



Islamabad POST

Friday, October 06, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

Norway's Fosse wins 2023 Nobel Prize in literature

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Pak keen to have good ties with world

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Babar Azam aims high in ICC World Cup

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Effects of climate change

PM seeks global cooperation to address the issue

The Prime Minister also praised the coordinated efforts of all State institutions during the devastating floods of 2022

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar inaugurated the newly established state of the art 'National Emergencies Operation Center' (NEOC) at NDMA Headquarters in Islamabad today. The Prime Minister lauded the establishment of NEOC that will help in coordinated efforts to not only manage the natural disasters in the future, but will help in disaster risk reduction and mitigation of damages. Emphasizing the importance of disaster resilient infrastructure and policy framework, the Prime Minister said that despite being one of the least contributors of carbon emissions globally, Pakistan is one of the top countries affected by climate change. "Climate change is a real challenge that will keep haunting our future generations unless we take such concrete steps", he reiterated. The Prime Minister also praised the coordinated efforts of all State institutions during the devastating floods of 2022, especially NDMA. "Nearly one third of the population of the country was affected by floods in 2022 and USD 30 billion was estimated to be the economic losses. The world needs to step forward and help developing countries like Pakistan to cope up the adverse effects of climate change", he said. The PM also praised the role of NCOC both in COVID-19 and 2022 floods. In a briefing, the Prime Minister was told that NEOC will serve as hub of all technological inputs related to climate change, disasters management and predictive modeling for national emergencies. First of its kind in Pakistan and the region, this is Pakistan's indigenously conceptualized capability, which will evolve capacity to predict future disasters with credence and accuracy about likely

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Delay in elections intolerable for nation

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) spokesperson said that Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was constitutionally bound to hold elections within the stipulated 90 days; hence the electoral watchdog and the caretaker government have only 34 days to meet the constitutional deadline. He categorically stated that the nation would not tolerate any unconstitutional attempts to delay the polls beyond the constitutional deadline come what may. The PTI spokesperson made it clear that it was electoral body's main constitutional responsibility and the fundamental right of the people to hold elections within the constitutionally mandated timeframe of 90 days. Therefore, he demanded that the honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan should intervene pre-emptively in order to thwart any attempt of violation of the Constitution and to make the ECP and the caretaker government bound to ensure holding elections within the constitutional time limits. PTI spokesperson went on to say that the state was subject to the constitution and the constitution made the free will of the public the basis of the political and

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker PM Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in a group photo with NDMA's team after the inauguration of National Emergencies Operation Center in Islamabad. - DNA

Petrol prices expected to drop

Diesel prices are also projected to decrease by more than Rs20 per liter

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the global oil market, there is anticipation of a significant decrease in petroleum product prices, with a potential drop of \$7 per barrel. This reduction is reflected in the Gulf market where crude oil prices have fallen to \$92 per barrel and the global market, where they stand at \$84 per barrel. In accordance with international rates, Pakistan is expected to see a substantial

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Nepra approves Rs1.71 hike

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) on Thursday notified an increase in the price of electricity by Rs 1.71 per unit on account of Fuel Charges Adjustment (FCA) for the month of Oct 2023. This surge in power tariff is set to impact all consumer categories. The approved tariff hike will be shown separately on consumers' bills. Couple of days ago, the Nepra approved hike in the power tariff by Rs 3.28 per unit on account of Fuel Charges Adjustment (FCA) from Oct 2023 to March 2024. The approved tariff hike will be shown separately on consumers' bills and the effects of this increase will be reflected in the bills for Oct 2023.

Jilani meets Muttaqi: takes up challenges confronting peace

"The FM reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthen bilateral ties with Afghanistan," the ministry said

NEWS DESK

TIBET: Interim Foreign Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani Thursday apprised his Afghan counterpart Amir Khan Muttaqi about challenges confronting regional peace, as Pakistan faces an uptick in terror activities - that also involved Afghan nationals.

The caretaker government has given a 28-day deadline (November 1) to all illegal immigrants, including Afghan refugees, to leave the country or face forceful expulsion. In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Jilani "underscored that challenges confronting regional peace & stability be addressed in collaborative spirit thru collective strategies". "The FM reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthen bilateral ties with [Afghanistan]," the ministry said. Their meeting was held in Tibet, China, where the foreign minister is visiting China to participate in the Third Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Co-operation - being held from October 4 to 5.

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Pak action not targeted at Afghan refugees

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday said its recent decision to deport illegal residents was not targeted at Afghan refugees but was against all foreigners without having valid visa documents. Foreign Office spokesperson Murtaz Zahra Baloch at a weekly press briefing said the national policy towards the Afghan refugees in the country "remained unchanged" and their safe repatriation was a separate issue. The spokesperson said the ongoing operation was against the individuals who had either overstayed their visas or did not have the valid documents to

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

PTI govt responsible for terror wave

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader and former prime minister Yousaf Raza Gilani said on Thursday that the current wave of terrorism grew during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman's tenure as prime minister. In a statement, the former prime minister said the PPP had always been committed and consistent in its interpretation and stance. He said that his statement about the month of January should be accepted about the holding of elections.

Only 8 hours Gas in winter

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Power Minister Muhammad Ali has said that gas will only be available for eight hours in the winters amid depleting natural gas reserves in the country. "[Gas] loadshedding has been taking place for the last few years. The loadshedding will occur this year as well because we don't have enough gas to supply it for 24 hours," the interim minister said while addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Wednesday. Like last year, the minister said the loadshedding plan was being devised to ensure a gas supply for eight hours. He said the natural gas reserves have further depleted by 18% compared to the last year.

EU envoy says GSP+ rollover unrelated to Pakistan performance

The European Council is expected to give its final approval for the extension of the current Scheme soon, claims Commerce Minister

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The members of the European Parliament of the European Union have decided to roll over the rules on the Generalised Scheme of Preferences-Plus (GSP+) till 2027, the commerce minister said on Thursday. "The European Council is expected to give its final approval for the extension of the current scheme soon," Gohar Ejaz said in a post on X, erstwhile Twitter. In July, this year, the European Commission proposed extending Pakistan's GSP+ status for another four years as a contingency measure. The special incentive is set to expire at the end of this year. The GSP+ scheme became effective on Jan 1, 2014. The top export destinations for Pakistan are Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, and Belgium. Ejaz reiterated Pakistan's commitments under the scheme for the betterment of all.



"I wish to thank the EU Parliament for living up to its commitment to facilitate trade from developing countries," he said. "The proposed extension of the current regulation for GSP+ in effect that means no change for Pakistan at the moment," EU Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Riina Kionka said in a statement on July 7, 2023. She explained that Pakistan enjoyed the same trade preferences and access to the European markets and it has the same obligations as before in terms of implementing 27 human rights, labour rights, governance, and the

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Toshakhana case Imran seeks suspension of the trial court order

PTI announces public rally in Lahore on Oct 15

FAISAL SHEIKH

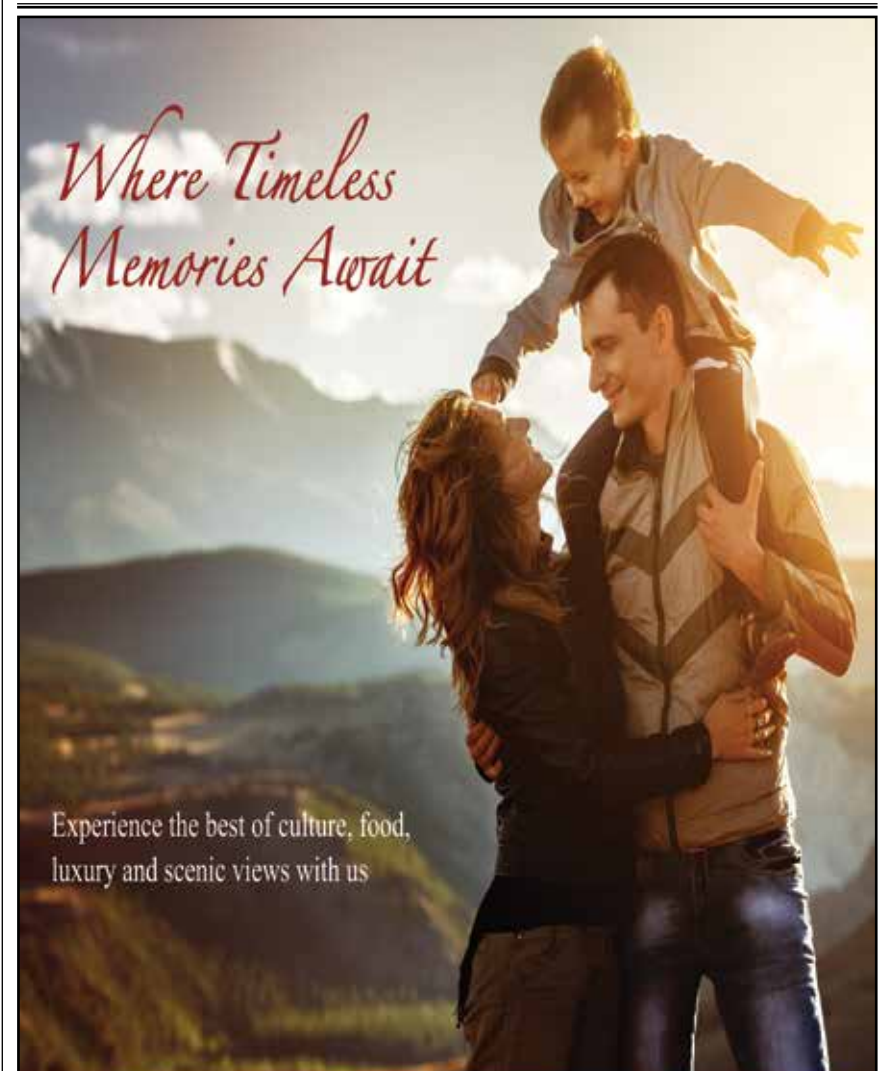
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan approached the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday to have the full order of the trial court in the Toshakhana case suspended, instead of just his sentence. In a plea filed through his counsel Sardar Latif Khosa, the former premier has pleaded to the court to also suspend the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) order declaring him ineligible for contesting elections after being convicted in the Toshakhana case. Furthermore, the PTI chief has requested the court to allow amending the appeal against his conviction and including the state as a respondent in it. The ECP had earlier objected to the PTI chairman's plea not including the state as a respondent. The PTI chief has maintained that the ECP's notification should be suspended till a final ruling on his appeal against the Toshakhana conviction. On August 5, the deposed prime minister was arrested and sent to Attock jail, hours after a trial court in Islamabad sentenced him to three years in prison while imposing on him a fine of Rs100,000 for making false

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Maryam sees Nawaz as 'saviour'

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz reiterated on Thursday that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif will steer the country out of the quagmire. She presided over the consultative meeting of the party's minority wing. The PML-N leaders and representatives from the Christian, Sikh, and Hindu communities attended the meeting. On the occasion, Maryam said, "Nawaz Sharif is coming to steer the country



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President Alvi urges collaboration in breast cancer awareness

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has urged the need for making collaborative efforts by the public and private sector to create awareness about breast cancer, especially during October, besides providing support to those affected by the disease. He said that media and other relevant stakeholders should join hands in the breast cancer awareness campaign and encourage women to engage in regular self-examinations and seek timely medical guidance for the early diagnosis of this life-threatening ailment.

The President made these remarks during a meeting with a delegation from Siemens Healthineers in Pakistan. CEO of Siemens, Mr. Khurram Jameel, and the First Lady Begum Samina Alvi attended the meeting virtually. During the meeting, the President highlighted the potential of digital technologies in addressing

healthcare challenges, particularly in enhancing awareness, improving healthcare accessibility, and raising the quality of care while minimizing costs. He underscored the importance of early screenings, self-examinations, and improved medical services. Moreover, the President also underlined the pivotal role that private sector partners could play in raising awareness through media campaigns, standee displays in hospitals and public areas, distribution of pamphlets, and organizing educational workshops and seminars in women's educational institutions. He also called for organizing breast cancer awareness events during October.

The President also commended the role of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and telecommunication companies, who had initiated a call-campaign from 1st October on the advice of Presidency urging women to conduct self-examinations and seek medical advice if they noticed any unusual growth. The President

said that spreading the message of self-examination for early breast cancer detection should not be regarded as taboo. He called upon media houses to broadcast/telemat messages regarding the significance of self-examination during their morning and talk shows, as well as in public service announcements to create awareness about the disease. He emphasized that increased awareness could lead to significant cost savings, given the expenses associated with treatment at the later stages of breast cancer.

The CEO of Siemens Healthineers pledged his company's support for the breast cancer campaign during the meeting. During the meeting, it was highlighted that Pakistan had one of the highest mortality rates due to breast cancer in Asia, with approximately 90,000 cases diagnosed annually. Early detection and proper treatment could potentially save numerous lives, as over 90% of the breast cancer cases could be successfully treated, if detected at an early stage.

Gwadar Port receives 34000 tons fertilizers for export

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As a fresh impetus to the Gwadar transshipment drive, Gwadar Port has received a mega vessel loaded with 34,000 tons of DAP fertilizers to be processed and discharged to Afghanistan as per the Pakistan-Afghanistan transit trade deal.

