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Belt and Road coop on 'right side of history': President Xi

Detailed News On Page-08

Egypt 'did not close' Gaza crossing to aid

Detailed News On Page-08



Babar continues to lead ICC ODI Rankings

Detailed News On Page-06



\$ 6.7 billion ML 1 contract signed Pak committed to work with China, regional partners

The BRI's concept of shared future for mankind is not about road and railway infrastructure, but also to create linkages among civilizations and nations," he said

DNA

BEIJING: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday said Pakistan was committed to working with China and other regional partners in achieving the ideals of an open global economy and promoting connectivity on a trans-continental scale. Both sides have also signed the contract for ML 1 Project. The project will cost USD 6.7 billion. The cost of the project has been reduced from USD 9 billion to 6.7. "With shared responsibility and by embracing the vision of working together, we can create a brighter, peaceful, and sustainable future for ourselves and for our generations," he said in his address at the high-level event of the Third Belt and Road Forum (BRF) on 'Connectivity in an Open Global Economy'. The two-day forum, which marked the 10 years of the multi-billion dollar cross-regional Belt and Road Initiative, kicked off in China's capital Beijing with representatives from 140 countries in attendance. PM Kakar said Pakistan endorsed China's vision of global connectivity and also looked forward to joining hands with other partners across borders and regions to materialize the projects.

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US vetoes UNSC action on Israel

AGENCIES

NEW YORK: The United States vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution on Wednesday that would have called for humanitarian pauses in the conflict between Israel and Palestinian resistance movement Hamas to allow humanitarian aid access to the Gaza Strip. The vote on the Brazilian-drafted text was twice delayed in the past couple of days as the United States tries to broker aid access to Gaza. Twelve members voted in favor of the draft text on Wednesday, while Russia and Britain abstained. "We are on the ground doing the hard work of diplomacy," U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, told the 15-member council after the vote. "We believe we need to let that diplomacy play out."

"Yes, resolutions are important. And yes, this council must speak out. But the actions we take must be informed by the facts on the ground and support direct diplomacy efforts. That can save lives. The council needs to get this right," she said. Washington traditionally shields its ally Israel from any Security Council action on the occupational activities against the Palestinians. "We have just been witnesses once again of hypocrisy and the double standards of our American colleagues," said Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia. A Russian-drafted resolution that called for a humanitarian ceasefire failed to pass on Monday. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire to allow for the release of hostages and preventing "ceasefire for humanitarian goals" in the war-stricken regions of Gaza and Palestine, he wrote on the social media platform "X". He said it proved the United Nations' inefficiency to appropriately apply international law, human rights and

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BEIJING: Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and Chinese Premier, Li Qiang met on the sidelines of 3rd belt and Road Forum. - DNA

Iran Envoy US using UNSC as puppet for political goals



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Iranian Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam on Wednesday said the United States (US) was using the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as a puppet for its political goals. With its political veto powers at the UNSC, it was fully supporting the Zionist regime of Israel and preventing "ceasefire for humanitarian goals" in the war-stricken regions of Gaza and Palestine, he wrote on the social media platform "X". He said it proved the United Nations' inefficiency to appropriately apply international law, human rights and

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Pakistan for end to Israeli terror

Members of OIC should impose an oil embargo and other sanctions on Israel and expel all Israeli ambassadors, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said

NEWS DESK

JEDDAH: Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani leading Pakistan's delegation in an urgent open-ended Ministerial Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has called for "an immediate end to Israeli terror campaign" against Palestinians. At least 500 Palestinians were martyred in an explosion at a Gaza hospital on Tuesday pushing the overall death toll - due to Israeli bombing of the Gaza Strip - beyond 3,000 as Palestinian health officials said it happened because of an Israeli air attack. During the OIC's ministerial moot - co-convened by Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Jeddah - the foreign minister denounced the Israeli aggression and inhumane blockade of Gaza that has resulted in death, destruction and displacement, the Foreign Office said Wednesday. Condemning Israeli violation of international human rights law, Jilani called on the international community to hold Israel accountable for its use of indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force which amounts to war crimes.

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US announces humanitarian aid for Palestinians

DNA

WASHINGTON: President Biden announced today that the United States is providing \$100 million in humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank. This funding will help support over a million displaced and conflict-affected people with clean water, food, hygiene support, medical care, and other essential needs. The United States provides humanitarian assistance through trusted partners including UN agencies and international NGOs. Civilians are not to blame and should not suffer for Hamas's horrific terrorism. Civilian lives must be protected and assistance must urgently reach those in need.

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Rupee falls sharply against dollar

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: The Pakistani rupee fell sharply against the dollar on Wednesday, with analysts citing a host of reasons, including import pressure, for the decline as the country faces an uphill task on the economic front. The local currency fell Rs3.26 or 1.16% against the dollar in the interbank market to close at 280.29, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), down from yesterday's rate of 277.03 - the second consecutive decline. Today's depreciation comes a day after the rupee's

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Pakistan conducts flight test of Ababeel missile

The missile system is aimed at strengthening deterrence and enhancing strategic stability

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan conducted a successful flight test of Ababeel Weapon System. The test flight was aimed at re-validating various design, technical parameters and performance evaluation of different sub-systems of the weapon system. The missile system is aimed at strengthening deterrence and enhancing strategic stability in the region through the operationalization of Full Spectrum Deterrence in the overall construct of

Credible Minimum Deterrence. Today's launch was witnessed by General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC) and senior officers from Strategic Plans Division and Strategic Forces Command, Scientists and Engineers of Strategic Organizations. JCSC appreciated the technical prowess, dedication and commitment of all those who contributed towards the successful test. The President, Prime Minister of Pakistan and Services Chiefs also congratulated all members of the Strategic Forces on the achievement.

Briefs

Pak stance on Palestine unequivocal

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Wednesday that Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq and the government of Pakistan had been unequivocal, consistent and clear about the Palestinian issue and the genocidal actions against the Palestinians, especially against the people of Gaza. Using his social media account on X, formerly Twitter, the minister said Pakistan was one of the movers of Jeddah moot and our foreign minister will represent Pakistan despite his need to be in Beijing.

Israel must be held accountable for war crimes

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) strongly condemned the barbaric Israeli airstrike on Al-Mamady Hospital in Gaza that killed hundreds of innocent Palestinians, demanding the international community to hold this inhumane state accountable for its war crimes.

IHC issues notice to NAB on Nawaz's protective bail pleas

The three-time former prime minister was declared a proclaimed offender by IHC in the Avenfield and Al-Azizia cases over non-compliance

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday issued a notice to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif's petitions seeking protective bail in Al-Azizia and Avenfield references. The protective bail petitions were filed in the IHC by Nawaz's legal team to restrain the authorities from arresting him when he returns back to country on October 21. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Mianqul Hassan Aurangzeb conducted the hearing on the bail plea and issued notice to the anti-corruption watchdog which had filed references against the former PM. PML-N chief's lawyer Amjad Pervez requested the IHC bench to grant protective bail to his client as he wanted to

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Imran Khan gets permission to talk with his sons

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan on Wednesday got permission to hold a telephone conversation with his sons, Qasim and Suleiman, by the court conducting the trial in the cypher case. The court instructed the superintendent of Rawalpindi's Adiala jail to facilitate the contact through WhatsApp. During the hearing today, special court Judge Abual Hasnat Zulqarnain heard

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Elections put on hold because of 'one person'

"Our previous allies will have to acknowledge that delaying elections will not 'give respect to vote', rather disrespect it," Bilawal said



NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said Wednesday that the country's Constitution, election, and democracy were halted due to "one person's return" - taking a veiled jibe at Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif. Despite being partners in the last govern-

ment and demanding the former three-time prime minister's return, the PPP has kept raising concerns that Nawaz might get a "special relief". Nawaz will return to Pakistan on Saturday (October 21), with the PML-N's legal team being hopeful that he will not have to go to jail despite being a convict and an absconder. "Our previous allies will have to acknowledge that delaying elections will not 'give respect to vote', rather disrespect it," Bilawal said during a public rally in Karachi, hitting out at the PML-N, whose slogan has been "vote ko izzt do (give respect to the sanctity of vote)". The PPP chairman also said that he wants to end the politics of divide and abuse, adding that if politics keep fighting amongst themselves, the country will not progress. "We demanded that those who defied the Constitution be punished. The entire nation should be aware of

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A man of substance: Asim Majid

Member all praise for President Iftikhar Alijev's leadership

REPARATION OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

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UNICEF, Hashoo foundation open 500 ECE classrooms

The inauguration ceremony united key stakeholders, including representatives from UNICEF, the Elementary and Secondary Education Department (E&SED), Hashoo Foundation, the KP government, and the local community

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: UNICEF and Hashoo Foundation, in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elementary and Secondary Education Department (E&SED), are proud to announce the inauguration of 500 Early Childhood Education (ECE) classrooms across twenty-three districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). This transformative initiative is made possible through funding from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW). Aligned with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Sector Plan 2020-2025, the E&SED underscores the critical role of ECE in a child's development and learning, making it a top priority for the region. To actualize this commitment, the existing 13,000 Katchi classrooms in primary schools will be converted into modern ECE classrooms. In pursuit of the goal to refurbish 13,000 classrooms into quality ECE centers, UNICEF has partnered with Hashoo

Foundation in a groundbreaking project titled "Transformation of ECE Classrooms in 23 Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." The ECE Centers being inaugurated recently are among the 500 centers to be established by Hashoo Foundation, in collaboration with the E&SED and the Implementation Support Unit of the E&SE Directorate, spanning 23 districts in KP. The funding for these projects is provided by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW), supporting 1,600 centers and 100 centers, respectively. This initiative is set to benefit over 96,000 children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. UNICEF has a long-standing partnership with the E&SED, offering technical and financial assistance to enhance educational opportunities, particularly for girls, and to improve education service delivery through evidence-based planning. Their collaboration focuses on multiple areas, including access, equity, inclusion, quality, governance, and management of education. The primary objective of this endeavor is to create a nurturing envi-

ronment for early childhood education and expand educational opportunities, especially in underserved communities, with a strong emphasis on advancing female education. Hashoo Foundation, with a rich history of promoting education, has reached 550,278 children since launching the Hashoo Schools initiative in 2002. Notably, the Child Education Support Program (CESP), benefitting 25,500 girls and 24,500 boys, and the 2022 Quality Education Program (Equip) exemplify the foundation's dedication to enhancing the educational landscape. The inauguration ceremony united key stakeholders, including representatives from UNICEF, the Elementary and Secondary Education Department (E&SED), Hashoo Foundation, the KP government, and the local community. Their significant support and contributions were greatly appreciated. Abdul Waheed, Acting Country Director of Hashoo Foundation, expressed his heartfelt satisfaction at witnessing the inception of the ECE project, a promise of a brighter future for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's children.



ISLAMABAD: A man is buying grocery from Utility store at Sitara Market as after the decline in dollar and fuel prices, such stuff also seems decline in prices, which a good gestures for the People in Federal Capital. —ONLINE

208 new dengue cases reported in Punjab

DNA

LAHORE: Another 208 new cases were reported in Punjab on Wednesday.

According to the latest data provided by the health department, a total of 7,082 confirmed dengue cases were reported across 36 districts in Punjab this year. Leading the unfortunate tally is Lahore, reporting a staggering 2834 cases, followed closely by Rawalpindi with 1,932, Multan with 755, Faisalabad with 312, and Gujranwala with 456 cases. The situation is still continuing, with Lahore reporting an additional 115 new dengue cases, Rawalpindi with 28, Multan with 23, Faisalabad with 07, Gujranwala with 23, while Sheikhupura, Kasur and Muzaffargarh each confirmed 2 new dengue cases during the same period. Attock, Gujrat, Sahiwal, Dera Ghazi Khan, Khanewal and Jhang each reported one case of dengue during 24 hours. Currently, 153 Dengue patients were receiving treatment in various hospitals across Punjab, with 78 of them in hospitals within the Lahore district. Secretary Health Punjab Ali Jaan Khan, issued a compelling plea for citizens to maintain clean and dry surroundings as a preventive measure against dengue fever. For those concerned, seeking dengue treatment, information, or wishing to register complaints, a free helpline is available through the health department at 1033.

ISSI and IPIS hold annual bilateral dialogue

FAISAL SHEKH

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) and Iran's Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) held Annual Dialogue on bilateral and regional issues today. The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) facilitated this dialogue. The distinguished speakers included Dr. Muhammad Hassan Shaykh al-Islami, Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran and President IPIS; Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Dr. Omid Babelian, Research Fellow IPIS; Amina Khan, Director CAMEA, Ambassador Hamid Reza Arshadi, Senior Research Fellow, IPIS, Ambassador Riffat Masood, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Iran; and Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman ISSI. The dialogue was divided into three working ses-

sions. The first session was titled "Pakistan-Iran Bilateral Relations", moderated by Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA. The second session was titled "Changing Dynamics in the Middle East: Prospects for Regional Integration and Connectivity" and was moderated by Arhama Siddiq, RF CAMEA. The third session was titled "The Evolving Situation in Afghanistan" and was moderated by Sarah Akram, RF CAMEA. In the Inaugural Session, Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood and Dr. Shaykh al-Islami also underscored the value attached to the institutional relationship between ISSI and IPIS and reaffirmed their commitment to intensify mutual exchanges and expand the scope of mutual collaboration between the two think-tanks. During the first working session, speakers highlighted recent progress in the Pakistan-Iran bilateral relationship, including bilateral trade surpassing \$2 billion.

