises and conflicts", Begum Samina Alvi said. She highlighted that Pakistan's own experience of hosting millions of Afghan refugees for over four decades and its long battle against terrorism had taught Pakistan that conflict and war severely affected the mental health

of people. The First Lady of Pakistan highlighted that the brutalities against the Muslims of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by India for over seven decades had badly impacted the mental health of Kashmiris. She referred to a study by Doctors Without Borders and the University of Kashmir which disclosed that nearly 1.8 million Kashmiri adults, almost 45 per cent of the region's adult population, found themselves grappling with varying degrees of mental distress, including anxiety, depression and post-traumatic disorder.

"These troubling figures underscore the profound impact of continuous military actions, armed confrontations, economic shutdowns and the imposition of curfews by the Indian government", she remarked. The First Lady of Pakistan regretted that mental health was often neglected and misunderstood in relation to its adverse impacts on people, particularly in conflict zones, as it did not have a visible manifestation of injury. She also made reference to World Health Organization's findings that the prevalence of mental health problems more than doubled in a humanitarian crisis. She stated that the prolonged duration of the war in any conflict zone increased the need for quality mental health facilities and counselling. The First Lady emphasised that bringing people in conflict zones back to normal life was possible, however, it required sustained efforts and resolving conflicts in the world. She said that Pakistan desired to see a peaceful settlement of conflicts around the world.

PR spends Rs.1862 M for rehabilitation of track

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways is spending Rs. 1862.84 million for the rehabilitation of 518 kilometers of track between Kotri-Khanpur under the project of Immediate Track Safety Works (ITSW-I). Despite financial constraints, the management of Pakistan Railways is putting maximum effort into improving infrastructure including tracks, bridges, and stations, an official in the Ministry of Railways told

APP. Under the project of rehabilitation of Karachi Port tracks, 24-kilometre tracks, 17 level crossings, and seven bridges have been rehabilitated, along with the replacement of turnouts. The official said that Railway Dry Ports at Lahore (Mughalpora), Badami Bagh, and Azakhel have been upgraded. He said under the Immediate Track Safety Works (ITS W-II & IMTS W-III), the railway track between Tan-

do Adam-Khanpur covering 456 kilometers would be rehabilitated at a cost of Rs. 4830.437 million and Rs.4875.461 million, respectively, by replacing the US components of the track and ensuring the safety of train operation. A PCI amounting to Rs.4930.22 million for the rehabilitation of track machinery has been approved, which would ensure the quality of track maintenance work. Mean-

while, 11 stations have been upgraded, including Peshawar, Hassan Abdal, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Lahore, Narawal, Nankana Sahib, Raiwind, Okara, Sahiwal, and Bahawalpur, under PSDP projects. The project of up-gradation of Main Line-I at a cost of \$6.683 billion has been negotiated with the Chinese side for completing the ML-I in two phases consisting of four packages, he added. The assets of Pakistan Railways are mainly related to the track (11881 kilometers), and rolling stock (15699), and most of these assets have lived their useful life.—APP

Prime Minister of Pakistan meets Huawei to discuss ICT ecosystem

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Ethan Sun, CEO Huawei Pakistan, called on His Excellency, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, to share ongoing and potential collaborations to develop the ICT ecosystem and digital economy in Pakistan. The honorable Prime Minister expressed his appreciation of Huawei's role in enabling the Digital transformation in Pakistan stating that "technological advancement and enhancement of ICT opportunities for the youth and women had the potential to usher in a brighter future of Pakistan." Mr. Ethan Sun said, "Innovation is central to Huawei's vision and operations. To this end, last year we have set up the Global Service Centre (GSC) R&D in Pakistan with more than 2000 employees. Our other focus here, and globally, has been on the youth as we strive to create and facilitate an ecosystem for nurturing ICT talent, innovation and technology adaptation. Pakistani engineers are exceptional and the youth has immense potential to benefit from and contribute to this initiative and others that Huawei brings to Pakistan. We would like to unleash the Pakistani talent and connect it to the world!" Dr. Omar Saif, Federal Minister of IT & Telecommunications commented, "Huawei Pakistan has long prioritized market investment and development. We are glad to continue supporting the government's efforts to provide opportunities and development platforms for young Pakistanis and promote sustainable development of Pakistan's ICT industry. The prime minister discussed with Huawei the need to empower more local partners and utilizing Huawei global expertise in 5G, cloud and other advanced technologies implementation excellence and use cases to Pakistan to pave the way for achieving more progress on the digital transformation of different sectors and industries with the support of local ICT talents".

Chinese entrepreneurs invited to benefit from Pak human resource

ISLAMABAD: Commercial Counselor of the Embassy of Pakistan in China, Ghulam Qadir has invited Chinese entrepreneurs to invest in Pakistan and benefit from young & skilled human resources in Pakistan. Addressing the China International Economics and Technology Administration Forum (CIETAF) at the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS), Ghulam Qadir said the theme of this forum empowers entrepreneurs, especially small businesses, and marginalized communities, providing them with a level playing field to compete and succeed in the local and global markets. According to China Economic Net (CEN), he said that 91% of Pakistani products come to China at zero customs duty, and he hopes to increase exports to China by providing special incentives to investors from China. "Pakistan is the 5th most populous country in the world and enjoys a huge demographic advantage as over 65% of the population is between the age of 18 and 35. Our youth is tech savvy and playing an active part in the digital initiatives in the country", he added.—DNA

CDA to ensure needs of minorities

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has taken all possible steps to fulfill the religious needs of minority communities in the federal capital. "The CDA has allocated two cremation grounds, measuring 0.49 acres and 0.50 acres, for the Hindu and Buddhist communities respectively in Sector H-9," an official in the authority told APP. Moreover, the official said that graveyards have been provided for Christians (9.01 acres), Bhaais (1.70 acres), and Qadianis (3.424 acres) in Sector H-9 and Sector H-8 of the capital. He said this move aims to ensure that all communities have access to appropriate facilities for their burial rites. The CDA has also addressed the issue of sewage treatment and water recycling, highlighting its commitment to environmental sustainability.—APP

AIU to celebrate Golden Jubilee in 2024

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood on Thursday said that the university would celebrate its Golden Jubilee in 2024. It was decided during a meeting in which discussed plans for the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the university, said a news release. As AIU will mark its 50th anniversary next year, he instructed the Deans, Professors and Principal Officers to ensure the participation of students in the celebrations. Various committees have been formed by the university administration to finalize preparations for the event. These committees will be responsible for highlighting the historical context of the university, setting up a history corner, and organizing alumni associations, conferences, seminars, and convocations in the main campus and provincial capitals. All committees have started working with full enthusiasm to celebrate the 50 years of AIU. It is pertinent to mention here that the university began its journey in 1974 with basic courses. Subsequently, intermediate and BA level programs were introduced, followed by MA and MSc level programs in the 1990s and then MPhil and PhD level programs. Today, AIU stands as the largest university in the country in terms of student enrollment and has largely achieved its founding objectives. As of June 2023, more than 46 lakh students have graduated from AIU. It is worth mentioning that this university started from a rented house and now operates 54 regional offices in different cities across the country. Since its establishment, the university has made significant progress in various fields, which is why it has decided to celebrate its Golden Jubilee on the completion of 50 years.—DNA

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ASEAN Summit is the road of unity