The Pacific Integrity, a vessel loaded with 34,000 tons of DAP fertilizers, arrived at Gwadar Port on the morning of October 3rd. The fertilizer is imported by a joint venture of Agven Private Limited and KB Fertilizer, two private enterprises registered in the Gwadar Free Zone area. An Agven official told Gwadar Pro that after offloading the fertilizers, the next step is to pack a huge quantity of fertilizer at a warehouse jointly sub-leased by both entities in the Gwadar Free Zone.

After the packing process is completed, all packets will be transported by trucks to Afghanistan, he added. This is the second

consignment delivered to Afghanistan in 2023. The last time during the current year, a private sector consignment of 20,000 tons of DAP fertilizer was sent from Gwadar Port

crop yield besides the development and growth of flowering plants or leafy plants. In 2022, Gwadar Port processed a private sector consignment of 8,000 tons of DAP ferti-



to Afghanistan on May 31, 2023. This batch of DAP fertilizer was imported from Australia. DAP is used in various industrial processes, such as metal finishing. It also improves

lizers and transported it via road to Afghanistan. In 2021, a total of 500 tons of fertilizers were shipped out of the port's warehouse by a fleet of Pakistani trucks from

Gwadar Port. In April 2020, the federal government allowed the import of fertilizers at Gwadar Port and onward transit to Afghanistan through bonded carriers – insured and sealable trucks with a tracking device. The Ministry of Commerce (MoC), at the request of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), the Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), the Gwadar International Terminals Limited, and other stakeholders, issued an Office Memorandum (MO) titled 'Implementation of the Import and Export Policy Orders through Shipping Procedure and Instructions for the Operationalization of Gwadar Port'. The petitions of all stakeholders were examined in the light of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) of 2010, specifically Article 21(1)(c) which allows transit of "bulk cargo (not imported in containers – like ship load) in open trucks or other transport units."

NGPL disconnects illegal connections

DNA

MULTAN: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has disconnected 10 Sui gas connections during an ongoing drive against compressors. According to SNGPL official sources, the campaign against illegal usage of compressors and giving illegal extensions was underway across the region. The task force was raiding on a daily basis at various places to ensure gas supply to domestic consumers, under the directions of General Manager SNGPL Rashid Ishaq. The teams removed two connections in Multan, four in Shujabad and four connections in Mian Channu. GM said that the drive would continue till the complete elimination of illegal compressors so that the required gas pressure could be provided to the masses.

LESCO recovers Rs 23m from 881 defaulters

LAHORE: The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), in collaboration with Tehsildars (Recovery), has recovered Rs 23 million from 881 chronic defaulters in all the five districts – Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara – on the 22nd day of its recovery campaign. A LESCO spokesman told the media here Thursday that on the 22nd day, Chief Engineer O&M (T&G) Zafar Iqbal with the support of Tehsildar City Mujahid Zia and Tehsildar Shalimar Noreez Humayun recovered outstanding dues of Rs 3.32 million from 125 defaulters in Northern Circle and Rs 5.09 million from 112 defaulters in Eastern Circle respectively. Similarly, LESCO Manager (Material Disposal) Engineer Anwar Wattoo, along with Tehsildar Model Town Rana Arsal and Tehsildar Cant. Sajjad Qureshi, recovered Rs 3.84 million from 103 defaulters in Central Circle and Rs 1.28

million from 41 defaulters in South Circle, while Manager (Technical) Engineer Muhammad Farooq with the assistance of Tehsildar Nankana Sahib Muhammad Iqbal Rasheed and Tehsildar Sheikhupura Muhammad Aslam Gujjar recovered Rs 1.46 million from 57 defaulters in Nankana Circle and Rs 2.34 million from 76 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle. He added that LESCO Manager E&S (PMU) Engineer Abbas Ali in collaboration with Naib Tehsildar Kasur and Okara Mirza Zahid Baig recovered outstanding dues of Rs 1.99 million from 153 defaulters in Okara Circle and Rs 4.53 million from 214 defaulters in Kasur Circle. Up till now during the recovery campaign, the LESCO with the help of Tehsildars (Recovery) recovered more than Rs 624 million from 19,244 dead defaulters in its all circles of operation. He elaborated that LESCO recovered outstanding dues of

Rs 74.96 million from 2,707 defaulters in Northern Circle; Rs 152.19 million from 2,153 defaulters in Eastern Circle; Rs 90.41 million from 2,387 defaulters in Central Circle; Rs 40.75 million from 1,215 defaulters in South Circle, Rs 38.93 million from 1,501 defaulters in Nankana Circle; Rs 81.02 million from 1,755 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle; Rs 41.26 million from 2,851 defaulters in Okara Circle and Rs 105.04 million from 4,675 defaulters in Kasur Circle. For the recovery campaign started on September 13, the Lahore Division's Commissioner had assigned additional charge of Tehsildar Recovery (from LESCO defaulters) to relevant Tehsildars, while LESCO Chief Executive Officer Engineer Shahid Haider has also designated four senior officers to assist them in the dues recovery from defaulters. LESCO Chief Executive Officer Engineer Shahid Haider said that the company.—APP

Niaz support celebrates a year of transformation

DNA

Niaz Support, a pioneering model to provide customised wheelchairs to deserving persons with disabilities, is celebrating one year of operation. With the support of its global honorary network of ambassadors, gifters, and partners, Niaz Support has made a significant impact on the lives of people with disabilities in Pakistan by providing them with the mobility and independence they need to thrive.

In its first year, Niaz Support made significant progress, mobilising over 1,000 persons with disabilities, connecting with 650 donors from 14 countries, and reaching 4,000 unique website visitors and 8,000 social media followers. Niaz Support is receiving an outpouring of support

from around the globe on its first anniversary, including from neighboring countries, which is a testament to the fact that humanity has no boundaries. "We are deeply grateful for the support we have received over the past year," said Hussain Odhwani,

Founder of Niaz Support. "We could not have achieved this milestone without the dedication of our team, the generosity of our gifters, and the trust of our community. We also thank all the print and electronic media for their support." Niaz Support is a one-of-a-kind

platform that connects gifters from all over the world with deserving people with disabilities in Pakistan. Gifters can choose to give a customised wheelchair to a particular person from the list of beneficiaries on their website, www.niazsupport.org. Niaz Support then



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George held a meeting with Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council Maulana Tahir Ashrafi.—DNA

UGI observes World Teachers' Day

DNA

LAHORE: A special event was organised at the Unique Group of Institutions (UGI), in connection with the World Teachers' Day celebrations, with Unique Group Chairman Prof. Abdul Manan Khurram in the chair, on Thursday.

Well-known motivational speaker Qasim Ali Shah and former vice chancellor Women University Multan Professor Dr. Uzmi Qureshi participated as special guests.

Addressing the ceremony, the UGI chairman said that teachers play a fundamental role in formation of society and teach their students a way of living. He said that teachers' profession was unique in the sense that it was the profession is prophets of God. He said that the importance of a teacher could be known from the fact that Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), when asked to introduce himself, had said "I have been sent as a 'Muallam' (teacher)". Qasim Ali Shah said that materialism should be discouraged in the field of education. He said the real income of a teacher comes from the success of his students. He said that a teacher was the one who illuminates society with his knowledge.

Prof. Dr. Uzmi Qureshi said that the way our teachers are performing their duties in the current situation is certainly commendable. Earlier, a special documentary film was presented about the importance of a teacher in society. Vice Chairman Unique Group Afif Ashraf Siddiqui, Rector Prof. Amjad Ali Khan, Director Prof. Waseem Anwar Chaudhry, Additional Director Muhammad Abdullah, Principal Head Office Professor Farida Arshad, Head Coordination Prof. Hamad Hasan, Head Promotions and Media Communications Prof. Riiazul Haq, principals of various campuses along with a large number of teachers and students participated in the function.

Ghee prices reduced by 60 rupees

ISLAMABAD: The price of ghee of well-known brands has been reduced by 60 rupees per kg. As per the new prices, the price of BISP's PMT-40 score register customers has been reduced from Rs 385 to Rs 325 per kg, while for general consumers it has been reduced from Rs 455 to Rs 395 per kg. The new prices have been applied immediately.—APP

ISSI hosts conference on Pak peace, security role

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is hosting a two-day International Conference on "Navigating Peace & Security in the Region & Beyond: Pakistan's Role." The two-day international conference brings together an amalgamation of academics and practitioners from around the world. The Conference stretches over two days and has six diverse working sessions focusing on Afghanistan, the Middle East, Pakistan-US bilateral ties, counterterrorism, regional peace and security as well as non-traditional security challenges.

Ambassador Asif Durrani, Pakistan's Special Representative on Afghanistan was the Chief Guest at the occasion. Dr. Andrew Wilder, Vice President of Asia

Centre, USIP, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General, ISSI and Ms. Amina Khan also spoke in the inaugural session. In her welcome remarks Director CAMEA, Amina Khan stated that the contemporary global landscape is witnessing profound shifts, in which Pakistan finds itself at a critical juncture amidst this transformative milieu. On a global scale, the pursuit of security, stability, and progress is beset by a myriad of challenges, including conflicts, warfare, economic uncertainties, natural calamities, climate change, poverty and overpopulation. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic starkly exposed the shortcomings of a fragmented multilateral system

in formulating coordinated responses to a crisis that continues to wreak havoc and inflict severe damage on the global economy. Ms. Khan highlighted that the evolving global trends not only present challenges but offer a spectrum of opportunities,



encompassing both economic and political dimensions, for Pakistan. The onus firmly rests upon the nation to assume leadership and proactively define its destiny within the multifaceted tapestry of these unfolding scenarios. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI, while expressing his views, elucidated that the world is currently facing an unprecedented level of fragility, polarization and conflict risks.

Diversify economy: shield Pakistan from global uncertainties

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Meher Kashif Younis on Thursday said diversification of economic activities across various sectors including technology, renewable energy, agriculture, health-care and manufacturing can shield Pakistan from the uncertainties of global markets. Speaking at a seminar on "The importance of diversification in economic growth" held here under the aegis of Gold Ring Economic Forum, a strategic think tank, he said as Pakistan continues to nav-

igate the complexities of the international economy, diversification can prove to be a pivotal strategy for sustainable growth and resilience, said a news release here. He said in today's interconnected world, economies are increasingly interdependent. By investing in diverse sectors, we can mitigate risks associated with economic downturns in specific industries. He said more over, diversification fosters innovation and entrepreneurship.

Encouraging a wide range of industries not only creates job opportunities but also nurtures a culture of creativity and adaptability. Innovation is a driving force behind economic progress, and diverse industries provide a fertile ground for new ideas and inventions. "We can build a robust and resilient economy that can withstand the challenges of the modern world while fostering sustainable development and prosperity for all citizens of Pakistan", he added.

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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
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ICCI, ICSTSI for promoting ease of doing business

It will enable businesses to play an enhanced role in the economic development of the country. He assured that ICCI would cooperate with ICSTSI in resolving the key issues of small traders and small industries to facilitate their better growth

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and Sajjad Sarwar, President, Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries (ICSTSI) called upon the government to focus on promoting ease of doing business in order to facilitate the growth of business activities and revive the economy. This demand was made during the visit of a delegation of President, Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries to ICCL. Tariq Khokhar Senior Vice President, Rana Ayaz & Saqib Abbasi former Presidents, Imran Sukhera Executive Member, Tahir Arain former Senior Vice President ICSTSI and others were in the delegation. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the small businesses are playing an important role in promoting the economic activities and stressed that the CDA should address their key issues to facilitate them in



business development. He emphasized that the government should allot plots to Chambers of Small Traders and Small Industries so that these trade bodies can play a more effective role in promoting small businesses to improve exports, generate jobs and help revive the economy. He said that due to the high transaction costs and tough collateral requirements, small businesses are facing great problems in getting loans from banks

and emphasized that the government should address this issue to increase their share in the total credit of the private sector. It will enable businesses to play an enhanced role in the economic development of the country. He assured that ICCI would cooperate with ICSTSI in resolving the key issues of small traders and small industries to facilitate their better growth. Sajjad Sarwar, President, Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders

and Small Industries said that close liaison and cooperation between ICCI and ICSTSI will prove effective in serving the cause of the business community. He said that the economy of Pakistan is passing through a difficult time and stressed that promoting the ease of doing business should be the top priority of the government to improve the economy. He emphasized that CDA should build parking plazas in markets to address the longstanding issues of traders and focus on better development of all markets. He said that small traders and small industries are making useful contributions towards the economy and urged that the government should focus on resolving their key issues to facilitate their better growth. Faad Waheed Senior Vice President and Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI demanded that FBR, CDA, ICT Administration and other business-related government departments should cooperate with the business community in promoting business activities that would help improve the economy.