The two principals also exchanged perspectives on the situation in Afghanistan and the tragedy unfolding in Palestine. They underscored the need for the world community's urgent intervention to stop unabated oppression against Palestinian civilian population and provide immediate relief assistance. The proactive role of the UN and ICJ in ensuring urgent action to address the current unacceptable situation was emphasised. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood and Dr. Shaykh al-Islami also underscored the value attached to the institutional relationship between ISSI and IPIS and reaffirmed their commitment to intensify mutual exchanges and expand the scope of mutual collaboration between the two think-tanks. During the first working session, speakers highlighted recent progress in the Pakistan-Iran bilateral relationship, including bilateral trade surpassing \$2 billion.



IGP visits Sindh High Court Bar

KARACHI: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Riffat Mukhtar Raja on Wednesday visited Sindh High Court Bar. Upon his arrival at the High Court Bar, he was received by President Bar Council Muhammad Saleem Mangrio and Honorary Secretary Amir Nawaz Warraich. In the meeting, the President and Honorary Secretary High Court Bar discussed various issues. The IGP Sindh on the occasion said it was necessary to make the criminal justice system strong and effective in order to solve crimes. He said along with its operational capabilities, the police was moving forward keeping in mind the innovation in investigative matters and measures. By doing this, on the one hand, the measures like research and investigation are strengthened, on the other hand, due to solid evidence and challan, the punishment of the arrested accused by the respective courts is also ensured. Riffat Mukhtar said as the chief of Sindh Police, his mission was to serve the people as much as possible and to make the police a friend and servant of the people in the true sense.—DNA

PFA discards 220 litre fake carbonated drinks

LAHORE: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has unearthed a fake beverages manufacturing unit producing carbonated drinks of different popular brands on Mustafabad Road in the provincial metropolis. The authority discarded 220 litres of spurious carbonated drinks, prohibited chemicals, sweeteners and hazardous artificial flavours. Further, PFA confiscated 1,000 empty bottles, 65 crates, four cylinders, five blue non-food grade drums, five filling ma-

chines, labels, stoves and filtration plants. This was informed by PFA Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar. He said that the authority also filed an FIR against the factory owner on account of adulteration and forgery. He said that the authority took action against the factory owner for violating the Punjab Pure Food Regulations. He said that fabricated fizzy drinks were being prepared with loose colours, hazardous chemicals, artificial sweeteners

and unclean tap water. Fake beverages with fake labelling were to be supplied to the different local shops in various areas of Lahore, however, the raiding team ruined their unholy ambitions by taking timely action, he said. He said that citizens were being misled by putting fake packaging on fake bottles. He said the use of substandard fizzy drinks causes problems for consumers' health like liver and kidney infections.—APP

Breast Cancer awareness week' commences at ATH'

ABBOTTABAD: Ayub Teaching Hospital (ATH) on Wednesday kicked off Breast Cancer Awareness Week which is a significant development for the women of Hazara. This healthcare initiative underscores the importance of early detection and awareness in the fight against breast cancer. During Breast Cancer Awareness Week at Ayub Teaching Hospital's Breast Cancer Clinic, over 100

women were examined in just two days. Throughout the week, women visiting the clinic and attendants accompanying patients at ATH are receiving invaluable counseling and educational assistance. A dedicated team of trained nurses and doctors, including renowned experts in the field, is leading these efforts. They are providing guidance, dismissing concerns, and

offering support to individuals affected by breast cancer. Dr. Ghazala, Chairperson of the Surgical Department, is leading this commendable team, along with Dr. Shwana, Breast Care Nurse Azra, Dr. Zilinda, and Head of Surgical Nursing Farhat, among other dedicated healthcare professionals. This Breast Cancer Awareness Week aims to educate women about the

significance of self-examination and regular breast screening in a structured manner. Early detection of breast cancer at its initial stages significantly improves the prospects of successful treatment. These efforts are part of a wider initiative by Ayub Teaching Hospital to enhance healthcare and raise awareness about critical health issues within the community.—APP

OIC commits support for Palestine amid crisis

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The representatives of all the political and religious parties of the country have urged the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to take practical measures on the situation in Palestine and announced to support the oppressed Palestinians at all levels, stating that the countries, which support the Israeli terrorists are also responsible for genocide of the Palestinians. A joint declaration issued at Palestine Solidarity Conference held here on Wednesday in the aegis of Pakistan Ulema Council, stated that the Muslim countries, which established relations with Israel should immediately sever relations with Israel and announced that the entire Muslim Ummah would observe Friday, October 20 as Palestine Martyrs' Day. In this regard peaceful protests will be demonstrated and boycott will be made of the products of Israel and



its supporting countries. So far, more than 3500 Palestinians have been martyred including children in Israeli bombardment and more than 13000 Palestinians have been injured. The conference was chaired by the Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi and leading representatives of religious and political organizations including Maulana Abubakar Hameed Sabri, Maulana Abdul Haq Muja-

hid, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Allama Zubair Abid, Allama Tahir Al Hasan, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq Patafi, Maulana Muhammad Siddiqui and others also addressed the conference. Leaders of various religious and political parties, foreign ambassadors of the Muslim countries also addressed the conference. The Charge' d Affairs of Palestine Embassy in

Pakistan, Nader Khamis Al-Turk, while addressing the conference said that more than 15000 Palestinians have been injured so far and 3500 Palestinians have been martyred. "We only ask the Muslim Ummah to stand with our rightful position, we don't want weapons from Muslim Ummah but simply want from the Islamic world to take courageous stance for the cause of Palestine", said Nader Khamis.

He said that more than 1000 Palestinians were martyred in a missile attack on Tuesday night in a brutal attacks on a Hospital in Gaza. October 7 has buried Israel's terror, arrogance, and pharaoism, said Nader Khamis Al-Turk, Charge' d'Affair of the Embassy of Palestine to Pakistan adding that We are grateful for the constant stand of the government, security forces and people of Pakistan on Palestine issue.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

OCTOBER

- Oct 01/China National Day
- Oct 01/Cyprus National Day
- Oct 01/Republic of Korea Armed Forces Day
- Oct 01/Nigeria Armed Forces Day
- Oct 02/Guinea National Day
- Oct 03/Germany Unification Day
- Oct 03/Republic of Korea National Foundation Day
- Oct 05/Indonesia Armed Forces Day
- Oct 06/Egypt Armed Forces Day
- Oct 09/Uganda Independence Day
- Oct 12/Spain National Day
- Oct 23/Hungary National Day
- October 24/United Nations United Nations Day
- Oct 25/Romania Armed Forces Day
- Oct 26/Austria National Day
- Oct 27/Turkmenistan Independence Day
- Oct 28/Czech Republic National Day
- Oct 29/Turkey Republic Day

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Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Sanjrani denounces Israeli hospital assault in Gaza

“This barbaric act of spilling Palestinian blood has led to the unimaginable suffering of innocent civilians, with over 500 women and children losing their lives”, said Chairman Senate

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, vehemently deplors and condemns the recent Israeli air strike on al-Ahli hospital in the Gaza Strip. “This barbaric act of spilling Palestinian blood has led to the unimaginable suffering of innocent civilians, with over 500 women and children losing their lives”, said Chairman Senate. Describing the attack as nothing short of a genocide perpetrated by the Zionist Israeli regime, Chairman Senate underscores that this incident is an absolute blot on humanity. It serves as a stark example of barbarism witnessed by the entire world, particularly with

the intentional targeting of medical facilities and a UN-run school, constituting an undeniable war crime that exposes the repugnant brutality of the actions taken by the Zionist regime. He called upon the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to assume a proactive role in the wake of the barbaric Israeli air strike on a hospital in Gaza. Emphasizing the urgency of the situation, he asserted that it is high time for the UNSC to intervene and address the humanitarian crisis. Furthermore, he pledged the Senate of Pakistan’s commitment to shedding light on these heinous acts of aggression by bringing the matter to the forefront utilizing forums like Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States



(PUIC) and other international forums through parliamentary channels. The Chairman strongly condemned the biased and unfair reporting perpetuated by certain international media outlets and Western journalists, accusing them of disseminating falsehoods that seek to humanize Israeli bar-

barism. He expressed deep concern over what he perceives as a tacit “License to Kill” granted to the Israeli regime by the world community, lamenting the blatant disregard for international law that this represents.

Expressing urgency for global unity, the Chairman Senate calls on the international community to stand against these heinous atrocities. The incident highlights the immediate need for a resolution to the Palestinian issue in alignment with UNSC resolutions, aiming to establish a just and lasting peace in the region. Expressing deep concern, the Chairman notes that the brazen spilling of Palestinian blood not only inflicts immediate devastation but also fuels a vicious cycle of conflict, causing widespread destruction in

the region and beyond. He urges the international community not to remain silent in the face of such blatant aggression.

“It is imperative that we collectively strive to halt this madness. Enough is enough, and concerted international efforts are essential to bring an end to the senseless violence, fostering a path toward lasting peace in the region,” he added. The Chairman called upon the global community to stand in solidarity against these egregious acts and work towards a peaceful resolution that respects the rights and dignity of Palestinians. He emphasized that such brazen acts are absolutely unacceptable and intolerable, requiring a united front to address the grave humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza.

Embracing diversity, cultivating tolerance must to counter polarization

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Only through a dispassionate dialogue, can we approach and deliberate social issues normally hard to speak about - concerning religious diversity, equal minority rights, etc. - and promote understanding, mutual respect, and critical thinking as a protection against prejudices towards different/ minority groups and extremist narratives in the society. This was the notion that figured prominently at the dialogue titled “Polarization in Pakistan and Our Responsibility”, organized by Forum for International Relations Development (FIRD) - a UK-based independent, non-governmental research and advocacy think-tank, in collaboration with Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) - an Islamabad based think tank, research and advocacy center. Mr. Toaha Qureshi MBE,

Founder Chairman, FIRD, noted that polarization in Pakistan is a deeply rooted issue that has persisted for decades, with divisions along ethnic, religious, and political lines, stymieing national unity and progress. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach that acknowledges its historical context, aims for inclusive policies, and involves dialogue characterized by a focus on discussing the solutions, not the problems.

Prominent religious scholar, Maulana Muhammad Hanif Jalandhari, underscored the importance of interfaith dialogue as a crucial means of fostering understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among people of different religious beliefs and backgrounds. He noted that interfaith dialogue provides a platform for individuals of different religious faiths to come together, discuss their beliefs, and find common ground. This can help re-

duce misunderstandings and conflicts based on religious differences, contributing to a more peaceful and harmonious society. Prof. Dr. Suleman Tahir, Vice Chancellor, Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering & Information Technology (KFUEIT) Rahim Yar Khan, noted that the educational curriculum plays a significant role in determining the state of polarization within the nation, as it not only imparts knowledge but also influences students, the future leaders, in terms of their values, beliefs, and perspectives that are key to social cohesion and peace. Back in the day, Pakistan’s curriculum for education had such features, but unfortunately, it is no longer responding to the social cohesion needs of the country. The extent to which the curriculum reflects a diverse and inclusive representation of different cultural, religious, and social groups, or conversely, pro-

motes a specific ideology, can have a profound impact on societal polarization. Educational policies that promote tolerance, diversity, and critical thinking tend to mitigate polarization, while those that emphasize a single perspective or exclude certain narratives can contribute to division and polarization within the country. Our best opportunity is to sensitize the young members of society on the importance of having a selfless vision; one that recognizes citizens’ collective responsibility for communal development and prefers fulfillment of collective development needs of the community over selfish individual needs. The onus to prepare such visionary future leadership lies on all the stakeholders including parents, universities, and madrassas. The change that we envision can only be sown through self-accountability, discipline, and transparency.

ICCI calls for focusing on export of manpower

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Faad Waheed, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that remittances of the Overseas Pakistanis are the backbone of the national economy as they account for more than total exports of goods and services annually and contribute significantly to improving the country’s foreign reserves. He stressed that to further increase the volume of foreign exchange reserves, the government should make strong efforts to explore new markets for increasing the export of manpower across the globe that would help improve the foreign exchange and the overall economy. He said this while talking to Muhammad Jawad Sohrab Malik, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development during a meeting with him along with Asad Hafeez Kiyani Chairman, Shakeel Ahmed Abbasi Vice Chairman and Faheem Iqbal Chaudhry former Senior Vice Chairman, Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association (POEPA). Faad Waheed said that Pakistan is the 5th largest country of the world in terms of population with a large pool of human resource and stressed that the government should equip its manpower with the latest skills and knowledge to improve their prospects of their export to potential markets. He said that Bangladesh has exported over 1100,000 workers during the year ending June 2023, but Pakistan’s export of manpower during the 11 months of the outgoing fiscal year remained just around 372000, which is not an impressive figure. He said that many countries in the Middle East, Europe, South East Asia are in high demand of skilled labor and the government should provide the demand-driven skills to its workforce that would increase their export and strengthen the economy. Muhammad Jawad Sohrab Malik, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development said that the government is determined to harness the the potential.