ASEAN's inability to address some of the pressing issues it faces, in addition to US President Joe Biden's absence from the 43rd ASEAN Summit with dialogue partners, which some have taken as an outright "snub", has prompted many to question the regional grouping's relevance. As if to refute the claim that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is becoming a "toothless talking shop", Indonesia, the host of the ASEAN Summit, which concluded on Thursday, chose the theme "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth" for the summit. Southeast Asia is forecast to be the "lifeblood of international trade" by 2045, Indonesian President Joko Widodo told US Vice-President Kamala Harris during their meeting on the sidelines of the summit. Southeast Asia, to a great extent, carries the new hope of post-pandemic recovery for being one of the brightest spots on the global economic landscape. Yet as Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said, "How ASEAN responds to today's challenges will determine whether ASEAN centrality can hold in the years ahead." He correctly observed that whether the grouping retains its centrality in regional affairs hinges ultimately on how it positions itself in the face of mounting pressures of geopolitical rivalries. Perhaps with the same thought in mind, the Indonesian president warned against ASEAN becoming a proxy for any power in his opening remarks at the summit on Tuesday, and asked major powers to not sharpen rivalries in the region. Accordingly, Widodo told Harris that their countries' "strong and sustainable partnership" can "only be realized if there is a strong commitment to maintain regional peace and stability", and urged the US to be a "positive force in creating a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific through inclusive concrete cooperation". That's also the central message Premier Li Qiang gave in Jakarta. "What is essential now is to oppose picking sides, oppose bloc confrontation and oppose a new Cold War, ensure that disagreements and disputes among countries are properly handled," Li told ASEAN leaders. "As long as we keep to the right path, no matter what storm may come, China-ASEAN cooperation will be as firm as ever and press ahead against all odds." Southeast Asia's recent prosperity is the fruit of peace and stability, and regional countries' focus on development. This is evident also in China-ASEAN trade, which last year crossed \$970 billion, up 15 percent year-on-year. The improved trade deal the two sides agreed on and their decision to deepen cooperation on agriculture, e-commerce and finalize the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea as soon as possible will further accelerate the region's march toward greater prosperity. And that's the road forward for all countries in the region.



Chinese firms' fitting reply to sanctions

WHILE US sanctions have choked the supply of US chips to Huawei, they have made it almost impossible for Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp to obtain US technology. So when Huawei launched its flagship device, Mate 60 Pro, which reportedly includes a new 5G Kirin 9000s processor, the domestic market and consumers seemed to hail it as a major breakthrough. US Congressman Michael McCaul's demand at a briefing at the US embassy in The Hague on Wednesday that the SMIC "warrants investigation" explains why both Huawei and the SMIC have kept a low profile on the issue. While US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said he needed "more information" on the precise "character and composition" of the Kirin chip, McCaul asserted, without having any evidence, that "it sure looks like it did" violate US sanctions — a premise that is based on presumption of guilt. True to its colors, and based again on presumption of guilt, the US administration is seeking more information on Mate 60 Pro, according to CNN, possibly to take legal action against Huawei or the SMIC or both. Both Sullivan and McCaul should know that the SMIC was put on the US Entity List in December 2020 during the last days of the Donald Trump administration, limiting the supply or transfer of US technology to it. That means it is almost impossible that the SMIC's 7 nm foundry was made using US technologies. Or are the US political leaders suggesting the United States will use long-arm jurisdiction to target the legal business of the two Chinese companies? The US used long-arm jurisdiction to cripple Japan's Toshiba in the 1980s, enfeeble France's Alston in 2013 and deal a big blow to Germany's Siemens in 2018, all on flimsy grounds and to protect American enterprises. In 2019, the Trump administration targeted Huawei with even harsher measures, banning all US enterprises from supplying advanced chips to the Chinese company. Against this background, Chinese researchers' breakthrough, as demonstrated by Huawei's Mate 60 Pro, is a fitting reply to the US' beggar-thy-neighbor policies. The most effective resistance against the US' long-arm jurisdiction is to invest in research and development and produce one's own high-tech products. For too long the world has been suffering from the US' vicious long-arm jurisdiction. It's time now for Chinese companies to make more technological breakthroughs and break the US' monopoly in different fields and end its global hegemony.

India's G20 presidency: challenges, opportunities

Qamar Bashir



Despite China's rebuke, India is determined to leverage its G20 presidency to assert greater influence across various domains, including economics, social issues, environmental concerns, and digital advancements. India's proactive engagement with global business leaders through the B20 engagement group has been instrumental in promoting trade and investment opportunities for Indian businesses on a global scale. This positions Indian industry as a significant player in discussions on international trade and policy matters

THE world's gaze is fixed on New Delhi as leaders from the Group of 20 (G20) nations convene for a historic summit marking the culmination of India's year-long presidency. This momentous occasion underscores India's growing significance on the global stage and highlights the formidable challenges it faces in navigating intricate international relations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has strategically leveraged India's G20 presidency to bolster the nation's geopolitical standing and assert itself as a key global influencer. However, this path forward is fraught with obstacles, including persistent disagreements among G20 members, particularly Russia and China, on pivotal issues such as the Ukraine crisis. India's dicey rise on the global stage is intricately intertwined with the ongoing geopolitical rivalry between the Western powers, led by the United States and supported by affluent European economies. This rivalry is rooted in the desire to curb China's rapid ascent and technological prowess. On the other hand, China's unprecedented economic growth, bolstered by its vast resources and highly skilled workforce, has allowed it to engage with and invest in emerging economies, effectively creating mutually beneficial partnerships while simultaneously sowing apprehension among Western nations. The fear of China's influence has galvanized Western powers to promote India as a counterbalance. While India claims the status of the world's fifth-largest economy, it is essential to acknowledge that a substantial portion of its population still grapples with poverty. This reality contrasts starkly with India's portrayal as an economic powerhouse. Thus, the effort to artificially elevate India's status to counter China's influence is riddled with complexities and contradictions. India's economic trajectory may have transitioned from a nation of modest global influence to one of the world's top economies. Nevertheless, this economic ascent has not translated into proportional influence on the global policy stage. India's journey to assert itself as a significant global player remains an ongoing challenge. Despite the impressive economic figures, India's impact on global policies has often been met with a degree of restraint. While India is determined to leverage its G20 presidency to assert more influence across diverse domains, including economics, social issues, environmental concerns, and digital advancements, it remains acutely aware of the shifting dynamics in international relations. However, it's important to recognize that once China reaches a favorable accord with Western powers on issues of mutual concern, India's aspiration for a more prominent role on the world stage could face a sobering reality check. The pursuit of a greater global say is akin to building a house of cards, vulnerable to the winds of geopolitical change and strategic realign-

ments. India's leadership within the G20 framework unfolds against a backdrop of escalating geopolitical tensions, notably with China, with whom India grapples over border disputes. The absence of Chinese President Xi Jinping from the G20 summit in New Delhi has raised numerous questions and conjectures. Xi's decision to abstain from the summit can be viewed through multiple lenses. It may be perceived as a diplomatic rebuff, indicating China's reluctance to engage with India on this particular platform. Alternatively, it could be seen as a strategic maneuver to elevate alternative multilateral groups, such as the BRICS, above the G20 and G7, as China aims to reshape the global order in alignment with its interests. China's foreign affairs spokesperson, Mao Ning, announced that Premier Li Qiang would lead the Chinese delegation. This marks the first time a Chinese leader has skipped the G20 leaders' summit since its inception in 2008. The move symbolizes China's narrative of the "rise of the East and the decline of the West," showcasing its willingness to assert itself on its own terms. Despite China's rebuke, India is determined to leverage its G20 presidency to assert greater influence across various domains, including economics, social issues, environmental concerns, and digital advancements. India's proactive engagement with global business leaders through the B20 engagement group has been instrumental in promoting trade and investment opportunities for Indian businesses on a global scale. This positions Indian industry as a significant player in discussions on international trade and policy matters. However, India's G20 presidency coincides with a period of pronounced global polarization characterized by rising debt levels, slowing economic growth, and heightened uncertainty. Even as India's rapidly expanding economy offers a strategic advantage, the path forward is marred by divisions and disagreements among G20 members, particularly regarding critical issues like the Ukraine crisis. One domain where India can exert significant influence on global affairs is the digital sector. India's digital ecosystem, marked by technological innovation and a burgeoning tech-savvy population, holds the potential to transform the global landscape. India's successful digital transformation can serve as a blueprint for other nations, fostering international collaboration in the digital realm. Nonetheless, a substantial portion of India's economy remains labor-intensive, necessitating a transition to knowledge-intensive production methods. China has long enjoyed a manufacturing advantage due to low labor costs. While India's focus on research and development and initiatives like Production-Linked Incentives (PLIs) are steps in the right direction, this transformation will take time. India's G20 presidency has made strides in addressing pressing social and employment challenges. The