Loss-making entities to be privatized

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Privatization Fawad Hassan Fawad on Thursday expressed the firm resolve of the government to privatize major loss-making state-owned enterprises to avoid a substantial financial drain of national resources as well as enhancing their working efficiencies. The minister held a meeting with the Country Head of the World Bank Najy Benhassine and discussed the caretaker government's strategic agenda for privatization, with specific attention to privatizing Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and optimizing the performance of Distri-

bution Companies (DISCOs). This concerted effort aims to rectify substantial financial losses incurred by these entities and thereby alleviate the fiscal burden on the government, said a press release. The Minister said that the federal government including the Apex committee of SIFC, comprising civil bureaucracy, military leadership, and political stakeholders, have unanimously agreed to undertake the privatization of major loss-making State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) which are already on the privatization list. He said that the PIA has emerged as the foremost priority

for privatization due to its persistent and staggering financial losses, amounting to billions of rupees annually, adding that privatizing PIA is considered imperative to remove these losses and improve its operational efficiency. Fawad Hassan Fawad explained the outlines of the PIA privatization plan, expressing the government's intention to engage the World Bank and other financial institutions at the initial phases of this effort. The overarching objective is to attract much-needed private investment through the privatization process, thereby unlocking govern-

ment funds for deployment in vital infrastructure development and other strategic sectors. The Minister highlighted the intention to develop a comprehensive model for PIA, with the World Bank remaining a key partner for potential future support. He also discussed DISCOs given their substantial annual losses, which currently stand at \$2.5 billion. Two productive sessions with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) have already occurred, focusing on formulating a long-term concession model to mitigate these losses, he added—APP

Dr. Saqib describes teachers as fountains of wisdom

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib has described teachers as "Fountains of Knowledge and Wisdom" and emphasized the importance of paying homage to these noble individuals who dedicate their lives to nurture the future. Addressing an event on World Teachers Day, organized in collaboration with UNESCO and Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), Dr. Amjad Saqib drew a parallel between the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and the modern-day significance of teachers, underlining the timeless value attributed to those who impart knowledge and moral values. The Chairman of BISP and Akhuwat Foundation further illuminated the three interconnected elements of 'Society, Teacher, and Student'. He asserted that without the respect and recognition of teachers, society can never achieve true success and progress. Teachers, he stated, are the architects of a brighter future, molding students into responsible citizens and better human beings. Addressing the students directly, Dr. Amjad Saqib advised them to earnestly follow the teachings of their teachers, as they are the sources of knowledge and character.—DNA

Economic ties between Pakistan and Kazakhstan discussed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a move towards enhancing economic cooperation and bilateral trade, Pakistan's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Gohar Ejaz, engaged in a Zoom meeting with the Minister of Trade and Integration of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Shakkaliyev Arman. The virtual meeting served as a platform for both nations to explore opportunities for a mutually beneficial partnership and to foster greater economic collaboration. Minister Shakkaliyev Arman began the discussions by highlighting the deep-rooted friendship and the untapped potential for trade between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. He emphasized the need for expanding cooperation in various sectors and increasing the trade volume between the two nations. Minister Arman expressed particular interest in exploring trade opportunities in agricultural products and the potential for transit trade and logistics through Pakistani ports of Gwadar and Karachi, facilitating access to South Asian markets. Dr. Gohar Ejaz, Pakistan's Minister of Commerce and Industry, reciprocated the enthusiasm for closer economic ties, acknowledging Kazakhstan's remarkable progress as a regional player.

UN Women to launch podcast series

DNA

ISLAMABAD: UN Women Pakistan is excited to announce the launch of its pioneering podcast series, "Gender Talks", on 6 October 2023. This persuasive podcast aims to initiate meaningful conversations to inspire positive change for gender equality and women empowerment in Pakistan and beyond. "Gender Talks" will provide a powerful platform to amplify the voices of women, men, and transpersons, promoting dialogue necessary for sustainable change. The inaugural season of "Gender Talks" features a collection of dynamic episodes that delve into a wide range of topics, including women's empowerment, gender-based violence, economic opportunities for women, and more. The first episode features guests Nilofar Bakhtiar, chairperson of the National Commission for the Status of Women in Pakistan and Sharmeela Rasool, Country Representative for UN Women in Pakistan. The podcast will be hosted by Nabila Malik, UN Women Communications Expert.

Sanjrani extends appreciation to teachers

ISLAMABAD: In connection with World Teachers' Day, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has released a poignant message expressing sincere gratitude to the dedicated educators across the nation. In his statement, the Chairman Senate commended the tireless efforts of teachers in shaping the future of Pakistan, said a news release issued here on Thursday. He highlighted the invaluable contribution of educators, emphasizing their crucial role in building a knowledgeable and empowered society. Sadiq Sanjrani further underscores the Senate's commitment to advancing education through the recently established Education Parliamentarians Caucus (EPC). This caucus aims to support and work towards an educated society in Pakistan, promoting education for all. By recognizing and appreciating the pivotal role of teachers, the Senate, through EPC, reaffirms its dedication to fostering a robust educational landscape for the nation. The message encourages a collective celebration of the profound impact teachers have on the lives of individuals and the development of the nation as a whole.—APP

Iqbal calls for investing in youth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, has emphasized the Muslim world to invest in youth for socioeconomic development. He was addressing the Mustafa PBUH Prize distribution ceremony in Isfahan. He said that we can together change the world by bringing global science, innovation, and education to every corner. Prof. Choudhary said that we live in a world which is defined by knowledge and its application. He quoted Pakistani

Nobel Laureate Prof. Abdus Salam, "the developing countries differ from developed countries not only because they have less wealth and capital but because they have less knowledge". He termed the launching of Mustafa PBUH Prize the most significant in STI landscape of the Muslim world, and said that it has now earned global trust and recognition. Prof. Choudhary said that the OIC is the second largest group of countries after the United Nations. He said that over 50% population in OIC region is below the age of 25 years. He said that this tremendous

pool of vigor and creativity requires adequate and relevant education. He informed that COMSTECH has initiated many programs to promote STI capacity of youth through inter-Islamic cooperation. He said that the socioeconomic development is no longer dependent on natural resources, knowledge is the main fuel which runs the engine of world economies. He said 12 disruptive technologies will generate a wealth of over 33 trillion dollars by the year 2025, as reported by 2019 report of McKensy Global Institute. Prof. Choudhary mentioned

that science, technology and education need political support, increased budgets, women participation, R&D expenditure on disruptive technologies, emphasis on patent and IPR protection, S&T collaboration and inculcation of increased interest of science learning in youth. He said that the best model for socioeconomic development for the Muslim world is to invest in capacity building of youth. Prof. Choudhary expressed his greetings to the organizers of Mustafa PBUH prize ceremony for putting together magnificent festival of recognizing excellence.

PIDE's Innovative Collaboration for Transformation

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, a nation steadfast in its commitment to overcoming economic and governance challenges, is poised to embark on a transformative journey towards sustainable national development. Recognizing the urgency of comprehensive reforms as the bedrock of progress, Pakistan seeks to revitalize its economic outlook, enhance its business environment, and elevate its global trade standing. Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, Vice Chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), made these remarks during the opening of the Third Think Tank Moot, hosted by PIDE. Dr. Shujaat Farooq, Dean of PIDE, provided background on the Think Tank Moot, highlighting its role as a unique platform for esteemed partners and thought leaders to collectively address transformative and sustainable reforms. The Moot fosters the exchange of intellectual capital and actionable strategies, transcending individual efforts to leave a profound impact on policymaking. It will culminate in regular meet-ups, allowing each think tank the opportunity to present their agendas, engage in discussions, and forge a consensus on reform priorities. The discussions at the event revolved around critical reform areas, with each think tank contributing insights and ideas enriched by innovative strategies and approaches. PIDE's researchers presented compelling briefings on "Catalyzing Inclusive Economic Growth via Structural Reforms" and "Optimizing Governance for Effective Policy Execution and Impact Evaluation." Participants

emphasized that in today's world, having ideas means having access to funds, extending to politics and governance. Financial resources are vital for driving positive change and addressing societal issues. Contrary to common belief, smuggling is not the root cause of economic challenges in many countries; import tariffs often have a more significant impact. Recognizing this distinction empowers policymakers to focus on the real issue and implement appropriate solutions. To ensure meaningful and sustainable development, a theme-wise reform agenda should be established, tailored to tackle key challenges

across various sectors. Public engagement is crucial, as the collective wisdom and diverse perspectives of the people can lead to more inclusive and effective policies. Inadequate eco-agendas within political parties pose a significant challenge. To address this, individuals passionate about environmental issues must be united. Forming teams of researchers and policymakers can uncover the root causes of environmental problems and develop comprehensive solutions. Complex societal challenges cannot be solved by legislation alone. Educational reforms hold the potential to shape

responsible citizens capable of tackling future challenges. Focusing on educational reforms that nurture critical thinking, empathy, and sustainability is key. In the digital age, access to information and resources is paramount. Prioritizing free access to digital resources and ensuring affordable internet access can bridge the digital divide, unlocking opportunities for education, innovation, and economic growth. In conclusion, recognizing the availability of funds for ideas, understanding the impact of import tariffs, establishing a theme-wise reform agenda, encouraging public par-

ticipation, addressing political parties' shortcomings, focusing on educational reforms, and promoting free access to digital resources and the internet are crucial steps towards a more prosperous and sustainable future. Together, we can shape a better world for generations to come. According to the Press Release issued from the PIDE, Islamabad office, following the culmination of the Third Think Tank Moot, a platform for fostering diverse perspectives and innovative ideas, participants from various sectors and backgrounds have united to address the pressing issues affecting Pakistan's economic development. Under the overarching theme of "Collaborative Reforms for Prosperity," participants have put forth a Joint Resolution encompassing key themes and actionable steps to guide the nation's path towards sustainable growth and prosperity. Representatives from numerous think tanks and universities in the federal capital, including SZABIST, SDPI, PRIED Policy Research Institute for Equitable Development (PRIED), IPS Institute of Policy Studies, POP Council, PSF Pakistan Science Foundation, QAU, Islamabad, IPRI, CDPI Customer Data Platform Institute, PRIME Institute organization, COPAIR Centre of Pakistan and International Relations, ISSI Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, IPS Institute of Policy Studies, Pakistan Economic Forum, CRSS Centre of Research and Security Studies, Wealth Pk, Independent News Pakistan, CGR Centre of Governance Research, PMAS Arid University, International Islamic University, COMSATs University participated in the historic event.



Briefs

Aneeq stresses eternal legacy of Holy Prophet

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed on Thursday the era of Prophethood had concluded, yet the everlasting legacy of the Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him persevered. Addressing the third annual 'Seerat-un-Nabi Conference' organized under Auqaf Islamabad here at Faisal Mosque as special guest, he opined that a single life was not enough to gain a profound comprehension of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him)'s exalted and virtuous character. Minister Aneeq further emphasized that the Holy Quran instructed us to follow the path shown by the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) raising question whether we had learned from His life and incorporated it into our own lives. He highlighted the success in following the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him)'s teachings, stating, "True believers are those whose character and conduct reflect the qualities of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)." He said, "If our way does not align with the noble path of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), it is a complete failure."—DNA

PTCL Group signs Iconic Pakistani cricketers as brand ambassadors

DNA

ISLAMABAD - October 04, 2023: Pakistan's largest telecom services provider, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G) has signed Pakistani cricket icons, Babar Azam, Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah as brand ambassadors for the Group to celebrate the nation's roaring passion for cricket and to rally support for the Pakistan Cricket Team during its ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 campaign. World's No. 01 batsman and Captain of the Pakistan Cricket Team, Babar Azam is Ufone 4G's current brand ambassador, who is featuring in Ufone 4G's brand new marketing campaign, 'U Tou Babar Hai', implying that both Ufone 4G and its customers are as talented and motivated, and worthy of glory in their respective fields as the World No. 01 ODI batsman. The campaign comes at an important juncture where the entire nation is in the grip of cricket fever ahead of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023, where Babar Azam will lead the men in green. The campaign is primarily a tribute to Babar Azam's unrelenting winning spirit and a call to every Pakistani to explore their inner 'unstoppable' Babar for ultimate success. The creative teams have masterfully crafted the TV Commercial (TVC) to capture Babar Azam's formidable on-screen presence, matchless cricketing prowess, and his 'unstoppable' pursuit of excellence.

NPO to organize webinar on "Boost Business Efficiency"

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) will conduct a webinar on 'Boost Business Efficiency through Waste Control and Recycling' on October 12 (Thursday). The purpose of the training workshop is to equip top line executives with latest management tools to understand the marketing, financial and production excellence, according to an NPO document shared here Thursday. The objective of the training aimed at to use data set for analysis to reduce waste and non-value-added activities, and learn the tools and techniques to enhance business efficiency. The workshop provides information related to marketing efficiency, financial excellence, operations excellence, quality and productivity and business efficiency. It also highlights big data and industry 4.0, descriptive data analytics, diagnostics data analytics.—APP

PCI receives multiple entries for photography competition

According to timeline of the competition, which was intended to capture the essence and impact of CPEC and other BRI projects in Pakistan, photos relating to CPEC and BRI projects in Pakistan in the categories of "Infrastructure and Development; People and Stories; and Environmental Impact" can be submitted by October 07

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A nationwide photography competition, launched to showcase the progress of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), was gaining momentum as Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) has received hundreds of entries for the contest.

Closing date for receipt of photographs to be included in the "Nationwide Best Belt & Road Initiative Projects Photography Competition" launched by the Ministry of Information and

Broadcasting in collaboration with PCI is October 7, 2023.