Agri exports witness increase of 13% in 2022-23

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) says the value of agricultural exports in 2022-23 was \$5.2 billion, an increase of 13% from the previous year. This growth in agricultural exports was driven by improved productivity, better prices, and increased demand in the global market. In this regard we may also invest in modernising our agriculture sector by adopting new technologies, enhancing water management, improving seed quality, expanding cultivated land for high-value crops, strengthening linkages between processors and growers, and providing incentives for agro-processing. Jahan Ara Wattoo, Vice President of PBF said foreign direct investment in

corporate farming holds the potential to benefit the country’s agriculture sector in offsetting the impending hovering threat of food insecurity besides meeting food staple needs of the people. Speaking to a delegation of progressive farmers, she said Pakistan is in dire need of foreign direct investment (FDI) to improve its foreign exchange reserves and to bridge the investment gap the country is currently experiencing. Such investments are crucial to boost its agricultural and industrial production, which can lead to job creation, increased exports, and the generation of additional tax revenues, she added. Wattoo said several countries, like India and Indonesia, went for public-private partnerships with foreign partners to increase local

production of high-yielding seeds. This initiative aims to enhance the country’s crop productivity and farm incomes by ensuring the availability of affordable, high-yielding seeds. Such partnerships side-stepped the complex and lengthy process of developing new cultivars, she added. She said in the realm of corporate farming, an investor needs capital investment for acquiring or leasing land, procurement of agricultural machinery, land development and irrigation and water resources development with high-efficiency irrigation solutions, where water availability is limited. Expanding the country’s cultivated area through corporate farming can also increase oilseed production to save a huge amount of foreign exchange.

Ram, lentil pulses to be grown over 874,000 hectares

ISLAMABAD: The government has established a target of cultivating pulses across 874,000 hectares during the current Rabi season as the initiative is driven by the dual objectives of meeting domestic demand and reducing reliance on imported commodities, thus safeguarding essential foreign exchange reserves of the country. During the period under review, it has been planned to cultivate gram pulses on over 860,000 hectares and lentils on 14,000 hectares, respectively, said an official in the Ministry of Nation-

al Food Security and Research. In alignment with these objectives, production targets for pulses, encompassing gram and lentil varieties, have been set at over 419,000 tons to meet the domestic demand for legumes, he told APP here on Wednesday. The Punjab Province aims to cultivate gram pulse on 786,000 hectares, yielding an estimated 322,000 tons, he said adding that gram pulses are projected to cover 22,000 hectares in Sindh, yielding approximately 23,000 tons of this leguminous crop. Simultaneously, gram pulses

are slated for cultivation on 30,000 hectares in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 40,000 hectares in Balochistan provinces, with anticipated yields of 15,000 tons and 49,000 tons respectively, he added. Meanwhile, it is anticipated that lentils will be cultivated on 14,000 hectares, resulting in an approximate production of 9,000 tons, he said adding that the major chunk of this pulse was being imported to comply with the local requirements. To elaborate further, he said that Punjab’s mandate for lentil production is 3,000 tons.—APP

38 FIRs registered for violating dengue SOPs in 24 hours

RAWALPIND: District Health Authority(DHA) had lodged 38 FIRs and sealed two premises on violations of anti-dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours. District Coordinator Epidemiology Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood Wednesday said that the health department, in collaboration with allied departments, had issued tickets to 13 and imposed a fine of Rs 134,800 on violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours. Presently, the health officer informed that 114 patients were admitted to different health facilities in the district of which 90 were confirmed cases while 1,936 were discharged after treatment. Dr Sajjad added that with the arrival of 28 more cases during the last 24 hours, the district’s total tally had reached 2,047 confirmed cases. Among the new cases, he informed that 13 patients had arrived from the Potohar town urban area, 11 from the Municipal Corporation, and two of each from Chaklala Cantonment and Potohar rural area.—APP

Interior Minister condemns Israeli bombing on Hospital

ISLAMABAD: Interim Minister for Interior Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti on Wednesday strongly condemned Israel’s barbaric bombing of a hospital in Gaza killing hundreds of innocent Palestinians. The minister expressed deep sorrow and regret over more than 500 martyrs in the attack and said that such barbaric attacks on wounded, patients and refugees in hospital is inhuman act. He said hospitals and medical staff are protected under international humanitarian law and targeting civilian populations and property is a violation of international law and a war crime. The entire Pakistani nation is praying for Muslim Palestinian brothers and sisters and their hearts beat with the oppressed Palestinians, said the Interior Minister. He urged the international community to take immediate steps to end the Israeli bombardment and siege on Gaza and asked for immediate permission to supply food and medicine to Gaza.—APP

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Briefs

Tractor production increase 44.98%

ISLAMABAD: The production of farm tractors in the country witnessed an increase of 44.98 per cent to 11,586 units during the first three months of the financial year 2023-24, against the production of 7,991 units during the same months last year 2022-23. During July-September, the production of trucks witnessed a decreasing trend as it went down from 946 units as compared to 391, showing a decline of 58.66 per cent, according to the Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA). Production of pickups, Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs) and Jeeps also dipped by 35.80 per cent to 5,827 units during the months under review from 9,077 units during the fiscal year 2022-23. The production of buses witnessed a decline of 60.48 per cent from 248 units to 98 units during the fiscal year 2024, the PAMA added. Meanwhile, the production of passenger cars also declined to 15,993 units against the production of 31,417 units during July-September, the data revealed.—APP

President urges int'l community to hold Israel accountable

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday strongly condemned the brutal Israeli attack on Al-Ahly Al-Mamadany Hospital in Gaza that killed hundreds of people, including women and children. He said the international community must hold Israel accountable for its war crimes and take urgent measures to bring an immediate halt to the Israeli bombardment and the ongoing siege of Gaza. The president expressed his deep shock over the tragic loss of innocent lives due to the reckless Israeli airstrike, saying that Israel had trampled all international and moral norms by attacking a hospital, where patients were seeking emergency treatment.—APP

Aneeq attends 'World Fatwa Conference' in Egypt, urges unity

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed on Wednesday participated in 8th World Fatwa Conference being held at the Egyptian Fatwa House under the umbrella of General Secretariat of Fatwa Houses and Bodies in the world in Cairo, Egypt. The conference, organized under the auspices of President of Egypt, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, brought together scholars, ministers and Muftis from 100 countries, said a statement issued here. During the conference, he extended his sincere gratitude to Dr. Shawki Ibrahim Allam, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, for his warm invitation and hospitality. He emphasized the importance of discussing the topic of 'Fatwa and the Challenges of the Third Millennium' in recognizing the unique and multifaceted challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah in this era.—APP

HEC deliberates on capacity-building policy

Several HEDP initiatives are focused on supporting the tertiary education system of Pakistan composed of Affiliated Colleges across the country. The HEDP team has, thus, been closely working with various HEDs across Pakistan to roll out its project activities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC), under its Higher Education Development in Pakistan (HEDP) project, conducted a one-day consultative seminar on 'College Faculty Professional Development Policy Dialogue' in collaboration with the Higher Education Department (HED) Punjab.

The Directors Colleges from respective Punjab Divisions and selected Principals serving in Rawalpindi Division attended the consultative seminar. Project Coordinator HEDP Dr. Mahmood-Hasan Butt, in his keynote address, emphasised the need for a well-structured policy for the professional development of college faculty, highlighting the importance of faculty development in improving standards of teaching and inculcating creativity among students through quality teaching. Deputy Secretary (Reforms and Training) Mr. Nadeem Asghar, who represented the HED Punjab, appreciated HEC in general and HEDP in particular for assisting HED Punjab in formulating the college faculty professional development policy. The inaugural session was followed by focused group discussions led by the Deputy Secretary with Directors Colleges and Principals to formulate the details of upcoming capacity-building exercises. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Educa-



tion Testing Council (ETC) Mr. Iftikhar Mahmood, along with his team and key HEDP staff, delivered sessions on Assessment, Affiliating System and Quality Assurance. The seminar was the preliminary outcome of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by HEC. Under the HEDP project, an MoU was earlier signed with the Punjab Higher Education Department (HED), Government of Punjab, to build the capacity of teachers

at Affiliated Colleges. As per the MoU, HEC will assist the Punjab Government in faculty professional development and staff training policy of HED Punjab. This includes providing technical support around conducting training need assessments, developing SOP for delivery of training, evaluating the learning outcomes, and periodically reviewing the training policy. However, the Punjab Government will provide necessary local ac-

cess to premises and resources and designate a focal person(s) to HEC for this activity. Under the policy, various kinds of professional trainings will be identified along with timelines to be mandated with proper assessment. The training performance will be reflected in the career growth and promotion of faculty and staff. The Affiliated Colleges across provinces are primarily offering undergraduate degrees but have limited capaci-

ties/resources and are not as well versed with the latest trends of teaching and learning methodologies as compared to large universities and thus need support. Several HEDP initiatives are focused on supporting the tertiary education system of Pakistan composed of Affiliated Colleges across the country. The HEDP team has, thus, been closely working with various HEDs across Pakistan to roll out its project activities.

Tax income must increase to give some relief to people

Shutter power and political forces are involved in this sin, and people hope that this system will be reformed, for which the caretaker government will have to take the necessary steps

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Wednesday that due to the country's economic condition and IMF sanctions, the government cannot give any major relief to the people. The government will have to take the necessary steps for the IMF review in November, and the only way to provide relief to the people is to try to increase tax revenue, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that according to a re-

cent World Bank report on Pakistan, the budget deficit is increasing, which should be taken seriously. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that instead of taking loans continuously, the tax system should be improved. He said that taxes should be imposed on sectors with political influence so that the tax system can be balanced and broad-based. In order to improve the condition of the people, taxes should be imposed on agricultural income, real estate, retail, and wholesale sectors. By improving the tax system, the government will have an income of thousands of billions of rupees, and it will be possible to stop taking loans on the

strictest terms, he noticed. This income can be used to provide relief to the people, and the conditions for the remaining IMF loan can be eased. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the poor people did not play any role in bringing the country's economic conditions to default, but they are the ones who get the punishment. Shutter power and political forces are involved in this sin, and people hope that this system will be reformed, for which the caretaker government will have to take the necessary steps. Pakistan is a prosperous country, but now it is among the poorest countries, with the world's fifth-largest population while poverty and unemployment are increas-

ing. Many people are no longer able to cope with the situation, and many people living in cities are taking their children out of school and sending their families back to the villages from the cities, making the future of the new generation dark. Due to inflation and unemployment, many workers are also leaving the cities and going to the villages, which is creating a new crisis that has become necessary to stop. Elections are approaching, and the people should ask the politicians who are seeking votes about the country's conditions and get assurances about just taxation; otherwise, any clear change in the country's condition will be impossible, and the people will continue to suffer.