development of an international occupational classification system to promote cross-country comparability is a noteworthy accomplishment. Furthermore, the commitment to provide comprehensive social protection for gig and platform workers is a crucial step toward safeguarding worker welfare in the modern gig economy. However, it is vital to acknowledge that India faces domestic challenges in this regard, particularly concerning the welfare of its vulnerable populations. Religious and ethnic minorities continue to grapple with discrimination, and incidents of gender-based violence persist. While India's international commitments are commendable, it must address these issues comprehensively on the home front. India's audacious endeavors during its G20 presidency are not without inherent risks. The lack of consensus on binding agreements, particularly due to objections from Russia and China, could undermine India's credibility on the global stage. Furthermore, the inability to foster a joint communique from previous G20 meetings raises questions about the effectiveness of India's presidency. India's G20 presidency represents a defining moment for the nation, offering an opportunity to amplify its global influence in an increasingly divided world. The G20 platform provides India with the means to shape global policies, strengthen economic ties, and showcase its digital prowess. However, formidable challenges persist, chiefly in the form of ongoing discord within the G20, escalating geopolitical frictions, and the conspicuous absence of key leaders like Xi Jinping. As the world closely scrutinizes the proceedings of the G20 leaders' summit in New Delhi, it's crucial for the global community to approach the event with a discerning perspective. While India's presidency indeed represents a significant moment, one should not assume that India possesses the unwavering capacity, visionary acumen, and intellectual prowess to seamlessly leverage this pivotal opportunity to propel its global ambitions and firmly establish itself as a paramount player in international affairs. India's journey on the global stage is undeniably intricate, characterized by a tapestry of contradictions and complexities. The optics may suggest a seamless ascent, but the reality is marred by multifaceted challenges, conflicts of interest, and political considerations that often transcend the pure merit of the endeavor. In essence, India's path to global prominence is a formidable one, laden with obstacles and competing narratives and a world marked by intricate geopolitics and diverse interests.

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

This is South Asia's make or break year

Adnan Rehmat

A prosperous collective future starts with a political connection — a prosperity that is equal and sustainable for South Asia will follow. As will have a positive influence on the rest of Asia, the Gulf and beyond. The region is not shy of ambition and connectivity — India has literally landed on the moon and is headed for the sun. Incredibly enough it was an Afghan who has the honor of being the first South Asian in space, and Pakistan only the second...

MOST global media and many influential capital cities are not paying much attention to the South Asian region in a news cycle dominated by the never-ending US-China political and economic conflicts and the bruising Russia-Ukraine military war. And yet, it is election season in South Asia — at least four of the eight countries here will vote to elect new national governments in the next several months. The outcomes of polls in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will determine not only the future of this troubled but promising region, but also have major economic and political repercussions in the world. Every fourth human lives in South Asia and its member states account for an accumulative GDP of over \$3 trillion, placing it in the top three fastest regional growths in a world throttled by economic downturn, and among the top five destinations for foreign investment. This is mainly driven by Indian and Bangladeshi entrepreneurship but these two countries along with Pakistan alone constitute for a middle-class consumer market of nearly 400 million — making it a hotbed of global consumables. Sri Lanka and India put together export more tea than the rest of the top ten global exporters. The region is not shy of ambition and connectivity — India has literally landed on the moon and is headed for the sun. Incredibly enough it was an Afghan who has the honor of being the first South Asian in space, and Pakistan only the second country after China in the whole of Asia to launch a space program. There are as many Internet users in South Asia — 700 million — as in the rest of Asia combined — and certainly more

than those in Europe, Africa or the Americas. The region elected more women heads of government in the 20th century, and earlier, than in other global regions. And yet trouble brews in this world-be paradise. The region, in all its constituent member states, has in recent years grown more socially conservative with religion a key marker of politics, more authoritarian in politics with democratic backslide, more intolerant of dissent manifesting in violence, and more belligerent with neighbors. It doesn't help that the regional military heavyweights — India and Pakistan — are nuclear and not on talking terms. In recent years they don't even have ambassadors in each other's capitals. Both have waged proxy and overt wars with dramatic hot pursuits in each other's skies in meaningless bullying. Pakistan and Sri Lanka have flirted with economic defaults and Nepal and Maldives with political dysfunction. This cumulatively not only prevents the region from fulfilling its economic and political potential, but also opens space in the region for destabilizing proxy strategic wars between outsiders such as China and the US. Every day South Asia spends in general acrimony and indifference translates into lost economic muscle and political influence over the rest of the world. All this can change if the upcoming elections in four countries that govern the political fate of one fourth of humanity go right. The elections — expected to range from throwing up new leadership or electing the stifling status quo — will determine if the region can stop its backslide in recent years into collective failure preventing

unprecedented socio-economic development. If the potential is unleashed, it can trigger a turnaround of even the global economy. But this cannot happen without focused economic integration of the region underpinned by collaborative political confluence. Intra-regional tourism and trade alone will double regional GDP in five years — the span for which new governments in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be elected. The new governments will have to agree to stop being dictated by unproductive past divisions and a self-prophesized inability to collaborate. To break the overhang of current governmental impulses to stick to regional political status quos, the political parties of the region must establish a regional political caucus. Political parties embody human connection and people's aspirations while governments are unfeeling entities. Friendships and mutual socio-economic confluence are too important to leave to the devices of state establishments alone. The people of the region through their political parties must lead the way. A prosperous collective future starts with a political connection. The heads of key political parties, especially those that have ruled their countries in the region in this century, must form a union and meet every year to inject a people-driven engagement and collaboration agenda changing the current regional focus from division to collusion. A prosperity that is mutual, equal and sustainable for all countries of South Asia will follow. As will a positive socio-political and economic influence on the rest of Asia, the Gulf and beyond. The year 2024 will definitely be a make or break year for South Asia.

— Arab News

Briefs

Political
turmoil...

FROM PAGE 01
PTI spokesperson said that the souring tension on the Pak-Afghan border and the armed attacks from across the borders were concerning because the nation, the law enforcement agencies and the forces had made great sacrifices in the long-drawn-out battle to flush out the scourge of terrorism and restore normalcy in the country. He alarmed that the terrorism was rearing its ugly head again in the bordering areas, which was posing a great challenge to the hard-won peace. PTI spokesperson highlighted that owing to the worst economic disaster and political uncertainty, anarchy and chaos were spread from Kashmir to Gilgit and from Karachi to Gwadar that further aggravated the national security situation.

Markets to
be closed...

FROM PAGE 01
country-wide protests from Karachi to Khyber and protests in some parts of the country turned violent. The protesting masses have been demanding that the government should end the provision of free electricity to the notables and provide them relief as the bills they have been receiving are more than their salaries. The caretaker Pakistan federal government on Wednesday announced plans to launch a crackdown across the country on electricity theft in a bid to reduce the ballooning circular debt in the power sector. The measures were announced by caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi, and Power Minister Energy Muhammad Ali during a press conference.

Contempt
case DC...

FROM PAGE 01
Both leaders were held by law enforcement for their alleged involvement in the May 9 riots, which were triggered after the arrest of PTI chief Imran Khan earlier this year. At the hearing today, IHC Justice Babar Sattar heard the case wherein DC Memon and SSP Zafar submitted their replies. Islamabad Advocate General Ayaz Shaukat also appeared before the court as prosecutor. Shaukat offered an unconditional apology to the court on behalf of the accused. To this, Justice Sattar said that the "accused should spend some time in jail to understand the gravity of their actions". DC Memon and SSP Zafar pleaded not guilty to the charges and also apologised unconditionally to the court, however, Justice Sattar reminded them that this case carried a maximum sentence of six months of jail time.

Pak sees
chances...