According to timeline of the competition, which was intended to capture the essence and impact of CPEC and other BRI projects in Pakistan, photos relating to CPEC and BRI projects in Pakistan in the categories of "Infrastructure and Development; People and Stories; and Environmental Impact" can be submitted by October 07. The winners will be announced on October 10, after judged by a panel of renowned photographers, artists and relevant government bodies on October 08-09. The prize distribution

ceremony and exhibition, to be co-hosted by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Pakistan-China Institute will be held on October 12, 2023 and will be attended by dignitaries, officials and media.

Executive Director General, External Publicity Wing of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ms. Ambreen Jan chaired a follow-up meeting here on Thursday to review arrangements for the competition. Besides the Head of PCI, Mustafa Syed, the meeting was attended by Deputy Director General, PID, Raisa Adil and other senior officers from the ministry

and its attached departments. Ms. Ambreen Jan assured the PCI of all out cooperation of the Ministry and its attached departments including PTV, Radio Pakistan, APP, PID, EP Wing, IP Wing, DEMP and others to do all in making the photography competition a success by using their multi-media platforms. Mustafa Syed briefed the meeting about aims and objectives of the nationwide photography competition, its procedure and timeline said that PCI has so far received hundreds of entries for the photography competition. The meeting was told that Pakistan-China Institute, a

non-governmental, non-partisan, non-political think-tank which endeavors to promote people to people ties between Pakistan and China, will also organize a trip to China for award winners by developing a detailed itinerary and coordinating all travel logistics. Today's meeting was a follow-up of the earlier meeting held on September 25, with Secretary Information and Broadcasting Zahoor Ahmed in chair during which he had stated that besides highlighting the CPEC and BRI projects, the photography competition will also help further strengthen the close and deep-rooted ties between Pakistan and China.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Tugio called on Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf Saeed Al Maliki.—DNA

CDA demolishes 7,867 illegal structures

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Directorate of Enforcement, Capital Development Authority (CDA) has demolished over 7,867 illegal structures in the markets, roads, green belts, and sidewalk tracks in the federal capital in one and a half years. "During the operation, around 13,243 items of encroachers have also been confiscated, subsequently, these articles are auctioned. Besides, fines worth Rs. 5.126 million has also been recovered from trespassers as a penalty," sources in the CDA told APP. They said, "The Directorate of Enforcement has launched as many as 1,423 anti-encroachment operations carried out across the

board in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). The sources said, "The Directorate was vigorously undertaking anti-encroachment operations on a regular basis throughout Islamabad in order to curb the illegal constructions in the ICT." They said the continuous operations were being carried out on a day-to-day basis 24/7 for the retrieval of state land from land grabbers and encroachers.

The matter was being dealt with by the Directorate of Municipal Administration, working under the administrative control of the Municipal Corporation Islamabad (MCI), they added.

About the steps taken for the protection of citizens, provision of emergency medical assistance, and water facility on hiking

tracks, they said, "The forest guards keep patrolling throughout the day in all the trails and hiking tracks of Margalla Hills, National Park." Moreover, they said the forest guards were equipped with wireless sets which were connected to the centralized control room of the Environment Wing, CDA, whenever any untoward situation arises at any trail or hiking track, these forest guards directly communicate with the centralized control room system, where the control room further calls on rescue teams to attend medical emergencies.

"Any type of water pipeline and provision of electricity in Margalla Hills National Park is prohibited to avoid any hazard to wildlife except notified villages," they added.

Islamabad police conducts special anti-riots training exercises

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police organized specialized anti-riot training exercises to enhance their readiness for any peace and security-related situations. During these training sessions, police personnel showcased their proficiency in maintaining peace, protecting both public and private properties, confronting criminal elements, and conducting arrests. The exercises also featured demonstrations of advanced techniques, including the use of water cannons, A police spokesman said. The police officials effectively displayed their ability to disperse unlawful protests using six distinct formations, each encompassing various tactics and techniques for managing and controlling such situations. These formations were strategically designed to equip the police force with the capability to handle unlawful protests through a variety of tactics.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi, paid a farewell call on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.—DNA

NUST 5G research lab to drive technological advancements

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) 5G Research Lab partners with OPPO, a global leader renowned for its cutting-edge technology and innovation, and Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital communications company. This alliance marks a historic moment in Pakistan's technological landscape, solidifying its commitment to driving innovation and spearheading technological advancements in the country, said a news release. The collaboration of NUST's esteemed 5G Research Lab is poised to explore new horizons in the realm of 5G technology, ensuring Pakistan's prominent position in the global technological revolution. By pooling their resources and expertise, OPPO, Jazz, and NUST aimed to accelerate the development and deployment of 5G technology in Pakistan, ushering in an era of unparalleled connectivity.—APP

Court Notice

In the Court of Naveed Abbas Mangat Civil Judge Gujrat

Title: Syed Javad Raza. Versus Province of Punjab etc.

Notice to: 8-Muhammad Arshad, 9-Qamar Hussain Sons Amanat Ali R/o. Garhi Shareef Tehsil & District Gujrat..

Suit for Declaration with consequential relief Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 09-10-2023, otherwise case will be decided ex party.

Lip and palate patients to be treated on Friday

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A free medical camp will be held here on Friday to treat Cleft lip and palate patients. It is being arranged by Islamabad Cleft Lip and Palate Association (ICLAPA). According to the Association's senior member Mrs. Farhat Akhtar Rehman, an ICLAPA's team of surgeons will treat and operate the affected children. The parents of the affected children could contact Mrs. Farhat on phone numbers 03335157676 and 0300-5192490 to get the treatment. The Association had been providing free medical facilities to the poor families since 2004 with the support of families, friends and philanthropists. The ICLAPA was a group of volunteers, which relied on donors to bring hope and happiness in the lives of people, for whom it was financially difficult to give treatment to their children.

Turkish classes start at NIHCR Quaid-i-Azam University

ISLAMABAD: Turkish classes have been started in National Institute of Historical & Cultural Research (Center of Excellence) Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad with the collaboration Yunus Emre Institute Turkey. Vice-Chancellor, Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar, formally inaugurated the classes in ceremony held here yesterday. While addressing the students as Chief Guest, teachers and scholars, VC QAU expressed his happiness and determination and said that the cultural, civilizational and historical development between Pakistan and Turkey will be enhanced by the promotion of Turkish language. He said the main objective of educational institutions is to make students skilled, responsible and civilized citizens. He said the educational institutions have to expose them to education compatible with modern sciences and arts, so that they can cope with the modern world. Dr Niaz Akhtar further said the language is the guarantee of cultural identity and survival of any region and an important and reliable source of understanding its culture and lifestyle. — DNA

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 03 Issue: 360

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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Sunak's 'jam tomorrow' speech fails voters

RISHI Sunak's speech to delegates at the Conservative party conference was an attempt to present himself as a radical break from a failed political and economic consensus. This is a gamble that smacks of desperation and panic. Voters blame the Conservatives for the country's parlous state. The Labour party looks on course to win the next election, which is probably just a year away. This week, many Tories were obsessed not with losing power but rather with the ferocious fight for the leadership that they think will follow an inevitable defeat. Campaigning as a change candidate is the option of last resort for Mr Sunak. He needs to convince voters that the Tory party, in power for 13 years, has not run out of steam. Mr Sunak is his own man: he is more fiscally conservative than Liz Truss, Boris Johnson and Theresa May. Among his proposals to fix the country were cutting waste, reducing demand on the NHS by banning today's children from ever smoking, and improving the quality of workers by making students study maths and English until 18. The last of these policies won't be ready until 2033 – somewhat blunting its electoral appeal. But Mr Sunak's big decision was the worst-kept secret of the week. In Manchester he confirmed that he would scrap the northern leg of the rail line HS2. This was a mistake, one amplified by making it in the very city that would have been one of the scheme's principal beneficiaries. But the move allowed him to cast the project as a white elephant, one which benefited the vested interests that pushed for it. Under Mr Sunak, only the London-to-Birmingham leg will remain – with the prime minister claiming that the resources would be better redistributed to connect cities in England's north with each other, rather than with the capital. In itself, this is not an unattractive prospect. But it is a "jam tomorrow" policy. Given how easily promises about HS2 were discarded, offering such a pledge engenders little confidence that it will be kept. The Tory leader's address aimed to redraw the remain/leave divide by seeking a cross-class alliance against those who identify with the political consensus that has existed since Margaret Thatcher left office. Woven into the speech were the staple themes of migration, motoring and woke culture, as well as cheap jibes at alleged "rip-off degrees". In parts this felt like a standard monologue on the rightwing TV channel GB News. The crisis in British society, of which the 2016 Brexit vote was a symptom, is ongoing. The Conservative party cannot reconcile voters' desire for better public services with its own small-state instincts. Mr Sunak's hero is the former chancellor Nigel Lawson, who endorsed him in last summer's Tory leadership race, suggesting the Thatcherite "election-winning formula" was to tackle inflation by shrinking the state and then offering tax cuts. Mr Sunak seems to be following such a strategy. But the deeper the malaise that Britons feel, the more transformational the solutions that are needed. These are not on offer. That might explain why the Tory vote share remains stubbornly behind Labour's, despite high-profile announcements on net zero and immigration. Income inequality in the UK is among the highest in Europe.



The view on Kevin McCarthy's removal

STUNNING. Unprecedented. Uncharted territory. A first in American history. Kevin McCarthy's removal as speaker of the House of Representatives on Tuesday was a startling moment. But it only confirmed that the predictable thing about American politics is now its unpredictability. Chaos and dysfunction increasingly look not anomalous but characteristic. The Biden administration's aura of calm stewardship can only go so far, because the saboteurs hold significant chunks of government machinery. The bitter divisions within the Republican party keep the rest of the country captive. A party once known for its ruthless discipline is obviously unmanageable; Donald Trump piously bemoaned the infighting of a party he has done more than anyone to break. Mr McCarthy's removal by a handful of his own party's lawmakers came on the same day that the former president, and likely Republican presidential nominee, was in court on fraud charges – only one of the multitude of civil and criminal cases bearing down on him, none of which have dented his popularity. Stories that would once have dominated the news for a week or more now jostle for coverage. In another courtroom, Hunter Biden became the first child of an incumbent president to be criminally prosecuted, pleading not guilty to federal gun charges. It is less than three years since an armed mob stormed the Capitol. Six in 10 Republicans still don't believe that Joe Biden won legitimately in 2020. Last week, House Republicans launched a confected impeachment inquiry – equal parts fishing expedition and misinformation exercise. Threatening to shut down the government and leading the country to the brink of default on its debt has become almost routine for them. It took Mr McCarthy 15 roll-call votes to become speaker in the first place, and he only succeeded after agreeing to make it easier to remove him. He held the post for less than a year before far-right Republicans moved against him, apparently motivated largely by ego, spite and anger that he had worked with Democrats to pass a short-term funding bill to avert shutdown. (It is, perhaps, another sign of the times that the ringleader, Matt Gaetz, is under investigation by the House ethics committee over allegations of sexual misconduct and misuse of funds.) Mr McCarthy gave Democrats little reason to back him on Tuesday. Quite apart from a shameful record which includes voting to overturn the 2020 election results, he attacked Democrats for "trying to shut down the government" after relying on their votes for the funding bill, and offered them nothing. It is entirely possible that his successor may be worse. The frontrunners are Jim Jordan and Steve Scalise, who reportedly once called himself "David Duke [the former Ku Klux Klan leader] without the baggage". Whoever wins will have to contend with the same ultraconservatives. Partial government shutdown looms again, with a 17 November deadline to provide more money. And Mr McCarthy's departure is felt far from Washington: Democrats backed the spending bill shorn of funding for Ukraine, believing he would help to see it through separately. Beyond Kyiv's immediate need lies necessity of firming up longer-term support in the west.