Foolproof security being ensured at Diplomatic Enclave

Citizens are also urged to promptly report any perceived suspicious activity or individuals to the helpline "Pucar-15"

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan the Islamabad Capital Police is ceaselessly dedicated to preserving law and order within the federal capital, a public relations officer said. He said that, to fortify the security of the Diplomatic Enclave, police personnel stationed at different entry gates diligently executing their responsibilities, meticulously verifying the particulars of individuals accessing the diplomatic enclave and meticulously documenting vehicle information. The diplomatic enclave encompasses pivotal government and private establishments, diplomatic missions, and other vital assets, necessitating an unwavering focus on their safeguarding. Citizens entering the diplomatic enclave are now mandated to display their identification cards. Additionally, individuals with private business within the diplomatic enclave are urged to carry their requisite documentation and extend their full cooperation to on-duty personnel. Senior officers have directed the personnel on duty to uphold the highest standards of diligence and professionalism, cultivating a positive rapport with citizens. Citizens are also urged to promptly report any perceived suspicious activity or individuals to the helpline "Pucar-15".—APP

ANF recovers 466 kg drugs in 4 operations; arrests 6

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations across the country managed to recover 466 kg of drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that in an operation at Pakistan International Container Terminal Karachi, ANF recovered 12 kg heroin from a container booked for Maldives. Heroin was being smuggled in salt packets. A resident of Karachi was also arrested during the operation. In the second operation, ANF foiled a drug smuggling attempt from Quetta to Sukkur and recovered 450 kg hashish from two vehicles.—APP

Famous TV actor Salim Nasir remembered

ISLAMABAD: Famous television actor Salim Nasir was remembered on the occasion of his death anniversary on Wednesday. Born on November 15, 1944, in Nagpur in an educated family, Salim Nasir had all the ingredients necessary to fulfil his ambition. He had a successful career in TV and film. Salim Nasir made his professional cinematic debut in a film called 'Zaibun-Nisa'. He earned accolades for his acting skills in many television plays, especially Aakhri Chatan, Nisahan-e-Haider, Un-Kahi, Dastak and Aangan Terha. At the age of 45 years, Nasir suffered a heart attack on September 24, 1989. On Thursday, October 19 he experienced signs of extreme heart congestion and breathed his last. He was rushed to the hospital but expired before any medical treatment could be provided. Salim Nasir was honoured with Pakistan's highest achievement award in the field of acting, 'The President's Pride of Performance Award' posthumously.—APP

IRSA releases 122,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 122,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 102,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1528.92 feet and was 130.92 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 37,200 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1211.50 feet, which was 161.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.—APP

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Chinese enterprise eyeing enhanced 'soft connectivity' with Pakistan and others

DNA

BEIJING: "Having established cooperation with 157 countries in the world including Pakistan, we aim to take a step further to leverage our advantages in the whole infrastructure industrial chain and promote the 'soft connectivity' of rules and standards and people-to-people exchanges with the Belt and Road countries". This was stated by Wang Tongzhou, Chairman of China Communications Construction in an interview with China Economic Net (CEN) after the Belt and Road CEO Conference held here. Wang Tongzhou, Chairman of China Communications Construction in an interview at the Third Belt and



Road Forum for International Cooperation [Photo/China Economic Net] The construction company has undertaken a series of major infrastructure projects in Pakistan, including the KKH Phase-II, Gwadar Port, Eastbay Express Way etc., upgrading facilities for Pakistani people and breaking local technical boundaries. "As iron brothers, we have full confidence in our

cooperation with Pakistan", Mr. Wang told CEN. For him, technology transfer is of critical importance in enhancing soft connectivity. "On one hand, frontier technologies such as IoT, big data, AI, etc. will be more widely employed. Through digital connectivity, more smart transportation projects will be built", he said. In addition, green, low-carbon technologies are expected to be applied throughout the process of as many projects as possible to empower Belt and Road countries to achieve energy conservation and emission goals as the world is moving towards green, low-carbon, intelligent development", he added. By transferring technologies, standards are shared and chances for peo-

ple-to-people connections are created. According to Mr. Wang, all of the six projects for which agreements have been signed at the Belt and Road CEO Conference put priority on people-to-people connectivity and green technologies. The Conference was the first official event of the ongoing Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. Nearly 300 Chinese and international delegates signed agreements at the conference, involving 68 countries and covering projects in infrastructure, clean energy, artificial intelligence, financial services, modern agriculture, rail transit, etc. As of June 2023, China had signed 107 documents with standardization bodies in 65 countries.

Chinese and Pakistani companies sign MoU for chili farming

DNA

BEIJING: Chinese and Pakistani companies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here at the Pakistan Embassy to enhance chili production in Pakistan. The agreement underscores the growing economic partnership between the two nations and aims to spice up agricultural endeavors in Pakistan. From the Pakistani side, JW group signed with Qingdao SCO International Trade Group Co. and Qingdao Pinpinxiao Food Co, according to China Economic Net (CEN). The signing of the MoU was witnessed by the Minister of Commerce, Industries and Production, Dr. Gohar Ejaz, and other Pakistani officials from the Pakistan embassy and the Ministry of Commerce.

Taxila police arrest three dacoits

RAWALPINDI: In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police have busted a gang and arrested three dacoits besides recovering Rs 78,000 cash, three motorcycles, 10 mobile phones, weapons and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Taxila Police arrested three accused namely Asadullah, Alam Zaib and Khalal Khan, who were allegedly involved in various dacoits, and street crime cases. He informed that the police team constituted under the supervision of SHO Taxila Police Station on the directives of SP Potohar, Muhammad Waqas Khan conducted a raid and managed to net the criminals who were record holders.

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EU prioritizes strategic autonomy for crucial interests

From Paris to Brussels to other European capitals, there have been talks about the European Union's strategic autonomy. For example, French President Emmanuel Macron famously said European nations should pursue a path of their own, rather than become "America's followers". After trade protectionism intensified in the US, especially after former US president Donald Trump announced his notorious "America first" strategy and denied climate change, the EU reaffirmed its role as an upholder of multilateralism. Free and fair international trade has been instrumental to Europe's prosperity. That's why even as Washington weaponizes trade to upend geopolitical competitions, Brussels has maintained a distance from the US and proposed the strategy of "de-risking" instead of "decoupling" from China. Listening to EU decision-makers talking about defending free trade, one tends to take their commitment to free market for granted. But if European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Charles Michel do reach an agreement with US President Joe Biden at their summit meeting on creating a joint tariff zone, targeting Chinese steel and aluminum imports, it will not be a matter of narrative alone. Under the proposed "Global Arrangement on Sustainable Steel and Aluminum", which is meant to protect US and European producers, EU member states would impose higher duties on imports from allegedly "nonmarket" economies – 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum – according to US media outlet Politico. The so-called "green steel club" intends to exclude countries such as China with some of the membership criteria being explicitly targeted at China. Designed as a solution to the EU-US dispute on steel and aluminum, the agreement will not only deal a blow to the EU's trade ties with China, but will raise serious questions about its commitment to free trade as well. Using national security as a pretext, Trump imposed punitive tariffs on all steel and aluminum imports, including those from the EU. While the compromise deal the EU and the US are expected to reach will likely exempt European imports, it will cause endless troubles for Brussels in the long run and on a wider range of issues. To begin with, it will tarnish the EU's image as a staunch free trade advocate, undermine its pursuit of strategic autonomy, and sow discords between the EU and China, which have been mutually beneficial trade and economic partners. As Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Hungarian counterpart Peter Szijjarto, who is in Beijing to attend the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, China and the EU are partners, not rivals, and their common interests far outweigh their differences. What Szijjarto said in response is an apt analysis of the EU's policy: "de-risking" is exposing Europe to risks.



Gaza bleeds, urgent aid needed now

The rapidly spiralling situation in the Gaza Strip, where more than two million people are trapped as Israeli airstrikes continue to flatten the territory. In retaliation to the deadly attack that Hamas launched on October 7 – in which 1,400 people were killed, per Tuesday's tally, and many taken hostage – the Israeli government has placed the Palestinian enclave under full siege and has been bombing it every day in an act of war. So far, more than 2,800 people have been killed in Gaza, with thousands more injured. It is feared that at least 1,000 Palestinians are trapped under the rubble of buildings demolished by Israeli bombing. People have been killed in the occupied West Bank, too. With food, water and fuel supplies cut off for more than a week due to the siege, a humanitarian crisis is unfolding in Gaza where people are on the brink of starvation and dehydration. The Israel Defense Forces claims it is "concerned" about the situation, but there is no sign of a ceasefire or the opening of the Rafah crossing at the Gaza-Egypt border for transporting humanitarian aid to the besieged civilians, as all diplomatic efforts to that end have failed so far. While humanitarian workers wait at the border with life-saving aid, people on the Palestinian side continue to languish in despair – with "no food, no water, no electricity, no internet. I feel like I'm losing humanity," as a 55-year-old Palestinian woman described her experience. The real dividing line in Israel-Palestine

Israel, we must say, has broken international laws by putting the entire population of Gaza under siege in the name of self-defence. Israel's right to self-defence doesn't justify its barbaric persecution of innocent Palestinians. It is evident that the Israeli government is subjecting Gaza residents to collective punishment, which is in complete violation of the Geneva Convention. With an Israeli ground offensive looming, the situation will only get worse if the international community, especially Israel's long-standing allies, don't play a more proactive role to protect the Palestinian civilians. We hope that the US president, who is scheduled for a visit to Israel on Wednesday, will remind it of the equal value and dignity of Palestinian lives. World leaders must do everything to spare them from what Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu has promised to be a "mighty vengeance" against Hamas. Palestinians deserve the same sympathy, on the same scale, and with the same vigour, as any other persecuted people in the world.

Cipher a hanging sword

Qamar Bashir



On numerous occasions, ciphers related to the Press Section were shared with me in person, and I ensured they were safely returned to maintain their confidential status. At that time, I had no inkling that these routine embassy ciphers would become so perilous, putting the lives of the former Prime Minister and former Foreign Minister at grave risk, particularly following the amendment of the Official Secrets Act in 2023, which now imposes the death penalty for violations of the official secrets. In general, government correspondence is often classified into different levels of sensitivity, such as "Top Secret," "Secret"

As the Press Minister at the Embassy of Pakistan in France, I was acutely aware of the sensitivity and significance of handling confidential ciphers. Almost every day, the Ambassador and trusted staff sent ciphers to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, addressing matters of utmost confidentiality.

On numerous occasions, ciphers related to the Press Section were shared with me in person, and I ensured they were safely returned to maintain their confidential status. At that time, I had no inkling that these routine embassy ciphers would become so perilous, putting the lives of the former Prime Minister and former Foreign Minister at grave risk, particularly following the amendment of the Official Secrets Act in 2023, which now imposes the death penalty for violations of the official secrets. In general, government correspondence is often classified into different levels of sensitivity, such as "Top Secret," "Secret," "Confidential," or other designations. The highest levels of classification, such as "Top Secret," are reserved for the most sensitive information. Access to classified information is typically granted on a "need-to-know" basis. This means that only individuals who require access to specific classified information for their official duties are granted that access. In the context of diplomatic communication, the term "cipher" is commonly used to refer to a coded or encrypted message. Diplomatic ciphers are employed to protect sensitive or confidential information from unauthorized access or interception during transmission. These codes are usually complex and may involve various cryptographic techniques to ensure security. Diplomatic ciphers are essential for maintaining the confidentiality of diplomatic correspondence. They are employed when discussing matters of national security, sensitive negotiations, confidential information, or any communication that needs to be shielded from prying eyes.

Though, typically the heads of the state or government are authorized to declassify the cipher information but they can do so after following an elaborate procedure which may involve, seeking formal recommendations and views from the concerned ministries, the agencies, departments or institutions of national security and safety and other relevant departments before declaring any cipher subject matter as declassified. Even when the head of state and government take such decision he is required to remove any sensitive parts of the cipher which can jeopardize national security or could potentially harm the relationship with another friendly or important country. If the head of state or government discloses classified or cipher information in a public meeting without following the established protocol and proper declassification procedures, it can have serious legal, political, and national security implications. It can potentially harm national security by revealing sensitive intelligence, military operations, or diplomatic negotiations. It can lead to political backlash, undermining the leader's credibility and reputation.

Opposition parties, lawmakers, and the public may demand accountability and investigations. In some cases, a head of state or government who engages in such behavior may face calls for resignation or impeachment, the severity of the response depends on the nature of the disclosed information and the political climate, erode trust within the government and among intelligence and security agencies, career professionals may lose confidence in the leader's

ability to protect sensitive information, can strain diplomatic relations with other countries, potentially leading to diplomatic crises. The consequences of such actions can be significant; however, the specific outcome may depend on the legal and political systems in place in a given country and the extent of the breach. Legal processes, investigations, and, if necessary, legal action can follow such incidents to ensure accountability. According to one legal opinion, the Prime Minister or Finance Minister of Pakistan were not authorized to disclose the cipher to the public as the Official Secrets Act 2023 clearly states that any classified information, including diplomatic correspondence, cannot be disclosed to the public without the prior approval of the appropriate authorities. It is a serious crime, and the consequences can be punished with imprisonment for up to 14 years, or with the death sentence in certain cases. The next important question is, who is the proper authority for seeking permission to disclose the cipher matter to the public? In the case of the Prime Minister or Foreign Minister, the proper authority for seeking permission to disclose classified information, including cipher matter, to the public is the National Security Council (NSC), a high-level body that is responsible for advising the Prime Minister on matters of national security. The NSC meets regularly to discuss matters of national security and to make recommendations to the Prime Minister. If the Prime Minister or Foreign Minister wishes to disclose classified information to the public, they must first seek the approval of the NSC. The NSC when making the decision will consider the factors such as the sensitivity of the information, the potential impact on national security and the public interest. If the NSC approves the disclosure of the information, the Prime Minister or Foreign Minister will then need to obtain the approval of the Cabinet. The Cabinet is the highest decision-making body in the government, and it is responsible for approving all major decisions. Once the Cabinet has approved the disclosure of the information, the Prime Minister or Foreign Minister can then make the information public. If official procedure is not followed, the provision of the amended Official Secret Act 2023 can be evoked. The original section of the Act, Section 9, states that anyone who discloses classified information without authorization can be punished with imprisonment for up to 14 years. The amended section adds a new subsection, Subsection (3), which states that anyone who discloses classified information with the intent to injure the interests of Pakistan or to benefit a foreign power can be punished with death.

The amended section also expands the definition of classified information to include "any secret official code or password." This means that anyone who discloses a secret official code or password without authorization can now be punished with death. This is a significant increase in the severity of the punishment for this offense. The amended section of the Official Secrets Act has not yet been tested in court.