FORM PAGE 01
The spokesperson added that there are high chances for the restoration of direct flights to the UK and European countries after the DfT and European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) visits. Earlier in July, it was reported that the management of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) had issued a tender for cargo handling services in France and sought applications from the willing companies. The PIA spokesperson had said that the applications will be submitted to the national airline's country manager in France. After a three-year ban, the national carrier is expected to be allowed to resume direct flights to European countries after getting clearance from the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). Moreover, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) made appointments of senior officers in the United Kingdom (UK) earlier this month. The national flag carrier is facing a ban on direct flights to the United Kingdom (UK) for three years. Despite the financial crisis and the ban, the national airline appointed officers and staffers on high salaries. The PIA spokesperson said that the national airline continued its flight operation on the basis of code sharing with Turkish Airlines in the UK and earning £14 million annually.

Wahab Riaz announces
award for Olympian Nadeem

Wahab Riaz announced a cash award of Rs 30 lakh for Olympian athlete Arshad Nadeem, who won a silver medal in javelin throw competition

SOHAIL ALI

LAHORE: Acknowledging the remarkable achievement, Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz announced a cash award of Rs 30 lakh for Olympian athlete Arshad Nadeem, who won a silver medal in javelin throw competition of recently-organised World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary. Wahab Riaz, in a statement on Thursday, said that Punjab Sports and Youth Affairs Department will give a cash award to javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem on the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi. "No doubt, Arshad has accomplished a great feat and created



history by winning Pakistan's first-ever medal in World Athletics Championships," he added. He said Punjab Sports and Youth Affairs Department is working for the welfare of all national male and female athletes. "Punjab government will patronize all those players who will work hard with great amount of passion and dedication and win laurels for the country," he explained. Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports further said that Punjab Endowment Fund is being launched soon. "The future of sports and athletes is bright in Punjab. Punjab Sports and Youth Affairs Department is working effectively on strengthening the sports sector on the directions of Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi".

World Weightlifting
Championship
begins in Riyadh

RIYADH: Some 2,500 athletes representing more than 170 countries are participating in the World Senior Weightlifting Championship, which opens on Sunday in Riyadh. Mohammed Jaloud, president of the International Weightlifting Federation, and the heads of the participating national federations will lead the opening ceremonies for the 14-day sporting event at 7 p.m., at the Ministry of Sports Hall of the Prince Faisal bin Fahd Olympic Complex in the Saudi capital. The competition, which will run until Sept. 17, is a qualifying tournament for the Paris 2024 Olympics. The opening ceremony is set to last 40 minutes and expected to include artistic performances by international teams, national heritage segments, folklore performances, and visual and acrobatic shows. It will be broadcast on Saudi sports channels and a number of global channels. Mohammed Al-Harbi (left), president of the Saudi Weightlifting Federation, welcomes Mohammed Jaloud, president of the International Weightlifting Federation, on his arrival in Riyadh. (SPA) The "Zurcaroh" Austrian acrobatic team, which won second place in the "America's Got Talent" program, will present an artistic performance for the first time in the history of the World Weightlifting Championships, with more than 43 artists from Brazil, Russia, Ukraine and Switzerland participating. - Agencies

Novak Djokovic keen
on winning at US Open

NEW YORK: Novak Djokovic blew off some steam following on U.S. Open win by belting out a rendition of a Beastie Boys classic and the second seed said he was trying enjoy his time on court despite the pressure he faces to keep winning. The 36-year-old, who is looking to match Margaret Court's all-time record of 24 Grand Slam titles, powered past American Taylor Fritz 6-1 6-4 6-4 at Arthur Ashe Stadium to reach a record 47th major semi-final. Appearing more relaxed in his post match interview, Djokovic sang, (You Gotta) Fight for Your Right (to Party) with fans in the stands



joining along. "I'm trying to enjoy the moments on the court, but there's so much stress and pressure going on that it's hard to have

fun, so to say, on the court," Djokovic told reporters. "It's really about finding a way to navigate through the match and win a match for me, you know. "But off the court, in terms of the actual journey of still being a professional tennis player and going around the world, travelling with my coaching team, we try to keep things light and have fun and enjoy life." The Serbian said he expects a "great battle" in the semi-finals on Friday against the winner of the all American meeting between Frances Tiafoe and Ben Shelton. "Both of the guys ... Shelton and Tiafoe, have a lot of charisma," Djokovic said. "They bring a lot of energy on the court. They're very quick, very powerful." - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: A vendor installed his cycle repairing setup along the road side as due to the extremely high inflation small traders are helpless to hire expensive rental shops in Federal Capital. -Online

Russian flag cannot fly
at Olympics: president

Paris 2024 to host Olympic Summer Games from July 26 to Aug 11

PARIS: French president Emmanuel Macron insisted Wednesday that "the Russian flag cannot be at the Paris Olympic Games... at a time when Russia is committing war crimes." Quizzed on the possible presence of Russian athletes in Paris competing as neutrals, Macron added: "I hope that this is a decision of conscience in the Olympic world. It is not the host state which must decide what the International Olympic Committee (IOC) should do." He added to sports daily L'Equipe: "I have total confidence in Thomas Bach (the IOC president)." Athletes from Russia and Belarus

have faced sanctions from a multitude of sports since Russia invaded Ukraine in February of 2022. Despite the ongoing war, the IOC has recommended allowing athletes from Russia and Moscow ally Belarus to compete as individual neutrals in international competitions. The Russian flag (center) flutters along with the Greek (left) and Olympic flags on September 29, 2013 during the lighting ceremony in ancient Olympia, the sanctuary where the Olympic Games were born in 776 BC. Those allowed to reintegrate into world sport must satisfy certain condi-

tions. These include competing under a neutral flag and proving that they have not actively supported the war in Ukraine. "Obviously, there cannot be the Russian flag at the Paris Games, I think there is consensus," Macron added in his interview with L'Equipe. "There is no place for Russia as a country at a time when it has committed war crimes, when it has deported children." "The real question that the Olympic world will have to decide is what place to give to these Russian athletes who sometimes have prepared for a lifetime, and can also be the victims of this regime." - Agencies

Rangpur Riders
rope in Babar
Azam for BPL

KARACHI: Pakistan captain Babar Azam is set to feature in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) for the first time since 2017 after he was roped in by Rangpur Riders on Wednesday. When the prolific right-hander last featured in BPL, he played for Sylhet Sixers. The Riders opted for a unique way to reveal the signing of Azam on its social media platforms. "We are here with another surprise after signing the world's No. 1 all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan in the fight for victory! Dear Rangpur Riders fans, guess who is going to be the new rider by matching the information given in the picture, and share your opinion in the comments," the franchise said in a post on its official Facebook account. The post also had an image, titled 'Guess the rider', with hints such as 'he made his ODI debut in 2015', 'He's the first player to score more than 5000 runs in his first 100 ODI innings, and He's the captain of currently ranked world's no. 1 ODI team', which immediately revealed that the side had signed Azam. - DNA

Russian climber
dies at Gilgit's
Gasherbrum IV

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan's Gasherbrum IV (7,925 metres) on Wednesday claimed life of an award-winning Russian climber Dmitry Golovchenko while his partner Sergey Nilov was injured. Pakistan Army helicopters airlifted Nilov to Skardu. Gasherbrum IV is the 17th highest mountain on earth and the sixth highest in Pakistan. Both Dmitry Golovchenko and Sergey Nilov had set out from their base camp via the extremely difficult South-east ridge without bottled oxygen, high altitude porters, fixed ropes or high camps. The two climbers went missing after reaching an altitude of 7,000 metres as the weather intervened. General secretary of the Alpine Club of Pakistan Karrar Haidri said Dmitry Golovchenko had probably suffered a lethal fall. His partner Sergey Nilov returned alone to the base camp, but was feeling weak and suffering frostbite. Golovchenko and Nilov had won two Piolet d'Or awards together for their daring ascents of treacherous peaks. - DNA

Army
reiterates
resolve...