From economic collapse to economic stability

Qamar Bashir



The recent actions taken by the interim government and establishment are like a melodious tune to our ears. For a long time, we yearned to witness strong actions against these criminals

IN a recent interview, on a national TV channel Mr. Shabbar Zaidi underwent a striking transformation in his views on Pakistan's economy. Just days earlier, he had been painting a grim picture of impending economic challenges. However, in an unexpected shift, Mr. Shabbar exhibited a newfound optimism about Pakistan's economic prospects. Initially, Mr. Shabbar had been attributing the failure to combat smuggling and tax evasion, especially within the real estate sector, to former Army Chief General Javid Qamar Bajwa and the corps commander of the southern command. However, he abruptly reversed course, now placing the blame for hoarding, smuggling, and tax evasion squarely on the shoulders of Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and the political elite. Mr. Shabbar didn't hold back when he attributed a significant portion of Pakistan's current economic and financial challenges, specifically around 80%, to the policies of the PML(N) government, and the rest 20% on other political parties without qualifying his sweeping statement. A few days ago, Mr. Shabbar strongly advocated that the solution to Pakistan's struggling economy lay in conducting free and fair elections and establishing a fully representative government. He saw this as the ultimate remedy for the financial challenges plaguing the nation. Now, Mr. Shabbar suggested that any political party assuming power in the future would likely reverse the positive measures implemented by the interim government, potentially plunging

the country back into dire economic and financial straits. This shift in his perspective added an intriguing dimension to the ongoing economic discourse. In a somewhat unconventional move, he suggested that, instead of holding elections, the country should consider forming a national government comprising patriotic, competent, and eminent individuals from all parties. However, he didn't elaborate on the constitutional, legal, or lawful means to achieve this objective. Earlier, he has also been emphatic about the government's need to officially declare a technical default, a stance he has maintained consistently. However, now he took a surprisingly optimistic view regarding Pakistan's economic and financial prospects. He declared that the positive steps taken by the current government including cracking down on hoarders and mafias, enforcing stricter border controls, imposing a 10% processing fee on Afghan transit trade, and clamping down on illegal currency dealers, have addressed many fundamental economic and financial distortions. Interestingly, he appeared to backtrack from his prior statement, once uttered with unwavering confidence, that there were no viable solutions to the country's present economic and financial woes. This shift in his perspective left many wondering why he had initially painted such a doomsday scenario. It's possible that Mr. Shabbar's earlier assessment was based on the assumption that the establishment would maintain its existing posture, effectively supporting the status quo regarding issues such as smuggling, illegal arms dealing, and influential mafias. However, to the surprise of not only Mr. Shabbar but perhaps the entire nation, a new era seems to be dawning in Pakistan, a departure from the established norms and a potential shift towards addressing these long standing issues head on. The leadership at the helm has showcased an unwavering resolve and a determination as unyielding as solid steel. Their resounding proclamation echoes clearly: "There is no choice but to rise." In a fearless and unequivocal message to the public, they have issued a stern warning: Anyone found engaged in illegal, unlawful, anti-state, criminal activities, or corruption, regardless of their stature, whether they hold the rank of a general, brigadier, colonel, or occupy high-ranking bureaucratic positions, or even if they are at the helm of the most influential mafias, politicians, real estate magnates, business titans, or foreign actors, will be met with the full force of the state's power, without exception or bias. This unequivocal message seemed to be more than sufficient to instill discipline and order throughout the ranks. In response, the authorities conducted a relentless crackdown on water hydrants, which had been draining the lifeblood of the nation. Their facilities were dismantled, and their tankers confiscated. They carried out unrelenting operations against electricity theft, disconnecting illicit connections, confiscating meters, imposing hefty fines, and placing offenders behind bars. This demonstrated an unwavering commitment to restoring law and order in the coun-

try. The authorities have successfully identified all foreign nationals who were engaging in thriving illegal and legal businesses while fraudulently acquiring Pakistani National Identity Cards (NICs). Many of these individuals were leading comfortable lives even without proper documentation. They have been given a month to vacate the country. In a decisive move, the government cracked down on powerful foreign currency dealers who were shamelessly, ruthlessly, and criminally depleting the nation's financial resources. These dealers were either selling Pakistan's precious foreign currency reserves to foreigners or to those who had amassed ill-gotten wealth for hoarding, all under the impunity and protection of influential mafias. They have been apprehended, their ill-gotten and illicit currencies confiscated, and their businesses shuttered, ensuring that they can no longer operate with impunity. Since our inception, we've witnessed a disheartening pattern: Over 80% of the Afghan Transit trade, once it reached Afghanistan, was illicitly funneled back into Pakistan. This nefarious operation occurred under the collusion and protection of law enforcement agencies. It inflicted grievous wounds upon our economy, decimating the local industry due to the influx of foreign, inexpensive, and substandard goods. Additionally, it deprived the national exchequer of crucial taxes and duties. What is even more alarming is that this detrimental practice continued for decades, despite a clear understanding of its adverse consequences, with successive governments, politicians, establishments, and law enforcement agencies choosing to turn a blind eye to the issue. They all were busy accumulating unimaginable wealth by letting this deplorable practice continue unabated, benefiting the Afghans and Afghan government and inflicting infectious and incurable wounds to the country's economy and its financial wellbeing. The Afghan government and its people, who were the primary beneficiaries of this deplorable illegal process, became increasingly audacious and confident. They believed that this practice would persist due to perceived political obligations, a notion that was, unfortunately, validated by Pakistan's historical appeasement policy toward Afghanistan. Despite being fully aware of the severe harm it caused to Pakistan's interests, successive governments and establishments pursued this policy. This complacency reached a point where it threatened the very existence of Pakistan. Afghanistan not only provided shelter to secessionists, separatists, and rebels from within Pakistan but also offered safe havens to groups like the TTP and Baloch insurgents. To date, they continue to refuse to take action against these elements and even enable them to launch terrorist attacks from Afghan soil into Pakistan. These attacks have resulted in the loss of numerous innocent lives, including law enforcement personnel, all with complete impunity. When pressed to take measures against criminals and terrorists operating from its territory, Afghanistan not only sidestepped responsibility but also shifted the blame onto the government of Pakistan and its law enforcement agen-

cies. They accused Pakistan of complacency and taunted them, insinuating an inability to control and restrain their own citizens, deflecting responsibility for addressing the pressing security concerns emanating from their soil. Their audacity reached such levels that they even cultivated Afghans who had found shelter, sustenance, clothing, and business opportunities in Pakistan, turning them into facilitators, abettors, and accomplices for launching terrorist attacks within Pakistan. They seemed confident that Pakistan's government, in an attempt to maintain favorable relations with the United Nations and adhere to its appeasement policy toward the Afghan government, would continue to turn a blind eye. However, what they didn't anticipate was the transformation in Pakistan's stance. Under the leadership of the resolute Army Chief and a government determined to prioritize national interests above all else, Pakistan has adopted a different mindset. It is now prepared to take decisive steps in its own national interest, without hesitation, fear, favor, or discrimination, and without showing mercy when required. As someone who has witnessed numerous governments and establishments not only turning a blind eye to but also benefiting from a wide range of illegal activities and processes, including the Afghan transit trade, smuggling of petroleum products, goods, and foodstuffs from Iran, as well as the hoarding and smuggling of essential commodities such as wheat, sugar, oil, fertilizer, cement, and more to various countries, including those in Central Asia, it was disheartening. The export of wheat and sugar when it was urgently needed domestically, followed by their expensive import, often accompanied by substantial government subsidies, reflects a troubling pattern. This, coupled with rampant corruption, widespread gas, water, and electricity theft, and the unchecked looting of state resources with impunity, paints a stark picture of the challenges Pakistan has faced in combating these longstanding issues. The recent actions taken by the interim government and establishment are like a melodious tune to our ears. For a long time, we yearned to witness strong actions against these criminals. The failure of successive governments to address these issues had caused us countless sleepless nights and drained away much of our hope for progress and development, especially when we saw neighboring nations and countries worldwide advancing steadily. Deep down, we always believed in the resilience of our nation and the strength of our institutions. We knew that we could achieve great things, provided we had the determination and will to do so. Thankfully, the current administration has demonstrated this much-needed resolve and commitment. We have begun to witness a shift in the right direction, a change that even someone like Mr. Shabbar Zaidi, known for his doomsday scenarios, has applauded as life-saving measures taken by the interim government.
— Former Press Secretary to the President, Former MD, SRBC, Former Minister Press, Embassy of Pakistan to France

Taiwan: A flashpoint of conflict between China and US

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



China is a bigger threat to Asian countries than Russia, but in the absence of a comprehensive US-led diplomatic campaign, Washington cannot support Taiwan in the Taiwan crisis. Many analysts believe that if China invades the Democratic Republic of Taiwan, many countries will remain on the coast. Such a campaign by Beijing to tarnish Taiwan's international image could be dangerous as if a dispute and erupts, it may signal...

AFTER the Russian invasion of Ukraine, there were concerns in western capitals over whether China might take similar action in Taiwan. Against this backdrop, Speaker Pelosi's visit to Taiwan has prompted some security scholars to predict a fourth cross-strait crisis. China will likely ensure that it punishes Taiwan enough to prevent future visits like Pelosi's. This may include economic action, limited military signaling and selective diplomatic action in bilateral and multilateral fora, and aggressive cyber repression. In response, Taiwan and the United States are likely to continue building deterrent defense capabilities to deter Chinese aggression. The US may continue to signal its increased presence and commitment to the region through freedom of shipping operations in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea, while keeping lines of communication open to avoid unintended tensions with Beijing. China and Russia believe the United States is playing the role of an arrogant player. This thinking has emerged in many parts of the world, including China. The People's Republic of China places all responsibility for the violence and destruction in Europe on Washington. Russia supports Chinese principle and affirms that Taiwan is a part of China and opposes any form of Taiwan's independence. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has shown that the world should take seriously what Xi and Putin are saying, especially when they speak in their own language. Both countries are determined to destroy the US alliance by force whenever it would be possible. Xi and Putin means that the US alliance has been formed over their opposition and they will oppose it. Statements by top Chinese diplomats should not be dismissed as mere propaganda. This is a clear warning to Washington to abandon its strategy in the Indo-Pacific, and Beijing reserves the option of resistance. From this point of view, Russia's invasion of Ukraine sets an example. Beijing has also warned small countries such as Ukraine to stay away from US plots. According to Beijing, sympathy for Ukraine is good but it is not good to be used as a pawn in Washington's efforts to maintain geopolitical dominance. These messages are also being heard in those countries that remain neutral in international politics. Russia and China continue to oppose any attempt by foreign powers to undermine security and stability in their respective territories. That why China and Russia also oppose further NATO expansion and have called on the North Atlantic Treaty Organiza-

tion to abandon Cold War ideological methods. China and Russia also oppose the formation of a bloc in the Asia-Pacific region and remain wary of the negative effects of the US Indo-Pacific strategy on peace and stability in the region. The two countries also express deep concern over the trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, which provides deep cooperation between its members in the areas of strategic stability, especially in the nuclear field. Both Beijing and Moscow believe that such measures contradict the security and sustainable development goals of the Asia-Pacific region and it will increase the risk of an arms race in the region, which also poses a serious threat to nuclear non-proliferation. Opposition to President Xi and Putin's Biden administration's new Australia-British-US (AUKUS) initiative has led to violations of non-proliferation treaties. This opposition is also echoing in the West. On the other hand, Australia, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan are committed to supporting Ukraine. Most Southeast Asian nations have supported NATO, Ukraine and the United States. The Philippines and Indonesia also voted in favor of condemning Russia but India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam did not. Indo-Pacific countries, such as Saudi Arabia, have also not backed coalition efforts against Russia. Such neutrality and indifference is a growing problem in international affairs and undermines counter-terrorism efforts. There is a growing sense in the West that a new Cold War is going to be started but most of the world does not see things that way. China is a bigger threat to Asian countries than Russia, but in the absence of a comprehensive US-led diplomatic campaign, Washington cannot support Taiwan in the Taiwan crisis. Many analysts believe that if China invades the Democratic Republic of Taiwan, many countries will remain on the coast. Such a campaign by Beijing to tarnish Taiwan's international image could be dangerous as if a dispute and erupts, it may signal Taiwan's diplomatic isolation that Taiwan is the only province China will bring back. China also has strong economic ties with every country. The United States will need to defend Taiwan, and it often uses its diplomatic and other tactics to keep it at bay. Many countries and US allies do not necessarily agree with all Chinese statements about Taiwan and justify their neutrality. US diplomacy should highlight that China is backtracking on its commitment to peace and endangering the stability of law and order

in the region while it is committed to maintaining peace under the Taiwan Relations Act. Washington needs to make sure that it does not distance itself from countries or regions that oppose China and Russia. However, the United States has also given China and Russia the opportunity to wield considerable influence in key regions such as the Persian Gulf. The lack of a US trade vision for Southeast Asia and the lack of a security system are obstacles to form a bloc. But Washington only sees how quickly military aid can be delivered and how quickly the right weapons system can get into the right hands in a crisis. Washington does not need to provoke China, but the two states must make promises and work for peace. There are lessons to be learned from Ukraine's failed deterrence efforts. It should be noted that the prevention of war in Ukraine has failed. The United States has no military ties with Ukraine, so it could not help Ukraine directly except through rhetoric. Although the United States has armed Ukraine with disproportionate weapons that could destroy Russia's major weapons system but it has not been able to stop Putin from going to war. On the other hand, Taiwan is also under threat from China and a similar approach will not work to stop China because the United States is not militarily engaged with the island. The United States must build Taiwan's military so that it can work together as an ally to counter the various threats of repression. But that requires careful coalition management, as Washington has been practicing with other potential coalition partners. China relies on global markets for everything from technology and energy to food and agriculture, major metals, minerals and capital. In fact, China's dependency on the global economy did not stop it from trading with Russia. Washington will have to maintain strong ties with all major suppliers in China. In short, President Xi is using the war in Russia and Ukraine to forge a "new era" that will either destroy or weaken the US alliance. Putin has taught the world that the aggressive statements and threats can wreak havoc. Washington must also review its strategy and highlight the growing threats posed by Beijing to peace and security in Asia in order to protect thousands innocent people from the effects of war. It will take time for these two countries to come down from the mountain of arrogance to stand side by side. Though it is difficult to do so but they have to do to protect Asia from war and its consequences.

Briefs

PM seeks...