It is possible that the courts will interpret the amended section in a way that limits its scope. However, it is also possible that the courts will uphold the amended section in its entirety, which would mean that anyone who is found guilty of disclosing classified information with intent to injure the interests of Pakistan or to benefit a foreign power could be sentenced to death.

In many countries, the heads of the state or government are immune from prosecution during their time in office. Therefore it is exceedingly rare for heads of state or government to be punished for disclosing the content of diplomatic ciphers to the general public. Disclosure of diplomatic ciphers would typically be an action taken while in office and is often a matter of national security and foreign relations, subject to legal and political processes that differ from those applied to ordinary citizens therefore, the legal actions related to disclosures of classified information are generally directed at lower-ranking officials or employees. For example, Daniel Ellsberg, a former military analyst, leaked the "Pentagon Papers" to The New York Times in 1971. The Pentagon Papers were a classified Department of Defense study of U.S. political-military involvement in Vietnam from 1945 to 1967. Ellsberg faced charges under the Espionage Act but was not ultimately convicted. Chelsea Manning, a former U.S. Army intelligence analyst, leaked classified documents to WikiLeaks in 2010, including diplomatic cables and military information. Manning was convicted of multiple charges under the Espionage Act in 2013. Edward Snowden, a former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor, leaked classified information in 2013, revealing extensive surveillance programs. Snowden faced charges under the Espionage Act but was granted asylum in Russia. It is relatively uncommon for former heads of state or government to be sued and punished for disclosing diplomatic ciphers after leaving office. Diplomatic secrets are typically subject to the authority and discretion of the sitting government or head of state. Once out of office, former leaders often enjoy certain legal protections or immunity from prosecution for actions taken during their time in power. However, the extent of legal protection varies by country, and the political circumstances surrounding the disclosure play a significant role. Laws and legal systems differ, so it is possible, albeit rare, for legal action to be taken against former leaders.

The former Prime Minister of Pakistan does not have immunity from charges related to the disclosure of cipher content under the Official Secrets Act 2023. This law does not provide any special protection for former government officials, including former Prime Ministers. Parliamentary privilege, which shields members of Parliament from prosecution for statements made within Parliament, does not extend to disclosures made outside of parliamentary proceedings, such as the release of cipher information.

Consequently, the former Prime Minister is subject to the same legal provisions as any other Pakistani citizen and could face prosecution for revealing classified information, carrying penalties of up to 14 years in prison or even the death penalty. While the former Prime Minister argues that his actions were justified in the public interest and that his previous immunity protects him, these arguments await judicial determination. It's essential to emphasize that the former Prime Minister is considered innocent until proven guilty and retains the right to a fair trial and the opportunity to mount a legal defense against the charges.

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

All-Weather Friendship: The Evolving Pakistan-China Relationship

A.R Ansari

China has been a staunch ally of Pakistan at international forums, particularly on issues related to Kashmir. China has supported Pakistan's stance on the Kashmir conflict and has shielded Pakistan from diplomatic isolation in the United Nations and other international organizations. China is holding its third Belt and Road forum in Beijing where representatives from over 130 countries are joining to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative

Pakistan and China's relationship is often referred to as an "all-weather friendship" owing to strong political, economic, and military ties. This friendship has evolved over several decades, based on mutual interests and cooperation in the fields of economic development, military and defense, and infrastructure projects, cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts have also grown, with an increasing number of Pakistani students studying in China and a surge in Chinese expatriates living and working in Pakistan. Despite the strong ties, there have been challenges in the Pakistan-China relationship like concerns about the terms and conditions of Chinese loans and investments under CPEC, owing to Pakistan's growing debt burden and security concerns in the border region. China has been a staunch ally of Pakistan at international forums, particularly on issues related to Kashmir. China has supported Pakistan's stance on the Kashmir conflict and has shielded Pakistan from diplomatic isolation in the United Nations and other international organizations. China is holding its third Belt and Road forum in Beijing where representatives from over 130 countries are joining to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a massive infrastructure and economic development project initiated by China. It aims to create a network of roads, railways, ports, and other infrastructure that connects China to Europe, Africa, and other parts of Asia. CPEC is a flagship project of the BRI initiative—a collection of infrastructure projects that include the construction of highways, railways, pipelines, and the development of the strategic Gwadar Port. The world has witnessed in 1979, one of the world's highest and most spectacular international road connections

Karakoram Highway as evidence of all-weather friendship, that connects Pakistan and China, making it one of the world's highest and most challenging engineering feats. The Karakoram Highway holds strategic significance, providing China with access to the Arabian Sea via Gwadar, very essential for China's energy and trade interests. The Karakoram Highway stretches for approximately 1,300 kilometers (810 miles) from Hasan Abdal near Islamabad to the Chinese city of Kashgar in Xinjiang. The Karakoram highway is subject to harsh weather conditions, especially in the winter, and has faced issues such as landslides and road closures due to natural disasters. Pakistan's Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, visit to China sets the stage for a new era for CPEC projects, particularly in the acceleration of the Thakot-Raikot section—a critical segment of the Karakoram Highway, known for its sharp bends and limitations. It is poised for an overhaul, of state-of-the-art tunnels, for reducing travel time and enhancing safety. The road classification will be advanced from Class 4 to Class 2, signaling an upgrade in its quality and the permitted speed limit will be increased, promising swifter and more efficient travel. This development extends beyond mere travel enhancements. It holds the potential to revolutionize cargo transport, making it more efficient and cost-effective. The improved road network will support heavier cargo loads, streamlining the transportation of goods with greater ease and efficiency. The Karakoram Highway looms as a prominent highlight of this historic partnership. It signifies more than just a road; it's a symbol of friendship, cooperation, and a shared vision for a brighter, more interconnected future.

The Highway Research & Training Centre also stands as one of the pivotal projects, prominently taking

center stage as the primary highlight of Prime Minister Kakar's visit. A promising Joint Research Program is envisioned with the Government of China from 2023 to 2027, aiming to foster collaboration and innovation in various domains of highway engineering. A formal memorandum of joint research extension will be finalized and entered into during the PM's visit to China. This program aims to foster collaboration and innovation in various domains of highway engineering. This extension is poised to be a cornerstone of the cooperation in the road infrastructure while the National Highway Authority is a vanguard of such cooperation. It is agreed to construct the Highway Research and Training Center spread over 530 acres by a Chinese Contractor/ Consultant under a Chinese Grant of Rs.15 billion. It includes infrastructure, a Test track, and indoor and outdoor lab equipment which will be handed over to NHA for operation after completion and required training. Various research projects in Reclaimed Asphalt, Bridges and Tunnelling, training and degree courses in China, development of engineering design manuals and standards for Pakistan are some of the key target areas of this project.

Pakistan-China relationship is poised to continue evolving, adapting to the ever-changing global landscape. With a shared commitment to deepening ties and fostering enduring peace, this friendship remains a cornerstone of stability in a rapidly shifting world. Pakistan and China are not just strategic allies but genuine friends, encouraging a legacy of collaboration that continues to shape the future. The Pakistan-China relationship serves as a compelling case study of how nations can accomplish prosperity and progress through resolute partnership, surpassing borders and generating a conduit to a happier future for all.

Briefs

Pakistan committed to work...

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"I am hopeful that together we can shape a world with the bonds that unite us together, rather than the forces that divide us," he said. The prime minister congratulated President Xi Jinping for his revolutionary idea of the Belt and Road Initiative launched 10 years ago that proved instrumental in bringing common development and shared prosperity. He termed enhanced connectivity a profound factor in development and progress in the modern age of globalization. "The BRI's concept of shared future for mankind is not about road and railway infrastructure, but also to create linkages among civilizations and nations," he said. He mentioned that the world faced a number of challenges including post-pandemic effects, the divide between the developed and the impoverished, peace, and food security.

US vetoes UNSC...

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humanitarian aid access to Gaza. China's U.N. Ambassador Zhang Jun accused the United States of leading council members to believe that the resolution could be adopted after it did not comment or express opposition during negotiations. "The final result of the vote is nothing short of unbelievable," he told the council. Thomas-Greenfield said the United States was disappointed the draft resolution made no mention of Israel's rights of self defense and she blamed Hamas for the Gaza humanitarian crisis. "We're working with Israel, its neighbors, the United Nations and other partners to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. It is critical that food, medicine, water and fuel begin flowing into Gaza as soon as possible," she said. "Let's be clear: Hamas' own actions have brought this on - this severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza."

Elections put on...

FORM PAGE 01

who was wrong and who was right," Bilawal, who served as the foreign minister under Shehbaz Sharif in the PDM-led government, said. He said the PPP had to swallow the "bitter pill" of elections moving past 90 days, but asked all political parties to back his party in demanding the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to announce the date for general elections. The PDM government's term ended in August and the polls, under the Constitution, were set to be held within 90 days, but as a free census was conducted, new delimitations halted the polls. The ECP had last month announced that the general polls will be held in January next year, but the final delimitations are still awaited.

Pakistan for end...

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"Israel must bring an immediate end to its campaign of terror with an immediate ceasefire, lifting the siege of Gaza, and rescinding forced evacuation of Palestinians from their homes," he said while underscoring the need for "secure and unrestricted" humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza. Terming the non-implementation of the two-state solution as the reason behind the ongoing conflict, he reiterated Pakistan's support for the Palestinians' right to self-determination and called for "an early establishment of a viable, secure, contiguous and sovereign state of Palestine on the basis of the pre-June 1967 borders and with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital." The foreign minister also held a meeting his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan on the sidelines of the OIC's ministerial meet. "We stressed the urgent need for cessation of hostilities & protection of civilians in Gaza," Jilani said on his X account.

FIFA WC Qualifiers

Messi scores twice against Peru, Neymar suffers injury

The win was Uruguay's first over Brazil in a World Cup qualifying fixture since a 1-0 victory over the Selecao in Montevideo in July 2001

SPORTS DESK

BUENOS AIRES: The Inter Miami star took his international goal tally to 106 with strikes in the 32nd and 42nd minutes at Lima's Estadio Nacional. Messi's first-half brace left reigning world champions Argentina on top of the South American qualifying table with 12 points from four games, five points clear of Uruguay, Brazil and Venezuela, who all have seven points. Restored to the starting line-up after coming off the bench in last Thursday's 1-0 win over Paraguay, Messi showed no sign of the injuries that have recently limited his appearances in Major League Soccer. The 36-year-old crashed home an emphatic opener just after the half-hour mark, then added a second 10 minutes later after good work by Enzo Fernandez down the left flank. The win leaves Argentina firmly on track to return to the World Cup finals in 2026, which are being expanded to include 48 teams and will be co-hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada. The top six teams in South America's 10-team qualifying competition will be guaranteed a place at the finals. While Argentina continued their serene progress through qualifying, arch-rivals Brazil



suffered a nightmare 2-0 defeat in Montevideo, crashing to a first loss against Uruguay in 22 years. The defeat was compounded by the sight of veteran forward Neymar being stretchered off just before half-time with what appeared to be a knee injury. Uruguay's Darwin Nunez struck with a

bullet header on 42 minutes to open the scoring in a dour first half at the Estadio Centenario. The Liverpool striker then played a pivotal role in Uruguay's second, holding up the ball well from a throw-in and cutting back for Nicolas de la Cruz to fire past Brazil goalkeeper Ederson on 77 min-

utes, sealing a 2-0 victory.

The win was Uruguay's first over Brazil in a World Cup qualifying fixture since a 1-0 victory over the Selecao in Montevideo in July 2001. The defeat marked another disappointing result for five-time world champions Brazil, who were held to a 1-1 draw by Venezuela last week in the previous round. Brazilian team officials said Neymar would undergo examinations in Sao Paulo on Wednesday to assess the nature of his injury. Venezuela meanwhile boosted their hopes of reaching the World Cup for the first time with an impressive 3-0 rout of Chile in Maturin. Winger Yeferson Soteldo was the star for La Vinotinto, scoring the opening goal and setting up second-half goals for veteran striker Salomon Rondon and Darwin Machis. Soteldo opened the scoring in stoppage time at the end of the first half, stabbing a low angled shot into the bottom corner to the delight of a raucous home crowd. The Santos winger turned provider for Venezuela's second, bursting down the left flank and cutting back for Rondon to sweep home from close range on 72 minutes. Soteldo was also involved in Venezuela's third, once again finding space on the left wing and crossing for an unmarked Machis to make it 3-0.