FROM PAGE 01
highest esteem, ever honoring them with utmost respect and dignity. Commemoration of Defence and Martyrs Day on 6 September across the country by all segments of the society was appreciated for which the Armed Forces of Pakistan remain ever thankful to our proud nation. Participants reiterated Pakistan Army's resolve to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan against all kinds of direct and indirect threats. Forum re-affirmed that inimical propagandists' desperate attempts to cause wedge between the state institutions and public are indicative of their mounting desperation and will only result into more humiliation of such elements. InshaAllah. Participants were briefed on prevalent geo-strategic environment, challenges to national security and own strategy in response to evolving threat. Forum resolved that all terrorists, their facilitators and abettors, working on the behalf of hostile forces to destabilise Pakistan will be dealt with full might of the state.

Lawyers
hint at...

FROM PAGE 01
postponement of the elections in Punjab citing security reasons as the major cause behind the change of plan. The ECP postponed the polls till October 8. In April, the SC declared the ECP's decision on the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) election null and void, ordering to hold snap polls - a persistent demand forced by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan after he dissolved the assemblies in both the provinces. The top court ordered the ECP to hold elections in Punjab on May 14. The ECP, however, could not comply with the top court's order. Addressing the Lawyers Convention organised by SCBA, Zuberi lashed out at the ECP, saying that the top court's order could not be implemented so far. "The ECP is violating the SC's order and the Constitution," said Zuberi. He also announced that the SCBA would challenge the recent amendments to the Official Secrets Act and the Pakistan Army Act in the SC.

Rupee gains
Rs2.03...

FROM PAGE 01
Rs5.25 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs380.20 as compared to the last closing of Rs385.45. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 55 and 53 paisa to close at Rs83.02 and Rs81.30 respectively. To prevent smuggling and hoarding of dollar, the government launched a massive crackdown against the elements involved in dollar smuggling, hoarding and organized crime cartels, causing loss to the national economy. Strict action is being taken after the identification of facilitators and patrons of government officials indulged in illegal economic activities.

SC takes up
Jaranwala
case today

FORM PAGE 01
Justice Ijaz-Ul-Ahsan will preside over the bench, comprising Justice Muneeb Akhtar and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail. Minority leader Samuel Piaray had moved the SC under a miscellaneous petition, to take notice of the Jaranwala tragedy. This is the second time that the petition has been scheduled for a hearing. Last month, CJP Bandial had constituted a three-member bench - comprising himself, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Shahid Waheed - to hear pleas filed on the Jaranwala incident. The bench was expected to take up the case on August 22 and notices were issued to all the parties in the case.

RCCI organizes Business opportunity Conference in Egypt

The conference witnessed the convergence of visionary entrepreneurs from both Pakistan and Egypt. More than 200 delegates from Pakistan and Egypt representing different sectors including Information Technology

DNA

CORIO: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) organized the Pakistan-Egypt Business Opportunities Conference at Triumph Luxury Hotel in Cairo, Egypt, here on Thursday. The conference witnessed the convergence of visionary entrepreneurs from both Pakistan and Egypt. More than 200 delegates from Pakistan and Egypt representing different sectors including Information Technology, Textile, Agriculture, Construction, Pharmaceutical, minerals and Travel and Tours, attended the conference. Mahmoud Mostafa Kamal Esmat, Minister of Public Enterprises Sector was the chief guest on the occasion whereas Ambassador Sajid Bilal, Dr. Alaa Ezz Amin, General of Chamber of Commerce, RCCI top leadership, President Saqib Rafiq, group leader Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad, former presidents, Executive Committee members, among others, were also present on the occasion. On the sidelines of the Business Opportuni-



ty Conference, Business-to-Business (B2B) meetings were held which provide an exclusive platform for delegates to establish meaningful connections and nurture potential partnerships. Several memorandums of understanding were also signed between the counterparts of the companies participating in the conference. President Saqib

Rafiq in his keynote address said that Pakistan has the second largest pool of freelancers and this provides a huge opportunity to Egyptian investors for joint ventures in the Information Technology Sector. Both Pakistan and Egypt are located on strategic locations, where Pakistan connects Central Asia via China Pakistan Economic Corridor

and Egypt serves as the gateway to African Markets, he added. He said that the trade volume between Pakistan and Egypt is close to \$400 million which can be increased to one billion dollars in a couple of years and added that by enhancing trade cooperation with Egypt, Pakistan can get easy access to many African markets including Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Algeria. He invited the Cairo Chamber, and Alexandria Chamber to visit Pakistan for improved networking. Group Leader Sohail Altaf in his speech said that this conference provides us a platform for information sharing and increased networking. Pakistan Ambassador Sajid Bilal in his speech said that Pakistan being located at the crossroads of Central Asia, South Asia, China and Middle East offers great opportunities for trade and investment in various sectors. He thanked the Egyptian Government and Chambers for the support and cooperation and utmost efforts of RCCI for organizing the Business Opportunity Conferences aiming to strengthen the bilateral and trade relations between Pakistan and Egypt.

Briefs

Lebanon
army blocked
1,200 Syrian
migrants

BEIRUT: The Lebanese army said Thursday it had prevented the entry of around 1,200 Syrian migrants this week, at a time both countries are beset by painful economic woes. Millions of Syrians have already fled abroad since their country's civil war broke out in 2011 following the government's repression of peaceful pro-democracy protests. Most of them cross the border into Lebanon, which the United Nations says hosts the largest number of refugees per capita in the world. The Lebanese army said in a statement that it had "prevented around 1,200 Syrians from crossing the Lebanese-Syrian border in the past week." It had announced on August 23 that it turned back 700 Syrians attempting to enter the eastern Mediterranean country illegally. "The Syrian-Lebanese border is porous and the number of soldiers mobilized is not enough," a security official told AFP. "Most Syrians come to Lebanon in the hope of finding work, given the unprecedented deterioration in living conditions in their country," said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak to the media. The Syrian government's repression of demonstrations in 2011 escalated into a civil war that killed more than 500,000 people, ravaged the country's economy and drove millions into exile. In the early years of the conflict, Lebanon welcomed hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees, before banning them from its territory in early 2015. Since then, many Syrians have used smugglers to cross the border and seek a better life in Lebanon or beyond.—DNA

UAE to host
global
climate
summit

DNA

LONDON: Abu Dhabi will host a global summit for faith leaders on Nov. 6-7 to highlight the critical role of faith communities in combating climate change, Emirates News Agency reported on Wednesday. The two-day summit will take place ahead of the 28th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, COP28, in Dubai from Nov. 30 to Dec. 12. It will be organized by the Muslim Council of Elders in partnership with the COP28 Presidency, the UN Environment Programme, and the Catholic Church, and under the patronage of the UAE's President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. Faith leaders from the world's major religions, as well as academics and environmental experts, are set to participate to discuss their ethical responsibilities in dealing with the climate crisis. The meeting will also look at how faith and science can work together to bridge the gap between empirical evidence and spiritual teachings; discuss ways for raising religious leaders' voices to improve climate justice; and ways to involve grassroots communities in sustainable development.

Magnitude
6.2
earthquake
rattles Chile

WASHINGTON :A magnitude 6.2 earthquake shook northern Chile, according to the US Geological Survey. The quake hit at 8.48 p.m. local time (2348GMT), while its epicenter was 41 kilometers (25 miles) south-southwest of Coquimbo, Chile. It occurred at a depth of 41 kilometers. Authorities withdrew a cautionary evacuation order, and no casualties or structural damage have been reported, according to Chile's emergency services. Chile has suffered devastating earthquakes in the past. In 2010, a magnitude 8.8 earthquake and subsequent tsunami killed more than 500 people.