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locations, time of impact and damage intensity. It would generate coordinated response, guiding lower tiers of provincial and district level disaster management authorities. The need was felt for a platform which should perform the functions for developing a national collage of disasters monitoring, high end technology driven capability. It can estimate vulnerable areas needs and determine the gap to be pre-coordinated support from global partner through all time ready holistic national outlook in the form of real time National Common Operating Picture. Chairman NDMA, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik, conducted the briefing session for the Prime Minister who attended as chief guest as well as Ambassadors, UN organizations' country heads, lead global NGOs, Pak academia lead institutional and experts who attended the event. He presented key lessons from Pakistan's extensive exposures to disaster and national emergencies in the past and shared new vision of NDMA for proactive management of disasters through NEOC.

Delay in elections...

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governmental system. "Suspension of any article or part of the Constitution is akin to suspending the entire Constitution, which is a serious crime," he said, adding that the constitution did not give any authority to any state institution alone or in association with others to take any decision contrary to its intent regarding holding of the elections. PTI spokesperson underlined that the constitution was very clear about the five-year term of the elected assemblies and about conduct of elections in the wake of the timely or premature dissolution of these assemblies. He stated that in case of premature dissolution of the assemblies, the constitution mandated the conduct of elections within timeframe of 90 days, which was interpreted by the top court and approved by the President.

Petrol prices...

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decline in petrol prices by approximately Rs22 per litre from October 16. Diesel prices are also projected to decrease by more than Rs20 per litre. Additionally, when converted from the dollar rate, the current price of a barrel of oil in Pakistan is estimated to be around Rs26,220. This marks a significant drop from the price of Rs29,898 per barrel on September 15. It should be noted that on September 30, the government reduced the price of petrol by Rs8, bringing the new price to Rs23.38 per litre. High-speed diesel was also made cheaper by Rs11, with the new price set at Rs318.18.

EU envoy...

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environment. The EU Ambassador to Pakistan said they were keeping a close eye on Pakistan and the proposed continuation of the regulation applied to all eight beneficiaries of GSP Plus. Last month, Kionka called on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar where they discussed the GSP Plus scheme. The EU ambassador had assured that the EU would continue to provide support to the government and work to enhance cooperation in areas of mutual interest. Federal Commerce Minister Gohar Ijaz has announced that the EU MEPs have decided to roll over the rules on the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) till 2027. The European Council is expected to give its final approval for the extension of the current Scheme soon. 'I take this opportunity to reiterate Pakistan's commitments under the Scheme for the betterment of all'



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi in a group photo with the Pakistan Long Range Field Target Rifle Team who won the European Long Range Rifle Championship 2023 held in Britain, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. — DNA

2030 FIFA World Cup spans three continents

Morocco, Spain and Portugal to host 2030 World Cup, three games in South America. It is the first time the World Cup will be played on more than one continent

SPORTS DESK

GENEVA : The 2030 men's soccer World Cup is set to feature games in six countries on three continents in a unique format that will allow the tournament to celebrate its 100th anniversary in Uruguay. FIFA reached an agreement between soccer's continental leaders to accept a bid spearheaded by co-hosts Spain, Portugal and Morocco as the only candidate for the hosting rights. The agreement also includes staging games in South American countries Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, which had earlier promoted a rival co-hosting bid. Those three countries will each host one match to start the tournament, which allows FIFA to stage the opening game in the Uruguayan capital of Montevideo, where the Centenario Stadium hosted the inaugural 1930 World Cup final. The bid had started out as a joint venture between Spain and Portugal before expanding to include Morocco, in northern Africa, earlier this year. All six host nations will get automatic entry to the 48-team tournament, FIFA said. It is the first time the World Cup will be played on more than one continent. "The centennial World Cup could not be



far from South America, where everything began," said Alejandro Dominguez, the president of South American soccer body CONMEBOL. "The 2030 World Cup will be played in three continents." The consensus reached by the continental soccer bodies also allowed FIFA to open bidding for the 2034 World Cup, with only member federations from Asia and Oceania eligible to bid for the hosting rights. Saudi Arabia immediately entered that contest and Australia is also interested after

successfully co-hosting the Women's World Cup this year with New Zealand. Either way, the 2034 tournament will almost certainly be played in November and December — like last year's World Cup in Qatar, in the heart of the European club soccer season. Accelerating the choice of a 2034 host to the end of next year will be widely seen as a victory for Saudi Arabia and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who has built close ties to FIFA president Gianni Infantino in the past six years. "We

want to celebrate our football culture and share our country with the world," Yasser Al Missehal, the president of the Saudi soccer federation and a member of the FIFA Council, said in a government statement announcing its intention to bid. The FIFA Council's acceptance of a unified 2030 candidacy still needs formal approval next year at a meeting of the 211 member federations. That should be just a formality. The 2034 pick will be made at a separate congress, FIFA said. "In 2030, we will have a unique global footprint, three continents — Africa, Europe and South America — six countries — Argentina, Morocco, Paraguay, Portugal, Spain and Uruguay — welcoming and uniting the world while celebrating together the beautiful game, the centenary and the FIFA World Cup," Infantino said in a statement. The 48-team tournament scheduled for June-July 2030 is set to start in Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay — which FIFA branded as "Centenary Celebration Matches" — before the action moves to the core host nations Spain, Portugal and Morocco. The plan involves an unprecedented amount of travel across distances and time zones, including 13-hour flights from Buenos Aires to Madrid.

Babar Azam aims high in ICC World Cup



HYDERABAD: Pakistan Captain Babar Azam is eyeing the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 as he begins the campaign against the Netherlands at Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium here on Friday. Since arriving in the city eight days ago, which also marked the first instance of a Pakistan men's side landing in India in seven years, the Babar Azam's side has made the most of the training sessions and two warm-up games to acclimatize in the city where they play first two of their nine league matches. The warm-up games against New Zealand and Australia also served as opportunities for Pakistan to fine-tune their combinations and provide much-needed match time to the entire squad. "We have been in Hyderabad for a week and our preparations have been really good," Babar told PCB Digital on the eve of Pakistan's tournament opener. "We have had two practice matches in which we tried different combinations and gave everyone an opportunity to see if they could play in any situation. Overall our practice went well and we will give our best," he added. Pakistan entered the 50-over World Cup as one of the favorites after an impressive run in the just-concluded World Cup cycle as they had the best win-loss ratio of 2.400 with 24 wins in 36 matches. That the team has performed so consistently has also been because of their mainstays emerging as solid performers over the years. Their captain, Babar, has evolved into a modern-day great since recording the most runs for a Pakistani at a World Cup in the 2019 iteration and is perched at the top of the ICC ODI rankings for batters. He is one of the two players to score over 2,000 runs in the last four years. His impressive 2,196 runs have been at an average of 66.54 and a strike rate of 93.72. He has smashed nine centuries in this period, which is the joint-most with Shai Hope, who is the other batter to breach the 2,000-run mark. — DNA

Chopra wins javelin gold in Asian Games

HANGZHOU: Indian trailblazer Neeraj Chopra added Asian Games gold to his Olympic and world titles in javelin after a technical mishap on Wednesday as his nation celebrated its biggest medal haul at the continental showpiece. Confusion reigned at the Hangzhou Olympic stadium as Chopra was asked to repeat his first throw, with officials having failed to record his mark before the next thrower sent his javelin down. It scarcely mattered, though, as India's first Olympic athletics champion posted 88.88 metres on his fourth registered effort, more than 70 cm further than Budapest where he claimed the country's first title in track and field. Chopra's cancelled first throw caused a lengthy hiatus as officials discussed the dilemma — but he agreed to throw again. — APP

Leicester City dominate Preston with 3-0 win

LONDON : Leicester City returned to the top of the Championship with an impressive 3-0 victory over Preston North End. Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall's brace and Kelechi Iheanacho's goal secured the win for the Foxes, marking their fifth consecutive league triumph this season. With just 10 matches played, Leicester fans are already optimistic about a return to the Premier League. The Foxes dominated a resilient Preston outfit, who had been unbeaten in their first eight games but now face back-to-back defeats. Under the leadership of manager Enzo Maresca, Leicester's debut campaign in the Championship has been exceptional, with nine wins and just one loss. Jamie Vardy's resurgence has added to the team's success, and they are navigating the tough Championship like a seasoned pro. Leicester displayed control and composure throughout the match, even with all their outfield players positioned in Preston's half. The only missing element was a goal, but supporters had confidence that it would come. Harry Winks, recruited from Tottenham Hotspur, orchestrated the Foxes' midfield play. Stephy Mavididi and Wilfried Ndidi posed constant threats on the left wing, while James Justin and Abdul Fatawu did the same on the opposite flank. In contrast, Milutin Osmajic was Preston's primary attacking outlet. Leicester's attacking methods included crosses into the box and intricate passes through the middle. When those tactics didn't yield results, they resorted to long balls for Jamie Vardy. Preston's defense held firm for significant periods before fatiguing. — Agencies

Simone Biles guides US to 7th Gymnastics title

US team led by Biles wins world title with combined score of 167.729 ahead of second-placed Brazil (165.530) and France (164.064) in third spot

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

ANTWERP: Simone Biles and her teammates were far from perfect, and yet nothing could stand in the way of a victory that set a record for both the US women's team and the greatest gymnast in history. The US women earned a record seventh consecutive team title at the gymnastics world championships on Wednesday night. For Biles, it was also her 33rd major championship medal — across the worlds and Olympics — to make her the most decorated female gymnast ever. And it's fitting that it came in Antwerp, the Belgian port city where Biles came to international prominence 10 years ago by winning her first world title in 2013. "It wasn't Team USA's best day," Biles said. "It's crazy, we still pulled it out. So I'm really, really proud of the team." The American team of Biles, Shilese Jones, Skye Blakely, Joscelyn Roberson and Leanne Wong combined for a total of 167.729 points to edge second-place Brazil and France. The US team won by a margin of 2.199 points as the final proved to be a closer contest than anticipated after the Americans put up a dominant performance in qualifying to finish more than five points ahead of the field. "We had some mistakes here and there, but just keep going, keep relying on our training," Biles said. "But I think this team that we have brought this year has the most great courage and fight. ... We had so many emotions go-

ing throughout the day." The US women have won gold in the team event at every world championship that included a team competition since 2011. Their victory in Antwerp broke a tie with the Chinese men for the longest streak of consecutive team titles. Biles now has 26 world championship medals, 20 of them gold, to go with her seven Olympic medals, including the 2016 Olympic title. Her 33 combined medals at the sport's two biggest events are one more than what Larisa Latynina of the Soviet Union achieved. Russia was banned from the event because of sanctions imposed by the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) as a result of the war against Ukraine. In the absence of their Rus-



sian rivals — the defending Olympic champions — the Americans were the overwhelming favorites. But the US team overcame an early scare as Roberson was forced out of the event even before it started after she seemed to hurt an ankle while warming up at the vault. She was helped off the mat and subdued by Wong. "My ankle just ... popped," Roberson said. Jones then kicked off the competition smoothly for the Americans with a Double Twist Yurchenko, with only a small hop. Wong responded to the last-minute call with a clean effort before Biles opted for the slightly safer "Cheng" vault rather than the Yurchenko Double Pike she performed during qualifying on Sunday. The Americans amassed 42.966 points and were second behind China after the first rotation following the Chinese gymnasts' excellent display on uneven bars. Biles and her teammates then bested their Chinese opponents' performance on bars as they took the overall lead with a margin of 1.467 points. They increased it a bit further after the beam — despite a sixth-place finish on that apparatus — as Biles made up for the modest 11.700 Wong received by scoring 14.300 with a solid routine. Biles capped off a successful night for the US team with a spectacular floor routine rewarded by a 15.166. Biles is competing at her first international competition following a two-year absence. Her previous appearance was at the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics, where she was hampered by a bout with a mental block known as "the twisties" that gymnasts can experience while in the air, and withdrew from several events.

Jilani meets...

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The major decision to ask illegal migrants to leave the country came after Pakistan witnessed an uptick in unlawful and terror activities. "We have given them a November 1 deadline," said interim Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti on October 3, adding that all illegal immigrants should leave voluntarily or face forcible expulsion after that date. The interior minister revealed that 14 of 24 suicide bombings in the country this year were carried out by Afghan nationals. Bugti said some 1.73 million Afghan nationals in Pakistan had no legal documents to stay, adding a total of 4.4 million Afghan refugees lived in Pakistan. Islamabad has received the largest influx of Afghan refugees since the Soviet invasion of Kabul in 1979.

Pak action...

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stay. Baloch clarified that the operation had nothing to do with the Afghan refugees that Pakistan had been hosting for several decades despite its economic constraints. She confirmed that the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan continued to take place, however, stressed that Pakistan would not accept the misuse of transit trade facilities. Pakistan, she said, had been clearly articulating its concerns about the threats emanating from Afghanistan. "We believe in diplomacy and will continue to engage with the Afghan authorities to ensure that the Afghan soil is not used to foment terrorism," she said. She said that Pakistan was in contact with the Indian authorities and urged them to issue visas to Pakistani spectators and journalists who wished to see the International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cup in India. She said that it was the responsibility of the host country to provide security and a conducive environment for the Pakistan cricket team and emphasized that sports should not be mixed with politics. She said that the Pakistan team was visiting India not for a bilateral cricket series and thus had every right to participate in the international series.