Babar Azam continues to lead ICC ODI Rankings

DNA

DUBAI: Pakistan captain Babar Azam managed to hold on to his number-one position in the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's ODI Batting Rankings. Babar, who scored an anchoring half-century against arch-rivals India on Saturday, got the reward for his performance as he kept India's batting prodigy Shubman Gill at bay. The right-handed Indian batter is ranked second with 818 rating points, in touching distance with Babar Azam, who occupies the top position with 836 points. Meanwhile, Pakistan opening batters Fakhar Zaman and Imam-ul-Haq, who were recently among the Top 10 batters, are now ranked 13th and 10th respectively. In-form South African opener Quinton de Kock, who scored back-to-



back centuries in the ongoing ICC World Cup 2023 pipped his teammate Rassie van der Dussen to claim the third position in the rankings. Indian captain Rohit Sharma made a big leap of five places to sixth after amassing 131 runs against Afghanistan then backing it up with an imperious 86 from 63 balls against arch-rivals Pakistan. Afghanistan opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz - jumping 19 spots to 18th - and Netherlands captain Scott Edwards - climbing

16 places to 27th - made notable surges in the batting rankings. In the ICC ODI bowling rankings, however, experienced New Zealand pacer Trent Boult is in touching distance to occupy the top spot following a destructive spell against Bangladesh. He is a mere one rating point behind leader Josh Hazlewood after ascending a place in the latest update. Boult, who returned figures of 2/45 against Bangladesh after also dismissing Towhid Hridoy, also completed 200 wickets in ODIs. Afghanistan's Rashid Khan climbs to fourth in bowling rankings while South Africa's Keshav Maharraj jumps seven spots to equal fifth alongside Mujeeb Ur Rahman.

WBBL trophy soars 1000ft to launch season

SYDNEY: Alyssa Healy and Meg Lanning welcomed the upcoming season of the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL) in a unique fashion as they took the trophy to the Sydney Tower Eye, standing at 1,014 feet high. Meg Lanning, the Melbourne Stars' captain, expressed her excitement for the upcoming season of WBBL. "Never before have I been to such staggering heights. It's super exciting, and I can't wait for the tournament to begin," said Lanning. Meanwhile, Alyssa Healy of Sydney Sixers praised the enduring appeal of the WBBL after nine years. "It's nice to see that after all this time, the WBBL is still as thrilling as ever," said Healy. Lanning also applauded the inclusion of cricket in the Olympics, calling it a monumental decision. "I'm glad to see cricket being included in the Olympics. It's a monumental leap that will undoubtedly elevate the game to new heights." Alyssa Healy, who has participated in the Women's IPL previously, shared her excitement about the growing opportunities for women's cricket worldwide. She also expressed her wish to witness more Indian players participating in the WBBL while emphasizing the league's commitment to inclusivity and its potential to further diversify the talent pool. WBBL season 09 is scheduled to commence on 20 October, Friday from North Sydney Oval where Sydney Sixers will face off against Melbourne Stars in the opening game. - Agencies

England beat Italy to qualify for Euro 2024

LONDON: Harry Kane scored a brace as a Jude Bellingham-inspired England came from behind to beat holders Italy 3-1 and march into the Euro 2024 finals in a Group C qualifier at Wembley. The visitors stunned the home crowd when Gianluca Scamacca swept in a cross from Giovanni di Lorenzo against the run of play in the 15th minute for his first goal with the national team. England, who lost the Euro 2020 final to Italy on penalties at the same stadium in 2021, equalised in the 32nd when Bellingham, the outstanding player of the evening, surged into the area and was brought down by a late Di Lorenzo tackle. The penalty was given a long VAR check before captain Kane calmly stepped up and slotted home, sending Gianluigi Donnarumma diving the wrong way. Marcus Rashford made it 2-1 in style in the 57th, firing a blistering shot into the bottom corner after Real Madrid forward Bellingham set him up. Kane then scored his second of the night in the 77th, pushing off defenders to score as manager Gareth Southgate punched the air in delight with his side qualifying unbeaten, with two games to spare and 16 points from six games. The goals took Kane's tally at Wembley to 24, one more than 1966 World Cup winner Bobby Charlton and making him England's all-time top scorer at the stadium. "Qualifying is never easy. Sometimes we are just expected to go to the big tournaments but we have seen in the past it is not as easy as it looks," Kane told Channel Four television. "We went 1-0 behind and stayed calm. We knew we could get the winner and we have done it." It was the first time since 1949 that England had won consecutive games against Italy, who lost 2-1 in Naples in March. The defeat left Luciano Spalletti's Italy third in the group, on 10 points and facing a battle with second-placed Ukraine, who have played one more, for the other direct qualifying slot from the group. "We played a good game but gave away things that you cannot afford to concede to England because they will punish you immediately," said the Italian. England, needing only a draw to punch their ticket for the finals in Germany, started with a completely changed lineup from the second-string side that beat Australia 1-0 in a friendly at Wembley on Friday. - DNA

Laporta under investigation for bribery case

BARCELONA: President Joan Laporta is under formal investigation for suspected bribery in a probe spanning two decades of activities at Spain's refereeing committee. In March, prosecutors filed a complaint over alleged payments of more than 7.3 million euros (\$7.8 million) over 17 years to firms owned by Jose Maria Enriquez Negreira, who was vice-president of the Spanish football federation's refereeing committee from 1993 to 2018. Laporta, who started a second term as Barca's president in 2021, was also at the helm from 2003 to 2010. Last month, investigating judge Joaquin Aguirre Lopez said Barcelona may have benefited from graft and put the club under investigation for suspected "active bribery." Now Aguirre also named as suspects Laporta and "all those who were members of the board of directors of FC Barcelona during his mandate or who had an effective responsibility in decision-making to allegedly make the illicit payments" to Negreira and his son. - Agencies

SA praises Qatar, eyes 2034 world cup

Saudi Arabia is seeking to host the showpiece after global soccer body FIFA invited bids earlier this month from Asia and Oceania

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

LONDON: Saudi Arabia's vice-minister of sport praised Qatar for their hosting of the World Cup last year and said his country wanted to experience it for themselves as they bid to host the tournament in 2034. Saudi Arabia is seeking to host the showpiece after global soccer body FIFA invited bids earlier this month from Asia and Oceania, setting a deadline of Oct. 31. Qatar was the first country in the Middle East to host the World Cup in November-December last year and Saudi vice-minister of sport Bader Alkadi lauded the host nation despite strained diplomatic relations between the two states in recent years. "Like the pride you had in the UK when you hosted the Olympics, like how proud we are about us beating Argentina at the World Cup. And Qatar... we're proud of what other countries have done delivering an excellent World Cup," Alkadi said at the Leaders sports conference in London. "Definitely we want to have this at home. And we want to ensure that we develop our country to host at a high standard such events." When asked about the fan experience at Qatar which included no alcohol being served in stadiums, a decision made

a week before the tournament began, Alkadi said people had enjoyed a unique experience. "And that's something honestly we applaud our colleagues and Qatar for, for going through and definitely proving that it is a possibility (and it) is something that we would want to repeat," he added. He did not clarify if that meant they would allow alcohol to be served in fan zones and hotels, as was the case in Qatar. Alcohol is banned in Saudi Arabia. Critics accuse the country of using its sovereign wealth fund to engage in "sportswashing" in the face of heavy criticism of Saudi Arabia's human rights record. Saudi Arabia denies accusations of human rights abuses and says it protects its national security through its laws. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said last month he does not care about allegations of "sportswashing" and that he will continue funding sport if it adds to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Alkadi echoed the crown prince's comments and said the vast investment in sport was to improve the lives of Saudi people. "Well, that would have been a difficult question (sportswashing) before the crown prince answered it. It's not difficult anymore. So definitely whatever we do in sports, we do it for our people," Alkadi added. - Agencies

NZ continue unbeaten run after thrashing Afghanistan

New Zealand continued their winning run in the World Cup with a thumping 149-run win over Afghanistan in Chennai

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

CHENNAI: Tom Latham and Glenn Phillips' half-centuries, paired up with a combined bowling effort, propelled New Zealand to a thumping 149-run victory over Afghanistan in the 16th match of the ICC World Cup 2023. Afghanistan after winning the toss invited New Zealand to bat first and picked up an early wicket of in-form opening batter Devon Conway at a total of 30. However, Will Young, who returned to the side after Kane Williamson suffered a thumb injury in the match against Bangladesh, remained firm and completed his half-century during his partnership with Rachin Ravindra. The duo scored 79 runs for the second wicket before Azmatullah Omarzai sent both of them packing in the same over. Ravindra scored 32, while Young scored 64-ball 54, featuring four



boundaries and three sixes. With New Zealand struggling at 110-4, skipper Tom Latham and Glenn Phillips played cautiously at the start to help the side recover before switching gears in the final overs. They knitted a 144-run stand for the fifth wicket, completing their respective half-centuries in the process. Naveen-ul-Haq broke the stand when Phillips was caught in the deep by Rashid Khan after scoring 71 off 80, with the help of four boundaries and as many sixes. Latham followed him two balls later while attempting to scoop Naveen-ul-Haq but missed the line and the ball thudded the off stump. Mark Chapman then played a brisk 12-ball cameo of 25 to lift New Zealand to 288 in their accumulated 50 overs. Naveen-ul-Haq and Azmatullah Omarzai picked two wickets each for Afghanistan, while Rashid Khan and Mujeeb Ur Rahman managed one each.

US announces humanitarian aid for...

FROM PAGE 01

We will continue to work closely with partners in the region to stress the importance of upholding the law of war, supporting those who are trying to get to safety or provide assistance, and facilitating access to food, water, medical care, and shelter. US President Joe Biden landed in Tel Aviv on Wednesday hours after Israel launched a deadly airstrike on a hospital in Gaza City, martyring hundreds of Palestinians and drawing condemnations from world leaders. Biden on a solidarity visit to Israel backed the ally's account that Palestinian fighters caused a devastating hospital strike in Gaza, adding Hamas had brought "only suffering".

IHC issues notice to NAB on...

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surrender before the court. The three-time former prime minister was declared a proclaimed offender by IHC in the Avenfield and Al-Azzia cases over non-compliance after he went to London for medical treatment with the court's permission in November 2019. In Avenfield and Al-Azzia references, Nawaz was sentenced to 10 and seven years in prison, respectively, by an accountability court in 2018. His appeals against the convictions were dismissed by the IHC bench comprising IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Mohsin Akhtar Kayani for non-compliance.

Imran Khan gets permission..

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the petition seeking directives to jail officials to allow the PTI chief to contact his sons. Imran's counsel, Sheraz Ahmed Ranjha, appeared in court. The judge then allowed the phone call to "family members" after observing that "the agonies of the family cannot [be] kept isolated". Furthermore, Imran's lawyer also requested the court's assistance in providing a bicycle for Imran's well-being. To this, the judge replied that he does not "want the cycle to be misused" and emphasised that the security of the under-trial prisoner was paramount. The judge then stated that he will issue orders for the provision of a bicycle.

Rupee falls sharply against...

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28-day winning streak broke due to a market correction, which experts said was inevitable due to an appreciation of 10% in the currency's value. From September 5-17, the rupee gained 10.9% or Rs30.3 against the greenback for consecutive 28 sessions. Dr Khaqan Hassan Najeeb, a former adviser to the Ministry of Finance, told Geo.tv that in a market-based exchange rate regime as the one in Pakistan, a currency moves in both directions against other currencies based on market forces of supply and demand. Najeeb said administrative action in curbing illicit market, a drop in demand for dollars, exporters cashing in receipts, and a slight uptick in remittances had been instrumental in improved dollar flows and strengthening of the rupee.

US using UNSC as puppet for...

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humanitarian rights. "If UN is not going to perform its inherent roles and functions in such circumstances, then where is it going to do so? What else should happen in the world for the UN to take action and find its true role? More innocent lives need to be lost? More human pains and grief?" he questioned. He said the US veto at the UNSC was a green light for Israel to continue genocide of Gaza residents. Ambassador Moghadam stressed that the Israeli war criminals should be referred to the International Court of Justice so that justice should be done to the innocent Palestinians. The Muslim world should not wait for more loss of lives, he added.