Jordan, Pakistan vow to
boost trade, investment ties

The Ambassador urged the ACC to delineate its economic, investment, service, and tourism priorities, in order to form the basis of an action plan for coordinating efforts with Pakistani counterparts and realize shared goals

DNA

AMMAN: President of the Amman Chamber of Commerce (ACC), Khalil Al Hajj Tawfiq, recently held a meeting with Ma'en Khreisat, the newly appointed Jordanian Ambassador to Pakistan, in a bid to strengthen economic ties and explore new avenues for trade and investment. The discussion, according to a statement on Wednesday, delved into strategies for enhancing collaboration between the two countries, and bolstering bilateral economic and trade relations. The two officials emphasized the pivotal role of the Jordanian embassy in Pakistan, highlighting its capacity to provide crucial data concerning Pakistan's market demands for goods and services. Additionally, the embassy is well-positioned to promote investment opportunities within Jordan, especially in light of the recent legislative changes in Pakistan's investment environment, which offer a host of benefits and incentives for prospective investors. Al-Hajj Tawfiq underscored the untapped potential within Jordanian-Pakistani economic relations, stressing the imperative need for intensified communication among various



stakeholders in both countries, particularly in burgeoning sectors. He also articulated the trade and service sectors' keen interest in increasing imports of Pakistani products. These imports, which span commodities like meat, fish, rice, textiles, and clothing, would complement Jordan's exports, including fertilizers, phosphates, and potash. The ACC President expressed the Chamber's read-

iness to host trade delegations from Pakistan, a move that aims to further consolidate economic relations and leverage Jordan's strategic geographic location to access regional markets. He also suggested the formation of a Jordanian economic delegation spanning various sectors to visit Pakistan and explore investment opportunities. For his part, Ambassador Khreisat underlined

the importance of cooperation in facilitating tours to Jordan's tourist attractions. This collaboration envisions a comprehensive program for Pakistani tourists, complete with detailed activity explanations, maps of archaeological and religious sites, and cost breakdowns. Looking ahead, he anticipated the convening of joint Jordanian-Pakistani ministerial committee meetings in the spring

of 2024, an event that would provide an opportune platform for hosting a business forum, uniting Jordanian and Pakistani business magnates on the sidelines of the official proceedings. The Ambassador urged the ACC to delineate its economic, investment, service, and tourism priorities, in order to form the basis of an action plan for coordinating efforts with Pakistani counterparts and realize shared goals.

Turkiye boosts investments
in Algeria's prosperity

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA : Turkiye has put great efforts into boosting investments in the North African nation of Algeria, where the authorities provide all kinds of cooperation, said the country's foreign minister on Thursday.

"We have a great effort and will to increase Turkish investments. Algerian authorities are also showing all kinds of cooperation in this regard. We are working on opening a branch of (Turkish) Ziraat Bank (in Algeria) especially for the solution of financial and related problems," Hakan Fidan told a joint conference in the capital Ankara with his visiting Algerian counterpart, Ahmed Attaf. Fidan and his Algerian counterpart Ahmed Attaf co-chaired the second meeting of the Joint Planning Group, formed to follow up on outcomes of the Türkiye-Algeria High-Level Cooperation Council

held in Türkiye in 2022. Saying they had a very "fruitful meeting," Fidan added that they mutual-

ly reviewed cooperative work in all areas of state, business, and social life. He said they discussed regional cooperation issues, bilateral cooperation, and how to make positive contributions in solving problems in Africa. On recent coups in Africa, Fidan



unfortunately caused scenes in recent years that we do not want to see in Africa."

He said the process of being a state and the failure of political systems in Africa, especially in countries that gained independence belatedly, are one of the reasons for the ongoing crisis. "The second main reason for these political crises is foreign intervention and

the methods followed by some imperial powers in their policies regarding African countries. the methods they prefer, and the tools they use. Political crises in Africa are constantly being triggered," he added. For his part, Attaf said relations between Türkiye and Algeria are developing both politically and economically. He said there has been significant progress over the last three years.

Blinken hails Ukrainian's
'extraordinary resilience'

Blinken visited a school's basement in Yagidne, where Russian troops kept dozens of villagers including elderly people and children captive

KYIV: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday praised Ukraine's strength in the face of the Russian invasion during a visit to the Chernigiv region, which was occupied by Moscow at the beginning of the war. Blinken visited a school's

basement in Yagidne, where Russian troops kept dozens of villagers including elderly people and children captive. "This is just one building... (but) this is a story we've seen again and again," Blinken said. "But we are also seeing something else that's

incredibly powerful... the extraordinary resilience of the Ukrainian people." Russian forces had seized parts of the Chernigiv region, including Yagidne, soon after the beginning of the war. They withdrew after about a month, and Yagidne was

recaptured by Ukrainian forces on March 30, 2022. But the Russian army left towns and land destroyed and heavily mined. Blinken said up to a third of Ukraine's territory was now dealing with mines or unexploded ordnance. "But Ukrainians are coming together to get rid of the ordnance, to get rid of the mines, and to literally recover the land," Blinken said. The top US official said Washington was "proud" to support Ukraine's efforts to "take on the aggression as they recover as they rebuild.—Agencies

Two women to
vie for Mexican
presidency

MEXICO CITY : Two women will compete for the Mexican presidency for the first time next year after the ruling party on Wednesday named former Mexico City mayor Claudia Sheinbaum as its candidate. Sheinbaum, a 61-year-old scientist by training, will face Xochitl Galvez, an outspoken businesswoman and senator with Indigenous roots selected to represent an opposition coalition, the Broad Front for Mexico. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's Morena party announced that Sheinbaum had won an internal contest to run in the June 2024 election, beating rivals including former foreign minister Marcelo Ebrard. "Today democracy won," Sheinbaum said, adding: "There will be a woman president of the republic!" Sheinbaum is a staunch supporter and confidant of Lopez Obrador, a leftwing populist who enjoys an approval rating of more than 60 percent but is required by the constitution to leave office after a single six-year term. "Sheinbaum is probably the greatest ally in the political history of Lopez Obrador," said analyst Pablo Majluf. A student leader in the 1980s, Sheinbaum served as Mexico City's environment secretary when Lopez Obrador was mayor from 2000-2005. She was a spokesperson for Lopez Obrador during his failed 2006 election bid and served as Mexico City mayor herself from 2018 until earlier this year when she stepped down to run for president. "Girls see an example in me," Sheinbaum told the magazine Gatopardo. "Being the first woman president would be historic in our country," she added.—Agencies

Sudan's al-Burhan
in Qatar to discuss
Sudanese war

KHARTOUM: Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan on Thursday headed to Qatar for an official visit to discuss his country's ongoing crisis and bilateral relations. In a statement, the ruling Sovereignty Council in Sudan, chaired by al-Burhan, said he will hold talks with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani to discuss "issues of common interest, and the situation in Sudan." Al-Burhan is accompanied by Sudan's Foreign Minister Ali al-Sadiq and his intelligence chief Ahmad Mufaddal. The statement, however, did not mention the duration of his visit or if there were other destinations on al-Burhan's schedule. The visit is al-Burhan's third foreign tour after Egypt and South Sudan since the outbreak of the fighting in Sudan in mid-April. Late on Wednesday, al-Burhan issued a decree to dissolve his rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and directed his country's concerned authorities to implement the constitutional decree to dissolve the RSF. Since the beginning of the war between the RSF and the Sudanese armed forces on April 15, thousands have been killed and more than 7 million displaced, especially in Khartoum and Darfur state, according to UN figures.—Agencies

UK vows
escaped
terrorist will
be found

LONDON: The British government vowed on Thursday a former army soldier suspected of terrorism offenses, who escaped from a prison by hiding under a food delivery van, would be found, as it promised an urgent inquiry into how he had been able to go on the run. Daniel Abed Khalife, 21, is believed to have escaped from London's HMP Wandsworth on Wednesday morning by slipping out of the prison kitchen where he was working and strapping himself to the bottom of the van. A major manhunt is underway to track him down, with enhanced security checks at ports and airports which has led to delays for passengers. "Daniel Khalife will be found and he will be made to face justice," Alex Chalk, the government's justice minister, told parliament. Khalife, who is 6ft 2ins tall (1.88 m) and was wearing a chef's outfit of a white T-shirt, red and white checkered trousers and brown steel toe cap boots, was being held in prison ahead of trial on offenses relating to terrorism and the Official Secrets Act. Police said he was not thought to pose a risk to the wider public but advised people not to approach him. Khalife, who was discharged from the army in May, is accused of eliciting or trying to elicit information likely to be useful to a person preparing an act of terrorism while he was based at barracks in central England in 2021, and also making a bomb hoax by placing three canisters with wires on a desk. He is also charged with obtaining information which might be "directly or indirectly useful to an enemy." Opposition lawmakers have demanded answers into how he had been able to escape and why he was not being held at a maximum security prison. There are also questions being asked about the jail's staffing and security procedures.