Imran seeks...

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declarations about his assets to the ECP. Additional Sessions Judge Humayun Dilawar also disqualified the PTI chief for five years, apparently ending his prospects for taking part in the elections slated for November this year, provided that superior courts do not come to his rescue this time. "This court finds it more than convincing that the complainant [ECP] has provided confidence inspiring, well-knitted and corroborated evidence and so the charge against the accused has successfully been proven," the judge said in his 30-page verdict issued at the conclusion of a rather speedy trial initiated on a criminal complaint of the ECP. However, on August 29, the IHC suspended the sentence awarded to the PTI chief, and ordered his release on bail. But the former prime minister remained behind bars as a judge had already ordered his detention in the cyber case.

Maryam...

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out of the economic crunch. The good days are coming for the country on October 21". "The country had to face severe hardships following the ouster of Nawaz Sharif as the premier. We will make an all-out effort to uplift the country's economy in such a way that it [economy] will not have to rely on others," Maryam stated. In line with the return of the PML-N supreme, Maryam said, "We will take an oath for the sake of the country's prosperity and development at Minar-e-Pakistan on October 21. There is a dire need to focus on the country's growth." Maryam reiterated that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif will take the country out of the quagmire.

Briefs

WB revises
America,
Caribbean
growth
forecast

ISTANBUL : The World Bank revised Latin America and the Caribbean region's economic growth forecast for 2023 to 2% on Wednesday, up from a previous projection of 1.7% in June.

"Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) continues to face the same challenges of economic recovery following the pandemic, persistent higher debt, and the inflationary pressures arising from a variety of sources affecting many regions of the world," it said in its economic review report for the region.

While GDP in Central and South American countries bounced back rapidly and surpassed pre-coronavirus pandemic levels, they are still in the process of converging to their pre-pandemic trend, according to the bank. The countries in the region face some difficulties, however, such as high interest rates and soft commodity prices that put downward pressure on economic growth, it said.

"Well-grounded policy responses have led to largely recovering employment and income losses from the pandemic and falling rates of inflation. However, the region faces the mutually reinforcing triple challenges of low growth, limited fiscal space, and citizen dissatisfaction," it said in a statement. Argentina and Haiti are expected to perform worst this year with a 2.5% economic contraction for each. Guyana's economy is anticipated to soar 29%.—APP

X platform
eliminates
headlines from
news links

WASHINGTON: Social media platform X, run by the head of electric car maker Tesla and Space X, Elon Musk, has cast out headlines from news articles shared by users in another move likely to aggravate relations with media groups further. The tycoon has long railed against the "legacy media" and claims X, formerly Twitter, is a better source of information. However, he said the latest change was for "aesthetic" reasons - news and other links now appear only as pictures with no accompanying text. Musk took over Twitter last year in a \$44 billion deal and has since renamed it X, sacked thousands of staff and drawn criticism for allowing banned conspiracy theorists and extremists back on the platform, sending advertisers fleeing. Some media groups have stopped posting to X altogether. Agence France-Presse (AFP) and other French news outlets launched a legal case in early August, accusing X of copyright breaches. "I almost never read legacy news anymore," Musk posted on Tuesday. "What's the point of reading 1,000 words about something that was already posted on X several days ago?" When the link changes were first mooted in August, he posted: "This is coming from me directly. Will greatly improve the aesthetics.—APP

Saudia enters
a new era
through major
re-brand
strategy

JEDDAH: The national flag carrier of Saudi Arabia, revealed its new brand identity and livery during a milestone event in Jeddah, in the presence of Royal Highnesses, Excellencies and leaders from both the public and private sectors, as well as prominent media correspondents and aviation experts. This new identity is in line with a wider strategic digital transformation plan aimed at strengthening the airline's support for the Kingdom's Vision 2030 to bring the world to Saudi Arabia. The rebrand marks the beginning of a new era for Saudia, introducing innovative concepts in terms of customer services with a strong focus on digital aspects and enhancing the guest experience by celebrating Saudi culture.—APP



ISLAMABAD : Prime Minister AJK Chauhdary Anwar ul Haq calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.—DNA

Ukrainians flee 'ghost town'
as Russians seek recapture

His village of Boguslavka in eastern Ukraine looks idyllic, with geese in ponds and cows grazing, but Sergiy had finally decided to leave after heavy strikes

NEWS DESK

KUPIANSK : Sergiy walked out of his grey-brick house carrying two plastic holdalls and closed the front door as his dog barked. Then the 71-year-old got into a car for evacuation. His village of Boguslavka in eastern Ukraine looks idyllic, with geese in ponds and cows grazing, but Sergiy had finally decided to leave after heavy strikes. This area close to the Russian border has become too dangerous for civilians as Russians attempt to retake the formerly occupied town of Kupiansk, less than 10 kilometres (six miles) from the front line. The small, historic town in the Kharkiv region has a strategic hilltop, which Russians are battling to recapture. While they have made some advances, Ukraine says the situation

is under control. Recapturing the village would be a coup for Moscow. The villagers however, who lived under Russian occupation for over half of last year, are still surrounded by ruins. Responding to attacks from guided aerial bombs, the Ukraine's authorities ordered the mandatory evacuation of parts of Kupiansk and nearby villages. Although labelled mandatory, the orders are not actually enforced. But for those ready to leave however, the Red Cross is evacuating locals to the nearby larger city of Kharkiv, which itself is being shelled regularly by Russia. Sergiy, a heating-stove specialist, declined to give his last name but he made it clear he had long resisted leaving home. He was worried about his animals and poultry, which a neighbour will feed. Now, at least, he will get to stay

with his wife in Kharkiv and see his 18-year-old grandson, who has just started university. But he became tearful as he talked about his small holding. "I want to go home so much," he said. "I don't want to live any more." In Kupiansk, two women from the town were waiting for Sergiy in the Red Cross evacuation bus. Tatiana, 72, a chatty woman with platinum-blond hair and bright pink lipstick, said she could not stand the artillery or the fear any longer. "I get so scared. I'm shaking all over," she said, denouncing the Russians. The second woman, Lyudmila, 60, smiled brightly, saying she was heading off to stay with a friend outside Kyiv. She first fled Kupiansk during Russian occupation, staying in several cities before returning. Now it is "pretty scary,"

she said, counting herself lucky that most of her flat's windows were intact. "I always say people should leave," said Klim, commander of the Ukrainian Red Cross's rapid response unit for the Kharkiv region, who is leading the voluntary evacuation. Russia's Grad rockets "do not differentiate. Don't just sit there, because tomorrow may be too late," said the commander, who uses a military-style call sign. He and his partner donned bullet-proof vests to drive to Kupiansk, crossing a pontoon bridge guarded by soldiers. In the town centre, the missiles had destroyed shops and blown out the windows in the blocks of flats. On the open door of one ruined shop, someone had left a handwritten note. "It's empty: everything's already been stolen." The

silence was broken by regular thuds of artillery from the other side of the river, where the Russians were positioned. Earlier that day, the bridge had been struck and soldiers had put up a barrier to stop vehicles. From high points in Kupiansk, smoke could clearly be seen rising from lower-lying ground on the opposite bank. Soldiers were among the few customers in the surviving shops and a small market, where traders were packing well before the town's 6 o'clock evening curfew. "The town is empty, a ghost town," said Marina, 54, leaning on the counter of her daughter's grocery store, where she helps out. She got "goosebumps" even talking about the Russian occupation, she said, and was dead-set against its return. "Here

we feel free, but there we walked around like we were under some kind of whip." But not everyone felt the same way. Sitting watching the scene in a jumper and leggings, retired doctor Lidiya smiled as she recalled Russian occupation. "When our Russians were here, life was wonderful," she said. "There wasn't this looting and there was some order." Such open expressions of support for Russia are rare, however. Chatting with friends outside a shop, 55-year-old Volodymyr said he could not leave as his job was to keep the town's water running. This involves pumping water from outside the town and mending holes in pipes from shelling - a job that never quite got done, he said. "Those left are the most steadfast," he said of Kupiansk's remaining residents.

Norway's
Fosse wins
2023 Nobel
Prize in
literature

DNA

STOCKHOLM: The Swedish Academy Thursday announced that the Nobel Prize in Literature for 2023 has gone to Norway's Jon Fosse, whose plays enjoy wide popularity on the contemporary global stage. Fosse was recognised "for his innovative plays and prose which give voice to the unsayable," as stated by the Swedish Academy. In response to the announcement, Fosse expressed his gratitude and said, "I am overwhelmed and grateful. I see this as an award to the literature that first and foremost aims to be literature, without other considerations." Anders Olsson, the chairman of the Nobel committee, noted that Fosse had become an innovator through his ability to evoke the sense of loss of orientation, which paradoxically leads



to a deeper experience akin to divinity. Fosse's writing is characterised by its form, often saying more through what is left unsaid than through the words on the page. Comparisons to Samuel Beckett are common due to his minimalist style, relying on simple language, rhythm, melody, and silence to convey his messages. Some of his major works include "Boathouse" (1989) and "Melancholy I and II (1995-1996). Jon Fosse, 64 years old, had been a subject of Nobel speculation for several years before receiving the prestigious award. His extensive body of work includes plays, novels, poetry collections, essays, children's books, and translations, primarily written in Norwegian Nynorsk, one of Norway's written forms of languages. While Fosse is celebrated as one of the most widely performed playwrights globally, his prose has also gained increasing recognition.

Bang
swamped
by record
dengue
deaths

DHAKA: In the crowded fever ward in Bangladesh's Muga hospital, every bed is taken, as the country struggles in the grip of its deadliest dengue outbreak. More than 1,000 people have died this year in the nation's worst recorded spate of the mosquito-borne disease, which scientists say is increasing in frequency due to climate change. In the worst cases, intense viral fevers trigger bleeding, internally or from the mouth and nose. Nupur Akter, 21, is struggling desperately to feed her sister Payel, who she rushed into hospital two weeks ago while the six-year-old was "shaking uncontrollably." But there has been little improvement. "She has become weaker," Akter said.—APP

Europe could
become
energy
self-sufficient

FRANKFURT : Europe could wean itself off fossil fuels and create a self-sustainable energy sector by spending around 2 trillion euros (\$2.1 trillion) on solar, wind and other regenerative sources by 2040, according to a new study. The report, led by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, said the continent would require annual investments of 140 billion euros by 2030 and 100 billion a year in the decade thereafter to get there. While most of the sum would be needed for on-shore wind expansion, solar, hydrogen.—APP

Slovakia halts
military aid
for Ukraine

BRATISLAVA: Slovakia's president has refused a plan by her country's caretaker government to send further military aid to Ukraine, saying it doesn't have the authority and parties that oppose such support are in talks to form a government following last week's election. The presidential office said in a statement Thursday that the current government of technocrats has only limited powers because it lost a mandatory confidence vote in Parliament on June 15, a month after President Zuzana Caputova swore it in. The technocrat Cabinet was created with the aim of leading the country to Saturday's early election. Caputova on Monday asked the leader of the winning party in the election to try to form a coalition government. Populist former prime minister Robert Fico and his leftist Smer, or Direction, party captured 22.9% of the vote on Saturday. It will have 42 seats in the 150-seat Parliament. Fico has vowed to withdraw Slovakia's military support for Ukraine, and his victory could further strain the fragile unity in the European Union and NATO. Fico needs to find coalition partners to rule with a parliamentary majority and has been negotiating with two other parties. He has been given two weeks. The presidential office said that Caputova, who has been a staunch supporter of Ukraine and visited Kyiv twice since the start of the Russian invasion, has not changed her view on the necessity of military assistance for Ukraine. But the statement said that "approving a military aid package by the current outgoing government would create a risky precedent for the change of power after any future elections." It said the president is ready to support military assistance proposed by any government with full powers. Slovakia has been a major supporter of Ukraine, donating arms, including its fleet of Soviet-era MiG-29 fighter jets.—APP

One people
killed
from
Typhoon

TAIPEI : Typhoon Koinu left at least one person dead and injured nearly 300 others as it grazed Taiwan's southern tip, lashing the island with the strongest winds it has ever recorded and knocking out power to hundreds of thousands of homes. Authorities said an 84-year-old woman died in her home in western Taichung City on Thursday after she was injured by glass shattered due to the gales. Koinu made landfall on the island's southernmost Cape Eluanbi Thursday morning and was weakening as it moved into the Taiwan Strait by 3 pm (0700 GMT), according to the Central Weather Administration. Pan Huang Kui-chun, a 68-year-old temple keeper in southern Pingtung county - the typhoon's epicentre - said it was "terrifying" watching powerful winds bring down power poles. "It nearly dismantled my house. I had to move all my deities to the side," he said.—Agencies

COVID, floods compounded
Pakistan challenges in
realizing SDGs

DNA

UNITED NATIONS : Pakistan told a U.N. panel that it has introduced legal and policy measures to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, saying those steps were essential for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). "Without achieving the rights of women and girls, we will not achieve the SDGs," Ambassador Munir Akram said in a speech in the General Assembly's Third Committee, which deals with social, humanitarian and cultural issues. But, he said, the finance, fuel and food crisis, caused by the Covid pandemic and the epic floods that hit Pakistan last year, have further compounded the challenges in realizing the SDGs and the

development rights of women and girls. Speaking in a debate on 'Advancement of Women', the Pakistani envoy said that rural women face particular challenges, noting that between 50 to 80 percent of women in Pakistan are food producers, while 70 percent of the livestock is managed by them in rural areas. The international community, he pointed out, has set clear norms to promote and ensure gender equality and the rights of women to education, work, political representation, as well as participation in households, communities, and national life. "In Pakistan and in almost all countries with the exception of Afghanistan these norms are established at the official level and are also widely accepted at

the social and personal levels," Ambassador Akram said. "However, despite the normative acceptance, the situation of girls and women in many countries, especially in the rural areas, remains disadvantaged, and, in many respects, exploitative." Ambassador Akram questioned how the UN system could assist individual developing countries in transforming into actual development and "quality of life" outcomes for women and girls, noting that the major and pervasive challenge is the paucity of adequate financing. "We believe that a deeper survey and study can offer conclusions of both a general and specific nature that could lead to a transformative leap in advancing women and girls' rights."