Briefs

WHO
Chief: Gaza
situation
spiraling out

LONDON : The situation in the Gaza Strip is becoming uncontrollable, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO), said on Wednesday, stressing the need to stop violence. "The situation in Gaza is spiraling out of control. Every second we wait to get medical aid in, we lose lives," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus wrote on X. Saying that WHO supplies are stuck at the border for four days, he stressed the importance of "immediate access" to start delivering life-saving supplies. "We need violence on all sides to stop," Tedros said. More than 500 people were killed in an Israeli airstrike on the Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital on Tuesday, according to Palestinian officials in the besieged enclave. Israel, however, has denied responsibility for the air raid. The conflict began on Oct. 7 when Hamas initiated Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, a multi-pronged surprise attack that included a barrage of rocket launches and infiltrations into Israel by land, sea, and air. It said the incursion was in retaliation for the storming of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and growing violence by Israeli settlers. The Israeli military then launched Operation Swords of Iron against Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip. Amid worldwide condemnation, UN chief Antonio Guterres has called for an "immediate humanitarian ceasefire" to ease the "epic human suffering."—APP

2 killed, 4
injured
in Russian
attack

ISTANBUL : At least two people were killed and four others injured in an overnight Russian missile attack in the city of Zaporizhzhia, southeastern Ukraine, local officials said early Wednesday. "Search and rescue operations are ongoing at the site ... At this time, it is known about two dead and four injured. Three more people are considered missing," Anatoliy Kurtev, secretary of the Zaporizhzhia City Council, said in a statement on Telegram. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also commented on the attack on Telegram, saying it targeted a residential five-story building and destroyed eight apartments. "My condolences to everyone whose family and friends died ... I thank everyone who does not remain indifferent and helps us overcome it," Zelensky added. Meanwhile, an earlier statement by the Ukrainian State Emergency Service said 50 residents of the building were evacuated by emergency workers. Russian officials did not immediately comment on the strike. The ongoing Ukraine war, which Russia started in February 2022, has killed over 9,800 civilians and wounded more than 17,900, according to UN figures.—DNA

Middle east
turmoil fuels
oil, gold gains

DNA

ANKARA : Global shares steadied Wednesday as the concerns among investors about the risk of a widening conflict in the Middle East translated into a surge in the prices of oil and gold. Compounding the concern about the current geopolitical situation was the prospect of no respite any time soon from punishingly high-interest rates, following U.S. data that showed consumer spending picked up in September. Bond markets battered the previous day, after U.S. retail sales increased more than expected last month, cementing expectations that economic growth picked up more than anticipated in the third quarter. Furthermore, China reported annual economic growth of 4.9% in the third quarter, beating forecasts for 4.4%. Separate releases there painted a picture of a more resilient consumer, suggesting Beijing's stimulus measures may be paying off.

President calls for boosting
trade ties with Morocco

President said that relations between Pakistan and Morocco were marked by common history and shared interests

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD : President Dr Arif Alvi has called for increasing co-operation with Morocco in the fields of trade, investment and economy. He asked Pakistan's newly-appointed Ambassador to work for enhancing Pakistani exports to Morocco. The President expressed these views while talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Morocco, Mr Muhammad Sami-ur-Rehman, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Talking to the Ambassador, the President said that relations between Pakistan and Morocco were marked by common history and shared interests, and the two sides needed to increase the exchange of high-level visits to further strengthen bilateral cooperation. He further said that the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) had been constituted to provide a single platform to facilitate and attract investment and Morocco could benefit of Pakistan's business friendly environment. Earlier, Pakistan's Ambassador/Permanent Representative-designate to the United Nations in Geneva, Dr Bilal Ah-



mad, also called on President Dr Arif Alvi.

Talking to the Ambassador, the President urged him to continue Pakistan's positive engagement with the UN system to advance Pakistan's national interest and priorities. He underlined that Pa-

kistan needed to increase its engagement with the World Health Organization and International Labour Organization to build capacity of its public health system and uphold labour standards. He urged the Permanent Representative-designate to use

the OIC platform in Geneva to project the perspective and voice of the Muslim Ummah on issues such as Islamophobia and the plight of the Kashmiri and the Palestinian people. He asked the Ambassador to expose the real face of India and highlight

the human rights violations and atrocities being committed by India in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The President expressed his best wishes for the Ambassador-designates for their future responsibilities at their respective stations.

Ukraine deploys US-provided
ATACMS rockets: Zelensky

WEB DESK

KYIV : Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that Ukraine's armed forces had used US-supplied AT-ACMS long-range missiles for the first time. "They have performed very accurately. ATACMS have proven themselves," he said in an evening address posted on social media, without giving details of when or where they were used. The White House confirmed the delivery for the first time in an official statement. "We believe these ATACMS will provide a significant boost to Ukraine's battlefield capabilities without risking our

(US) military readiness," National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said in a statement. ATACMS have a maximum range of around 300 kilometres (190 miles) - but Watson said the version "recently" sent to Ukraine had a lower range of 165 kilometres. "Today, a special thanks to the United States," Zelensky said in a video message. "Our agreements with President Biden are being implemented." Russian ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov said Wednesday that Washington's decision to supply Ukraine with AT-ACMS long-range missiles was "a grave mistake". "The White House's de-

cision to send long-range missiles to Ukrainians is a grave mistake. The consequences of this step, which was deliberately hidden from the public, will be of the most serious nature," he said in a statement. Earlier on Tuesday, Ukraine said it had hit airfields in the Russian-occupied south and east of the country overnight, claiming the "successful operation" had destroyed several helicopters. In a mission dubbed "Operation Dragonfly", Kyiv's special forces said on social media they had attacked airfields in southern Berdyansk and eastern Lugansk. Russian officials had claimed earlier on Tuesday

that the US-supplied missiles had been used in the attack on Berdyansk. A Moscow-backed official in the Russian-controlled part of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region, Vladimir Rogov, said on Telegram that fragments of ATACMS missiles had been found at the site of the strike. An influential Russian Telegram channel, Rybar, which has close ties with Moscow's forces, also alleged ATACMS missiles were used in the attack. Kyiv, which launched its counteroffensive against Russian forces this summer, has claimed to have carried out several operations in occupied territory. Berdyansk fell to Russian forces early in their invasion last year.

Philippine CB
develops Islamic
finance system

MANILA : The development of Islamic banking in the Philippines aims to benefit all Filipinos, the central bank said, as it works on awareness programs to broaden access to financial services in accordance with Islamic law. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has stepped up its promotion of Islamic finance in the country following a decision in August by the nation's monetary board to approve the first Islamic banking unit license for a traditional bank. The decision expanded the possibilities for foreign and private banks looking to tap into the market. Earlier, it was limited to the state-owned Al-Amanah Islamic Investment Bank of the Philippines. "The BSP has made significant strides in promoting the development of Islamic banking and finance in the country," Arifa A. Ala, the central bank's assistant governor, told Arab News this week. "The promotion and development of Islamic banking and finance will equally benefit all Filipinos, including overseas Filipino workers. This is seen to attract foreign investors inclined to operate in the Philippines under the Islamic finance business model, expand the payment gateways and remittance channels of OFWs, and increase availability of other financial services." Around half of 1.8 million overseas Filipinos live and work in the Muslim-majority countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, especially Saudi Arabia, where Islamic banks have a major asset share.—Agencies

UK inflation
remains
steady
in Sept

LONDON : Inflation in the United Kingdom remained unchanged at 6.7% in September as easing food and drink price rises were offset by higher petrol and diesel prices for motorists, official figures showed on Wednesday. The flat reading reported by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) was unexpected. Most economists had predicted another fall. It means that the U.K.'s inflation rate remains more than three times higher than the Bank of England's (BoE) target rate of 2%. The bank, though, is not expected to raise interest rates at its next policy meeting, opting instead to keep its main borrowing rate unchanged at the 15-year high of 5.25%. The flat reading will raise concerns, certainly among homeowners, that rates will stay higher for longer. Last month, the bank brought an end to nearly two years of interest rate rises as inflation fell from multi-decade highs above 11%. Most economists expect a sizeable decline in inflation next month. "Progress on falling inflation has stalled, for one month at least," said James Smith, research director at the Resolution Foundation think tank. "It should fall sharply next month to below 5%, as energy prices fall for most people."—Agencies

Europe
battles influx
of Chinese
electric
vehicles

LONDON : When Laima Springe-Janssen was looking to replace her French-made gasoline-powered SUV with an electric car, she considered models from Volvo and Nissan. The Volvo extras she wanted would have busted her budget, while the Nissan lacked the "wow factor." The Copenhagen, Denmark, resident ended up buying a compact SUV from China's BYD. "I really, really love the car," Springe-Janssen said. For the equivalent of about \$50,000, the Atto 3 SUV came with "all these goodies" like a 360-degree dash cam, two years of free charging and an extra set of winter tires. Her husband likes it so much he's considering buying another BYD to replace their other car, from Volkswagen's Skoda brand. This Sept. 29, 2023 photo provided by Laima Springe-Janssen shows her posing by her electric car, from Chinese auto brand BYD, in Gelsted, Denmark. Chinese automakers are winning over drivers as they make major inroads into Europe's electric vehicle market, challenging long-established homegrown brands in an industry that's key to the continent's green energy transition.—DNA

US thwarts drone
attack on Iraq troops

TEL AVIV : The U.S. military thwarted an attack targeting its forces in Iraq early on Wednesday, intercepting two drones before they could strike, two U.S. officials said after the first such attack on U.S. forces in Iraq in more than a year. The officials, who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity, declined to say who was suspected of the attack but Washington is on heightened alert for activity by Iran-backed groups amid soaring tension in the region over the Israel-Hamas war. Last week, Iraqi armed groups aligned with Iran threatened to target U.S. interests with missiles and drones if Washington intervened to support Israel's conflict with Hamas in Gaza. The Pentagon has rushed air defenses and munitions to Israel, America's closest ally in the Middle East, but U.S. forces have not joined the fighting. The one-way attack drones were intercepted as they attempted to strike Iraq's al

Asad air base, which hosts American troops, the officials said. The attack came hours after an explosion at a Gaza hospital killed hundreds of Palestinians, raising the stakes for U.S. President Joe Biden as he flies to Israel on Wednesday to signal support for its war against Hamas. Israel blamed the blast at Al-Ahli al-Arabi hospital on a failed rocket launch by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group, which denied responsibility. Palestinian officials said an Israeli air strike hit the hospital, with the Palestinian Authority's health minister accusing Israel of causing a "massacre". In Iraq, tension over the war in Gaza had already been high. Its top Shi'ite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, last week condemned Israel and called on the world to stand up to the "terrible brutality" in Gaza. Leaders of Iraqi armed groups blamed Israel for the attack on the hospital. Some of them condemned the U.S.

for supporting Israel. Kataib Hezbollah, a powerful armed faction with close ties to Iran, accused the United States of supporting Israel in "killing innocent people" and said it should leave Iraq. These evil people must leave the country, otherwise they will taste the fire of hell in this world before the afterlife," the group said in a statement late on Tuesday. Iraqi politician Hadi Al-Amiri, leader of the political and military group the Badr Organisation which is close to Iran, also blamed Israel for the attack on the hospital and described it as "the massacre of the era, which can only be classified as a war crime" and condemned the U.S. and Western countries for supporting Israel. We "will not hesitate to consider America and the West as partners in this hideous massacre", he said in a statement on Tuesday night. Last week

he threatened to target U.S. interests if Washington intervened to support Israel. The United States currently has 2,500 troops in Iraq - and an additional 900 in neighbouring Syria - on a mission to advise and assist local forces in combating Islamic State, which in 2014 seized swaths of territory in both countries. In past years, Iranian-backed militias in Iraq regularly targeted U.S. forces in Iraq and the U.S. embassy in Baghdad with rockets, though such attacks have abated under a truce in place since last year, as Iraq enjoys a period of relative calm. U.S. officials have accused Kataib Hezbollah of previous attacks on U.S. interests. The group has denied the claims. Dozens of members of the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF), the state paramilitary organisation that contains many Iran-backed factions, took to the streets on Tuesday to condemn the hospital attack.—Agencies

Pak-US science, tech coop extended to 2028

The purposes of the Agreement are to strengthen scientific, technological and engineering capabilities of the parties, to broaden and expand relations between the extensive scientific and technological communities of both countries

WASHINGTON DC : In a significant development, Pakistan and the United States today extended the Agreement on Science and Technology Cooperation between the two countries for another five years with sharing of diplomatic note between the officials of the two governments. Ambassador Masood Khan, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, and Jason Donovan, Director Office of Science and Technology Cooperation in Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES/STC), US Department of State, witnessed the ceremony. Mr. Muhammad Saad Ahmed, on behalf of Government of Pakistan, and Ms. Michelle Sheckells from the U.S. State Department exchanged the documents. The purposes of



the Agreement are to strengthen scientific, technological and engineering capabilities of the parties, to broaden and expand relations between the extensive scientific and technological communities of both countries, and to promote scientific and technological cooperation for peaceful purposes. The two sides will under the Agreement cooperate through exchange of scientific and technical information; exchange of scientists and technical experts; convening of joint seminars and meetings; training of scientists and technical experts; conduct of joint research projects; educational exchanges related to science, technology and engineering; establishment of science-based public-private partnerships; and other forms of scientific.—DNA

Briefs

Muslims let down by US support for Israel

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's former envoy to the United Nations (UN) Maleeha Lodhi while reprimanding the United States for its stance on the Gaza conflict has said that the country's support for Israel has disappointed the Muslims around the world. At least 500 Palestinians were martyred in an explosion at a Gaza hospital on Tuesday pushing the overall death toll — due to Israeli bombing of the Gaza Strip — beyond 3,000 as Palestinian health officials said it happened because of an Israeli air attack.

Israel denied responsibility and said the blast was caused by a failed rocket launch by the Islamic Jihad group, which denied blame. "One-sided position of Joe Biden" has triggered such a massive response, Lodhi said while commenting on US President Joe Biden's Israel visit amid the human tragedy unfolding due to the Israeli onslaught on the Gaza Strip. "The main reason for his Israel visit is to show solidarity with Israel. It is also said that Biden's trip to Tel Aviv is also aimed at making Israel agree to humanitarian access to Gaza because the country hasn't allowed aid inside the territory.