Germany
arrests 2
Syrians

BERLIN: Two Syrian men have been arrested in Germany on suspicion of membership in extremist groups, and one of them is suspected of involvement in a 2013 attack in eastern Syria in which more than 60 Shiite fighters and civilians were killed, prosecutors said Thursday. The suspects, identified only as Amer A. and Basel O. in line with German privacy rules, were arrested on Wednesday, the federal prosecutors' office said. Both are accused of membership in a foreign terrorist organization — Liwa Jund al-Rahman, or Brigade of the Merciful God, an armed rebel group that prosecutors said Amer A. formed in February 2013 and led. Amer A. is also accused of committing war crimes by means of forced displacement and of membership in the Daesh group. The war crimes charges relate to a June 2013 attack on Hatla, in Syria's eastern Deir Ezzor province, that killed about 60 Shiite residents. At the time, the attack underscored the increasingly sectarian nature of Syria's civil war.—DNA

Focus on global niche market to pay more dividends

DNA

FAISALABAD: The Ambassador of Indonesia Mr. Adam Tugio urged the business community of Faisalabad to focus on research on global niche market for extra dividends and products expansion while taking into account products where Pakistan has comparative advantage. Addressing a gathering of leading businessmen from various sectors at Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Envoy said that young millennial globally are selective, environment caring and health conscious and usually prefer specific innovative products that are unavailable in traditional market. Citing the importance of non-traditional market, the envoy pointed out new trends of circular economy, creative economy and recycling economy which provide good trade and investment opportunities. He mentioned Bali as a preferred place for real estate sector of Pakistan to explore niche market for establishing restaurants and hotels as tourists from South Asia are the second biggest foreign visitors there. On the importance of ASEAN region, Ambassador Tugio said global economy is shifting towards Asia, which ASEAN in Southeast Asia is the 4th largest economy in the world

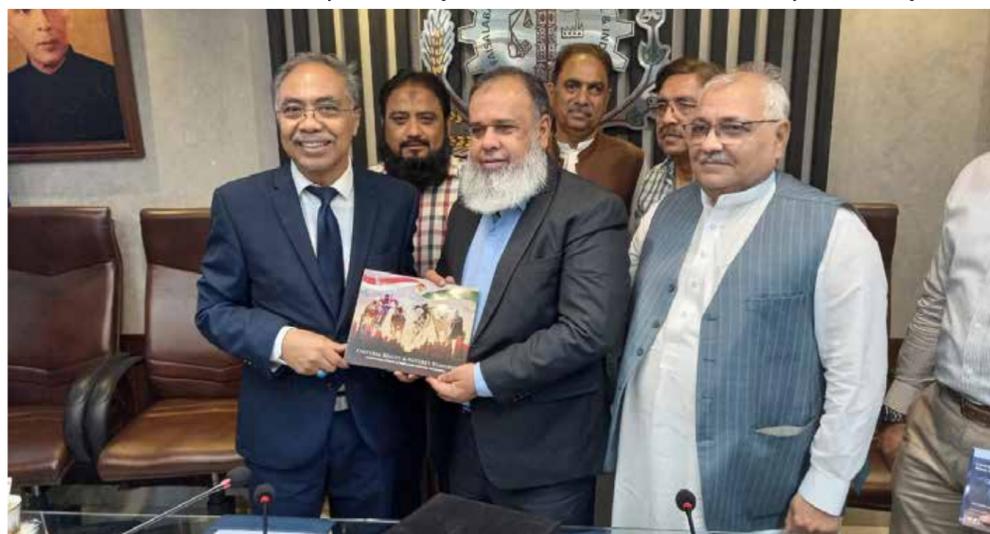
with a diverse population of above 650m people. He informed about Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) of ASEAN and five dialogue partners as an emerging trading block with 30 percent of global GDP and encouraged FCCI to conduct research on the benefit

of building trade connectivity with ASEAN through RCEP as well as with an FTA with ASEAN. Talking about challenges in the line of business activities, the Envoy particularly mentioned to narrow the gap between perception and reality and consistency of economic policies

for sustainable economic growth in Pakistan. "Indonesia considers Pakistan an important strategic partner for its geo-strategic importance and signing of PTA agreement reflects the interest of both sides since trade volume reached to record USD 4.2 bn which was 1.2bn before the trade

agreement", said Tugio. However, he pointed out that due to high tariff several products from Indonesia such as tires and auto spare parts enter into Pakistan via other trade routes. The envoy suggested FCCI to carry a comparative advantage study on Pakistani products for

Indonesian market and to provide list of potential new items to TDAP for more access and better trade volume as the countries are now in the process of revisiting PTA with the objective to expand it further. He also emphasized on frequent exchange of trade delegations for better understanding of market demand and trends on both sides. Ambassador Tugio also invited the FCCI members to participate in the upcoming annual Trade Expo to be held in Indonesia in October 2023 and assured facilitation from the Embassy. He also informed about Halal Trade Expo to be held right after the Trade Expo and underscored the growing market share of halal products both in the Muslim and non-Muslim countries. "Halal trade is beyond food which includes pharmaceutical, hospitality and tourism, lifestyle, beauty care and cosmetics and other related businesses with promising prospects joint collaboration", he added. Earlier, the Senior Vice President of FCCI Dr. Sajjad Arshad expressed his gratitude to the Indonesian Ambassador for visiting the Chamber and for enlightening interaction with the members. He expressed keen interest in further expanding trade and business activities with Indonesia through the assistance and sup



Briefs

OIC special envoy meets with Afghan FM

DNA

KABUL: The OIC Secretary-General's Envoy for Afghanistan, Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakht, met today, Wednesday, September 6, 2023 Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, Foreign Minister of the de facto government in Afghanistan, at the headquarters of the Afghan Foreign Ministry in Kabul. The meeting discussed the outcome of the visit of the delegation of Muslim scholars to Afghanistan, which held several meetings with Afghan scholars and officials on issues of utmost importance to the organisation such as tolerance and moderation in Islam, girls education and women's work. During the meeting, they reviewed the organization's efforts in the development field in Afghanistan within the framework of the Humanitarian Trust Fund at the Islamic Development Bank and the humanitarian activities of the organization's office in Kabul financed by King Salman Center in coordination with Afghan Red Crescent. The two sides discussed other political and economic issues that constitute a priority for the organisation in the framework of following up the implementation of the resolutions of the Council of Foreign Ministers related to the situation in Afghanistan.

Court extends interim bail of Bushra Bibi

ISLAMABAD: A lower court here on Thursday extended interim bail of Bushra Bibi, wife of PTI Chairman Imran Khan, till September 12, in case pertaining to fake receipts with regard to toshakhana gifts. Additional District and Session Judge Tahir Abbas Sapra heard the case wherein Bushra Bibi appeared before the court along with her lawyer Salman Safdar Advocate. At the outset of hearing, the investigation officer said that they required custody of the accused for investigation. He said that the audio of Bushra Bibi had been sent to the FIA for forensic purpose. Salman Safdar Advocate said that the investigation team used to summon his client who had to wait them for hours. They had told the investigators, during the investigation that the audiotape did not belong to Bushra Bibi. He said that the matter was related to receipts instead of audiotape. The court extended the interim bail of Bushra Bibi and adjourned further hearing till next date. - APP

Rs 360 mln interest-free loan approved for LHC judges

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab caretaker government has approved funds of over Rs360 million, to be availed as interest-free loan by 11 judges of the Lahore High Court for purchase and construction of houses. According to sources, the approval for the grant of the loan has been given by the Cabinet Standing Committee for Finance. Reportedly, the high court judges had desired to avail the facility of interest-free loan equivalent to 36 basic salaries for the purchase and construction of houses. Each judge draws a basic pay of over Rs0.9 million. The interest-free loan will be repaid in installments in a period of 12 years. The judges availing the facility of interest-free loans include Justice Ahmad Nadeem Arshad, Justice Safdar Saleem Shahid, Justice Raza Hasan Syed, Justice Shakil Ahmad, Justice Muhammad Tariq Nadeem, Justice Muhammad Amjad Rafique, Justice Abid Hussain Chattha, Justice Anwar Hussain, Justice Ali Zia Bajwa, Justice Muhammad Raza Qureshi and Justice Raheel Kamran.



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

Australia PM confirms China visit

DNA

CANBERRA: Australia's prime minister confirmed on Thursday he will visit China later this year after talks with China's premier, who said Beijing was ready to resume bilateral exchanges after years of friction. The announcement by Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on the sidelines of a Southeast Asia summit in Indonesia came after a years-long break in relations over political and economic issues including Chinese sanctions on Australian imports. "I ... confirmed the invitation from President Xi," Albanese told reporters after talks with Chinese Premier Li Qiang, adding he "will visit China later this year at a mutually agreeable time". The trip would be the first to China by an Australian prime minister since 2016. Li told Albanese China was ready to work with Australia to resume exchanges in different areas, Chinese state news agency Xinhua reported, without mentioning specific areas. He said the Asia-Pacific region was the shared home of both countries and Beijing would work with Australia to safeguard peace and stability in the region, according to Xinhua. China's foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said Beijing welcomed the planned visit and that "a healthy and stable China-Australia relationship serves the fundamental interests of the two peoples". Albanese thanked President Xi Jinping for the invitation and said his talks with Li were "constructive" and "positive", adding the two countries needed more dialogue to improve relations. "This was an important meeting. I told premier Li that we would continue to cooperate where we can, disagree where we must and engage in our national interest," he said.

Russian attack kills 17 as Blinken visits Kyiv

NEWS DESK

KYIV: At least 17 people were killed and 32 wounded in a Russian attack on a crowded market in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kostiantynivka on Wednesday as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Kyiv, Ukrainian officials said. Footage circulated online by presidential officials showed people falling to the ground or running for cover after a huge explosion in front of them, seconds after some look up to the sky when they hear what sounds like a missile approaching. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy condemned the attack, saying a market, shops and a pharmacy had been struck in the industrial city close to the battlefield. "This Russian evil must be defeated as soon as possible," Zelenskiy said on the Telegram messaging app. "When someone in the world still attempts to deal with any-

Estonia 'concerned' about hybrid attack

TALLINN: "We are watching carefully", Margus Tsahkna warned in an exclusive interview with European media. Estonia's Foreign Minister has said he is "concerned" about a possible hybrid attack from Russia. Margus Tsahkna said: "There are hybrid threats. But we never know what kind of hybrid situation may happen. We have witnessed them before as well." He suggested Russia could "test the borders" not only of Estonia, but also those of NATO and the EU, with Tallinn inside both blocs. "We are watching carefully. We are working very closely with our allies on the border." Estonia, a small Baltic country and former part of the USSR, shares a nearly 300km border with Russia. The Ukraine war has heightened security concerns inside the country, with Tallinn fearing a revisionist Russia. Hybrid threats mix military and non-military tactics, covert and overt means. They include disinformation, cyber-attacks, economic pressure, deployment of irregular armed groups, and use of regular forces. Tsahkna cited the example of Poland and Lithuania, which also share borders with Russia or its ally Belarus, saying Tallinn has "witnessed and understands definitively" their concerns. - DNA

thing Russian, it means turning a blind eye to this reality. The audacity of evil. The brazenness of wickedness. Utter inhumanity." He later told a press conference in the capital Kyiv that he believed it had been a deliberate attack on "a peaceful city". Reuters video footage after the attack showed shattered store fronts, gutted cars and a street littered with debris and twisted metal. Emergency services picked through the rubble. "I only saw a flash and then shouted to my colleagues: 'Lie on the floor. All the customers lay down on the floor ... I heard things falling over, then everything was covered in smoke and fire started," said Diana Khodak, an employee of a pharmacy hit in the attack. "One woman walked into the pharmacy on her own. Her arm and leg were bleeding, she had a big wound on her arm. Another woman was carried inside by soldiers. She had an open fracture and her bone was sticking out from her leg," Khodak said.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Belgium to Pakistan Charles Delogne called on Foreign Minister, Jilani Abbas Jilani. They discussed areas of bilateral cooperation and important regional and global developments. They agreed to enhance cooperation in all fields especially trade & investment. - DNA

Ahead of COP28 EU chief Ursula visits oil-rich UAE

ABU DHABI: EU chief Ursula von der Leyen visited the United Arab Emirates Thursday, three months before it hosts UN climate talks and as it comes under pressure over sanctions on Russia. The European Commission president held talks with President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed in Abu Dhabi, before the neighbouring emirate of Dubai organises COP28 in November-December. "We both want to make COP28 a success and I look forward to our continued co-

operation," she posted on X, formerly known as Twitter. "We will work across the board to reinforce UAE-EU relations." Despite cordial relations with the Gulf monarchies, Western powers have faulted the UAE and top oil exporter Saudi Arabia for staying close to Russia since its invasion of Ukraine in February last year. Before von der Leyen's visit, EU sanctions envoy David O'Sullivan flew to the UAE this week, along with US and British officials, in a push to maintain sanctions on Moscow. According to reports, Western officials are concerned that goods that could help Russia's war effort are being shipped to it from the UAE. The US, EU and British officials were in the UAE "to discuss the effective implementation of our sanctions" on Russia, a US embassy spokesperson told AFP. The UAE said it strictly implements United Nations sanctions, and monitors for compliance through its banks. "The UAE strictly abides by UN sanctions and has clear and robust processes in place to deal with sanctioned entities, which we have exercised against a number of companies since the beginning of the conflict," a UAE official said. "We will continue to take these responsibilities extremely seriously, especially given the current geopolitical landscape." - DNA

Pakistan's HC pays a farewell call on PM Sheikh Hasina



The High Commissioner expressed his thanks for the support extended during his tenure and hoped that the bilateral ties would further grow in the period ahead

DNA

DHAKA: High Commissioner for Pakistan H.E. Mr. Imran Ahmed Siddiqui paid a farewell call on Honourable Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh H.E. Sheikh Hasina this morning. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina congratulated the High Commissioner for completing a successful tenure and appreciated the High Commission's initiatives to bring both countries closer. The High Commissioner expressed his thanks for the support extended during his tenure and hoped that the bilateral ties would further grow in the period ahead. The High Commissioner also conveyed the message of goodwill and friendship from the leadership of Pakistan, which was reciprocated. The two sides agreed to continue working for further strengthening of the fraternal relations between the two countries.

ASEAN summit concludes with "fruitful" outcomes

JAKARTA: The 43rd Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit concluded here on Thursday with a series of outcomes despite rising uncertainties globally. "Within three days, 12 summits have been held, resulting in 90 outcome documents and a number of concrete agreements with partners," Indonesian President Joko Widodo said while addressing the closing ceremony of the summit. "ASEAN's big duties will not finish in only one chairmanship. We will continue to face the complexity of global challenges," the president said. Indonesia handed over the ASEAN chairmanship for 2024 to Laos at the closing ceremony. "We must hand in hand navigate the challenges to be opportunities, navigate the rivalries to be collaborations, navigate exclusivity to be inclusivity and navigate differences to be unity," Widodo said. During the summit, ASEAN members reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen ASEAN as an organization that is robust and agile, equipped with strengthened capacity and institutional effectiveness. Numerous documents have been adopted at the summit, including the ASEAN Concord IV and ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on ASEAN as Epicentrum of Growth. The summit under Indonesia's ASEAN chairmanship this year is themed "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth." - Agencies

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