"Maybe Biden wants to force Israel but the US role in this crisis has been very disappointing. Currently, the most pressing issue is to prevent the conflict from spreading to other countries in the region."

LHC acquits Hanif Abbasi in ephedrine quota case

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday acquitted Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Hanif Abbasi in the ephedrine quota case and declared his lifetime sentence in the case as null and void. A two-member bench of the LHC announced the verdict it had reserved a day earlier on Abbasi's appeal against the conviction.

After hearing the concluding arguments of lawyers for the appellant and government, the bench — comprising Justice Aalia Neelum and Justice Asjad Javed Ghural — had reserved the judgment.

Abbasi was awarded life imprisonment by a special court for control of narcotics substance (CNS) along with Rs1 million fine a few days before the 2018 general elections on July 21.

The case against him and other co-accused was registered by the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in 2012 under Sections 9C, 14 and 15 of the Control of Narcotics Substances (CNS) Act for misuse of 500kg ephedrine. He was contesting election against his main rival Sheikh Rashid Ahmad of Awami Muslim League from NA-60, Rawalpindi but he stood disqualified following the guilty verdict.

IPP decides to hold rallies in Punjab

DNA

LAHORE: Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party decided to hold rallies and workers convention in the Punjab province. In the first phase, rallies and conventions would be held in 9 districts such as Khanewal on October 28, Hafizabad on November 3, Narowal on November 9, Leh on November 12 and Kasur on November 17. Gujranwala, Jhang, Sahiwal and Faisalabad would hold rallies on November 20, November 24, December 2 and December 9 respectively. In the second phase, conventions will be held in Multan, Rawalpindi, Sheikhpura, Sialkot, Bahawalpur and other districts in the wake of the party decisions to intensify political activities ahead of the elections.

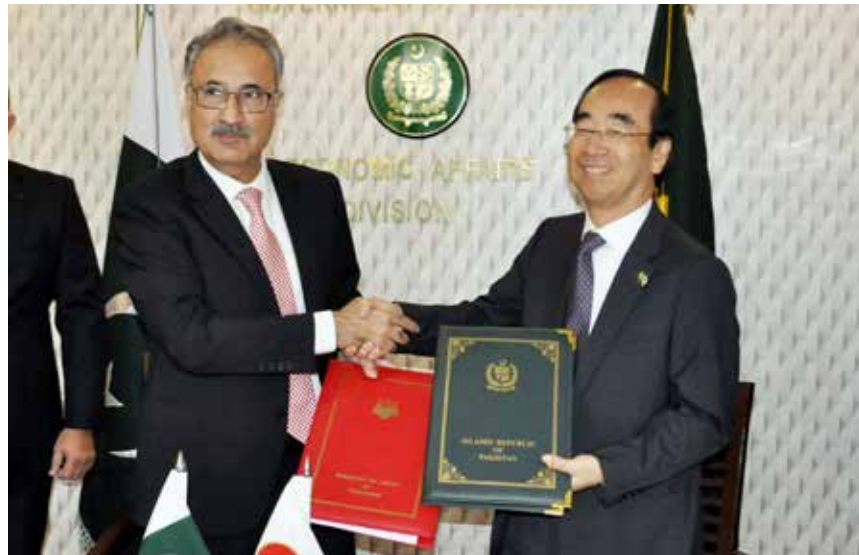
Japan provide new grant for educational facilities

This is the fourth grant aid through which the Government of Japan supports the improvement of educational facilities in Sindh province

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has agreed to provide new grant assistance worth 794 million Japanese Yen (equivalent to around 5.3 million USD/ around 1,530 million PKR) for reconstructing educational facilities in flood-affected areas in Sindh. On October 18, 2023, a signing ceremony for the assistance was held at the Ministry of Economic Affairs in Islamabad. H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan, Mr. KINOSHITA Yasumitsu, Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, and other officials from both countries attended this ceremony.

Since June 2022, heavy monsoon rains have intermittently caused flooding that has submerged one-third of the country, resulting in more than 1,700 deaths and 33 million people affected. Damage in Sindh province has been severe, accounting for 66% of the total damage in the education sector. As medium- and long-term measures, the rapid reconstruction of damaged educational facilities are important to ensure that children have safe learning opportunities. This is the fourth grant aid through which the Government of Japan supports the



improvement of educational facilities in Sindh province. It has been reported that the school buildings assisted by Japan in the past projects suffered less damage and destruction from the rainfall and flooding

in 2022 because they were designed and constructed based on analysis of the 2010 floods. The new project will also incorporate the concept of "Build Back Better" to reduce vulnerability of the target schools to future disasters and build resilience of communities where the schools are located.

This project aims to establish safe and disaster-resilient learning environment through reconstruction of elementary schools which were heavily affected by the flood and heavy rain in 2022. The assistance contributes to improving the school enrollment rate and gender equality in the target areas, contributing to the SDGs Goal 4 (Quality education) and 5 (Gender equality).

In the signing ceremony, H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro stated, "I hope that the project this time will further contribute to creating an environment where children can continue to receive education even after the floods in the future". Mr. KINOSHITA, while speaking at the event said "we believe that the new grant aid project will build not only school buildings, but also it will build brighter and more resilient future for the next generation of Pakistan".

'Displacement of Palestinians cannot be implemented'

DNA

CAIRO: Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi said on Wednesday that forced displacement of Palestinians cannot be implemented, adding that Israel can let Palestinians move to the Negev desert in Israel "till militants are dealt with."

Sisi warned Wednesday of the dangers of "forced displacement of Palestinians from Gaza into Egypt", saying it would set a precedent for "the displacement of Palestinians from the West Bank into Jordan."

Sisi, who has rejected calls to allow large numbers of refugees from Gaza into Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, said the goal of "the Palestinian state" would be "eradicated." "If it came to it, I could call on the Egyptian people to come out and express their rejection of this proposal, and you would see millions of Egyptians" in the street, he told reporters.

Sisi said that if Israel needed to displace Palestinians "it has the desert of Negev to move Palestinians until Israel completes its declared mission against Palestinian armed factions. But transferring (them) to Egypt is dangerous, as Sinai will turn into a base for operations against Israel."

Belt and Road cooperation on 'right side of history'

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday said that the past decade of Belt and Road cooperation is "on the right side of history". The Chinese leader made these comments during the opening ceremony of the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation event being held in Beijing. "What has been achieved in the past 10 years demonstrates that Belt and Road cooperation is on the right side of history. It represents the advancing of our times, and it is the right path forward," said Jinping. Jinping added that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) represents humanity's joint pursuit of development for all and it has opened up a new path for exchanges among countries and established a new framework for international cooperation. "China has become a main trading partner of more than 140 countries and territories and a primary source of investment for more countries. Both Chinese investment overseas and foreign investment in China has boosted friendship, cooperation, confidence and hope." The Chinese leader emphasised that BRI has shown that "win-win cooperation is the sure way to success in launching major initiatives that benefit all".

Putin praises 'dear friend' Xi

BEIJING: President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday praised Chinese President Xi Jinping for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and invited global investment in the Northern Sea route which he said could deepen trade between east and west. Speaking on his second known trip outside the former Soviet Union since the Ukraine war, Putin thanked the Chinese leader for his invitation and said Russia could play a key role in China's modern day revival of the ancient Silk Road. Putin called Xi his "dear friend" and heaped praise on the Belt and Road Initiative for bringing the world together. Shortly before Putin starting speaking, a handful of European delegates, including former French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, walked out of the room, a Reuters witness said. — DNA

MI5 head warns of "epic scale" of Chinese espionage

LONDON: More than 20,000 people in the UK have now been approached covertly online by Chinese spies, the head of MI5 said. It comes amid a new warning to tens of thousands of British businesses of the risk of having their innovation stolen. Ken McCallum was speaking to the BBC at an unprecedented public appearance of the security chiefs of the Five Eyes alliance in California. The heads of US, UK, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand security agencies appeared together. They did so for the first time to warn of commercial secrets being obtained by China. Stanford University in California was chosen as the venue for the first public meeting because it lies in the heart of Silicon Valley. In both public statements and a closed session with entrepreneurs and investors, security chiefs warned that cutting-edge research is being stolen.

"We have seen a sustained campaign on a pretty epic scale," Mr McCallum told the BBC in an interview during the event. In the past, MI5 focused on protecting government secrets from foreign spies but now the fear is that innovation is often stolen from small companies, start-ups and researchers who may not previously have worried about security. "If you're working today at the cutting edge of technology then geopolitics is interested in you, even if you're not interested in geopolitics," Mr McCallum said. MI5 is trying to warn tens of thousands of UK companies who are potentially at risk, and doing so requires the security service to go public in a way it has not done before. Mr McCallum said that MI5 had now seen suspected Chinese agents approach over 20,000 people in the UK over professional networking sites like LinkedIn, in order to try to cultivate them to provide sensitive information, double the previously reported figure. In the last year, MI5 has also seen more than 20 instances of Chinese companies considering or actively trying to gain access to sensitive technology developed by UK companies and universities through investments or other means where the full role of China is hidden, often through complicated company structures. That has included at least two Chinese companies seeking to avoid the scrutiny required under law to access sensitive technology of UK companies undetected. — Agencies

Maryam deplores global spinelessness

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League-N (PMLN) chief organizer, Maryam Nawaz, has strongly condemned the Israeli atrocities against the Palestinian people. She expressed her solidarity with the Palestinians and sorrow over their killing by the Israeli forces. She said its height of barbarism that children, women and hospital were bombed by the Israel. People are very sad due to the Israel's act of barbarity, she added. The PMLN vice-president, said the innocent children and women are being killed because they are Muslims. Its neither a human ideology nor honor of the international law. She said the Israel is committing a war crime by killing the innocent people and silence of the international community is tantamount to help the killer.

LHC grants bail to Khadija Shah, others

The judges asked him what was illegal in her statements. "Is it illegal to allege that the dignity of mothers and sisters is not protected?" Justice Neelum

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court on Wednesday granted bail to fashion designer Khadija Shah and six co-accused in Jinnah House and Askari Tower attack case. Those were granted bail today include Usman Sharif, Muhammad Shehbaz, Suleman Qadri, Faiz Ahmed and Arbaz Khan.

A division bench headed by Justice Aalia Neelum and including Justice Asjad Javed Ghural, announced the verdict reserved on October 12. Justice Neelum asked the prosecution, during proceedings last week, whether Khadija was nominated in the FIRs. Special prosecutor Syed Farhad Ali Shah acknowledged that she was not nominated in the FIRs, but she was "identified by the prosecution witnesses in an identity parade." He said she was accused of inciting people against the state and chanting objectionable slogans during the violent protests on May 9 and kept posting videos and photos of the protests on social media. The judges asked him what was illegal in her statements. "Is it illegal to allege that the dignity of mothers and sisters is not protected?" Justice Neelum added. She asked him whether there was any video evidence to prove that the accused vandalised and torched Askari Tower in Gulberg. Advocate Farhad could not answer Justice Neelum and said it was not the case of the prosecution against the petitioner. She was inciting the public, which led to the riots and attacks on May 9, he claimed. Justice Neelum observed that holding protests on the call of a political leader was a norm in society. "The government cannot prevent people from holding peaceful protests," she remarked. Advocate Sameer Khosa, Khadija Shah's counsel, argued that the police arrested her without any evidence and purely on political grounds. — DNA

Pakistan-Turkiye to enhance joint production of military hardware

Commander Turkish Air Force visits Air Headquarters, meets Air Chief



MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by General Ziya Cemal Kadio lu, Commander Turkish Air Force, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office today. The meeting covered a wide array of matters related to geo-strategic situation, progress of current joint ventures and exploration of further avenues of collaboration in the aviation industry. The discussion also involved an exchange of insight from both dignitaries on the operational training of their respective air forces in the backdrop of PAF's on-going mega aerial exercise, Indus Shield 2023 which is being witnessed by dignitaries from around the globe. Both the commanders also agreed to explore further avenues of bilateral cooperation including collaboration for joint production of military hardware with special focus on unmanned aerial platforms. On his arrival, a smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented guard of honour to General Ziya Cemal Kadio lu. Later, the visiting dignitary was

introduced to the Principal Staff Officers. During the meeting, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, shared the framework of PAF's comprehensive modernization strategy involving procurements of technological equipment from allied countries, bolstering critical infrastructure and a comprehensive restructuring of its training set-up, in order to address contemporary air warfare challenges. The Air Chief highlighted that both the brotherly countries enjoy long-standing religious and historic ties which are manifested through unprecedented strategic partnership. Appreciating the participation of Turkish Air Force in Exercise Indus Shield, the Air Chief reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing bilateral relations in military-to-military cooperation, strategic alliance and the training domain. The Air Chief further remarked that PAF pilots are playing an active role in providing basic and tactical level training to Turkish aircrew. He reiterated Pakistan Air Force's commitment to provide training and capacity-building assistance to the Turkish Air Force.

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