Nobel laureate Yunus appears before BD graft watchdog

When the bridge finally opened last year, Hasina said Yunus should be "dipped in a river" for jeopardizing its completion. Critics accuse Bangladeshi courts of rubber-stamping decisions made by Hasina's government

WEB DESK

DHAKA : Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus appeared before Bangladesh's anti-graft watchdog Thursday over corruption charges that his lawyers said were part of a campaign of government harassment. Yunus, 83, is credited with lifting millions out of poverty with his pioneering micro-credit bank, but he has fallen out with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who has accused him of "sucking blood" from the poor. He is facing around 175 separate

criminal and labour tribunal cases related to social business firms he set up in Bangladesh aimed at creating jobs and bringing services to the poor. "I have not committed any offence," Yunus told reporters after leaving the Anti-Corruption Commission in the capital Dhaka. "I am not scared." Defence lawyer Abdullah al Mamun told reporters Yunus had to cut short his trip to United Nations headquarters in New York to attend the hearing. Khaja Tanvir Ahmed, another lawyer for Yunus, said he was interrogated for more than an hour in the office. "These

cases are all part of the continuous harassment against Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus," he added. Yunus and seven officials of Grameen Telecom, a social business firm he founded, are accused of money laundering and embezzling 250 million taka (\$2.3 million), according to charges filed by the commission in May. He faces up to 12 years in jail if convicted. Another case against Yunus is currently at trial with the next hearing scheduled for October 11. His lawyers have insisted he is innocent of all charges against him. In August, 160 global

figures including former US president Barack Obama and ex-UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon published a joint letter against the "continuous judicial harassment" of the micro-credit pioneer. The signatories - including more than 100 of his fellow Nobel laureates - said they feared for "his safety and freedom". Yunus was awarded the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his work promoting economic development. He has been credited with helping eradicate extreme poverty in Bangladesh by offering microfinance loans to tens of millions of rural women through

Grameen Bank, which he founded in the 1980s. Bangladesh's anti-graft watchdog last year ordered a wide-ranging probe into firms that Yunus chairs. Hasina has attacked him personally, blaming him for the World Bank pulling out from a bridge project near Dhaka that was mired in corruption allegations. When the bridge finally opened last year, Hasina said Yunus should be "dipped in a river" for jeopardizing its completion. Critics accuse Bangladeshi courts of rubber-stamping decisions made by Hasina's government.

Briefs

Joe Biden approves new section of border wall

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden's administration is to build a section of border wall in southern Texas in an effort to stop rising levels of immigration. Around 20 miles (32km) will be built in Starr County along its border with Mexico, where officials report high numbers of crossings. Building a border wall was a signature policy of Donald Trump as president and fiercely opposed by Democrats. In 2020, Mr Biden promised he would not build another foot of wall if elected. His administration passed a proclamation soon after taking office that said building a wall across the southern border "is not a serious policy solution". In a statement to Associated News on Wednesday night, the US Customs and Border Protection defended the latest move, saying it was using funds already allocated for a border barrier. "Congress appropriated fiscal year 2019 funds for the construction of border barrier in the Rio Grande Valley, and DHS is required to use those funds for their appropriated purpose," the statement said. The rising number of illegal border crossings has made the issue a vulnerable one for the president.

14 killed, 102 missing in Indian flash floods

DNA

NEW DELHI: Rescue workers were searching for more than 100 people on Thursday after flash floods triggered by sudden heavy rainfall swamped several towns in northeastern India, killing at least 14 people, officials said. More than 2,000 people were rescued after Wednesday's floods, the Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority said in a statement, adding that state authorities set up 26 relief camps for more than 22,000 people impacted by the floods. The Press Trust of India news agency reported that 102 people were missing and cited state government officials saying 14 people died in the floods. Among the missing were 22 soldiers, officials said. One soldier who had been reported missing on Wednesday was later rescued by authorities, the army said in a statement. Some army camps and vehicles were submerged under mud following the floods. Vinay Bhushan Pathak, the top state bureaucrat, said that nearly 3,000 tourists and 700 drivers with their vehicles have been stranded in the flood-hit areas.

6 killed in Turkish strikes on Kurdish area

DNA

BEIRUT: At least eight people have been killed in Turkish drone strikes on Thursday on the Kurdish-held zone of northeast Syria, a war monitor and a local security source said, following Ankara's threats against Kurdish military facilities in Syria and Iraq. Two were killed in a strike on a car near a military facility and another six were killed in a later strike on a military post near the town of Anuda, the security source told Reuters. Turkey said Wednesday that all Kurdish militant facilities in Syria and Iraq are valid targets after it concluded that two attackers who detonated a bomb in front of government buildings in Ankara last weekend had come from Syria. The Syrian Democratic Forces, the US-backed force dominated by the Kurdish YPG and which spearheaded a years-long campaign against the Daesh group, has denied the bombers came through territory it controls. SDF head, Mazloum Abdi, said on Wednesday in a post on the social media platform X that Turkey was looking for "pretexts" to carry on attacking SDF-held areas.

Russia kills 49 in attack in northeast Ukraine

Klymenko said it was not immediately clear whether Russian forces, who invaded Ukraine 19 months ago, had shelled the village or had fired a missile

KYIV: A Russian attack killed at least 49 people, including a six-year-old boy, as they gathered in a cafe for a memorial service in a village in northeastern Ukraine on Thursday, the country's interior minister said. A cafe and a shop were struck early in the afternoon in the village of Hroza in the Kharkiv region, regional governor Oleh Synehubov said, adding that many civilians had been there at the time. Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said that residents of the small village of about 330 people had been holding a memorial service in the cafe that was hit. "From every family, from every household, there were people present at this commemoration. This is a terrible tragedy," Klymenko told Ukrainian television. Seven people were also in hospital after the attack, which appeared to be the most devastating Russian strike on a residential area in weeks. Officials posted footage of rescue workers clambering through smoldering rubble. Some photos showed bodies lying alongside slabs of concrete and twisted metal, and others showed rescue workers carrying away covered bodies. Klymenko said it was not immediately clear whether Russian forces, who invaded Ukraine 19 months ago, had shelled the village or had fired a missile. He said the strike was clearly very targeted and that Ukrainian security services had launched an investigation into the matter. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who was attending a summit with European leaders in Spain, said that "the Russian terror should be stopped". "Now we are talking with European leaders, in particular, about strengthening our air defence, about strengthening our soldiers, about giving our country protection from terror," he said in a post on the Telegram messaging app. Russia has frequently carried out air strikes since the start of its full-scale invasion in February 2022, and Ukraine has launched a counter-offensive in the south and east that it says is gradually making progress. Moscow did not immediately comment on the events in Hroza. Moscow denies deliberately targeting civilians, many have been killed in attacks that have hit residential areas as well as energy, defence, port, grain and other facilities. - Agencies

European leaders stress support for Ukraine

GRANADA: Almost 50 European leaders used a summit in the southern Spanish city of Granada on Thursday to stress that they stand by Ukraine at a time when Western resolve appears somewhat weakened. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that beside maintaining such unity, more military aid to get through the winter was essential. Despite the political, economic and military support, the desperate struggle to rid Ukraine territory of invading Russian forces has ground to a stalemate, and Zelenskyy insisted that it was no time for wavering in the face of Russian President Vladimir Putin. And especially now that questions about continued support are growing in the United States too. "Europe must be strong" despite what happens in other places around the globe, Zelenskyy said, calling for more air defense systems, artillery shells, long-range missiles and drones. He said that victory or defeat in Ukraine would determine Europe's fate. Zelenskyy flew in the morning to the third meeting of the European Political Community forum, which was formed in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 that drastically reset the continent's political agenda and fundamentally undermined long-held beliefs on peace and stability on the continent. Support from Europe has become all the more important after US Congress hastily sent President Joe Biden legislation over the weekend that kept the federal government funded, but left off billions in funding for Ukraine's war effort that the White House had vigorously backed. Biden called other world powers on Tuesday to coordinate on Ukraine in a deliberate show of U.S. support at a time when the future of its aid is questioned by an important faction of Republicans who want to cut off money to Kyiv. "The main challenge that we have that is to save unity in Europe," Zelenskyy said. Last weekend's election in Slovakia, where pro-Russia candidate Robert Fico was the big winner, and Hungary's continued recalcitrance to fully back Ukraine have cast increasing shadows on Europe's commitment. That counts especially for the European Union where many decisions on Ukraine need unanimity among the bloc's 27 members. In Slovakia early this week, the president refused a plan by her country's caretaker government to send further military aid to Ukraine, saying it doesn't have the authority and parties that oppose such support are in talks to form a government following last week's election. - Agencies

Bugti orders early redress of public problems

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a bold move to ensure public convenience and welfare, caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has instructed officials concerned to solve the problems of the people who come to the Home Ministry immediately. He also warned that he will not tolerate any form of official culture or attitude that may hinder the process, he said in a tweet. The interior minister made these remarks during a meeting with the public at his office on Thursday. Bugti listened to their problems and issued instructions to the officials concerned on the spot. He assured the people that the staff of the Ministry of Interior was available at all times to solve their problems on priority. The minister also emphasised the need to end the culture of bribery and nepotism. He said that there was no room in the Ministry of Interior for those who caused undue delay, bribery or abuse of power.

SC questions maintainability of Elahi's plea

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court expressed displeasure at former Punjab chief minister Parvez Elahi's counsel on Thursday for insisting that the order of the Lahore High Court (LHC) barring his arrest be implemented in a case lodged by the Islamabad Police. A division bench comprising Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Sardar Tariq Masood directed Elahi's counsel Barrister Latif Khosa to prepare arguments and adjourned the hearing till next week. During the proceedings, the court questioned the maintainability of the plea and asked the counsel to explain how a high court could place a blanket ban on a certain person's arrest. When Khosa pointed to harassment by the police referring to Elahi's arrest each time after acquiring bail, the bench questioned the jurisdiction of the LHC's order over authorities in the Islamabad Capital Territory and pointed out that the cases were separate.



ISLAMABAD: Turkish ambassador to Pakistan, Mehmet Pacaci calls on Murtaza Solangi, caretaker federal minister for information and broadcasting. - DNA

Solangi, Turkish envoy agree to enhance coop

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Türkiye on Thursday agreed to promote bilateral cooperation in diverse fields including economy, trade, culture, tourism, media and people to people contacts. This was decided in a meeting between Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi and Ambassador of Türkiye Mehmet Pacaci who called on the minister here. Murtaza Solangi said that Pakistan highly valued its relations with the brotherly country Türkiye. "Pakistan and Türkiye have always supported each other in difficult times," Murtaza Solangi added. Strongly condemning the recent bomb blast in Türkiye, the minister said Pakistan had faced the scourge of terrorism and Türkiye was also suffering from the same menace. "We are a strong country and incidents of terrorism cannot weaken us as a nation," reiterated Murtaza Solangi. In the meeting, the need to expand cooperation in the fields of media, drama and films was also emphasized. "Film and drama can play a key role in improving the global image of any country," Murtaza Solangi said adding Turkish plays were very popular in Pakistan. Expressing the desire to co-produce movies with Türkiye, Murtaza Solangi said that Turkish filmmakers could benefit from tax amnesty given the film industry in Pakistan. "Northern parts of Pakistan are rich in natural beauty and Turkish filmmakers can utilize these beautiful tourist areas," Murtaza Solangi remarked. Moreover, he said that cooperation between the two countries in the fields of media was the need of the hour. He suggested that Pakistan and Türkiye should promote their culture together and in this context, joint films can also be exhibited at Pakistan, China Center. Turkish ambassador said that Pakistan and Türkiye were cooperating in every sphere of life including media. - DNA

UK: Former Afghan pilot faces homelessness

LONDON: A former Afghan Air Force pilot who served alongside British forces and fled the Taliban remains stuck living in a hotel a month after his asylum application to remain in the UK was approved, The Independent reported on Thursday. The pilot, whose case caused uproar after he was threatened with deportation to Rwanda for crossing the English Channel illegally, despite being labeled a "hero" and "patriot" by coalition allies, is struggling to find permanent accommodation as he is forced to rely on a government financial handout called universal credit, which cannot cover most rents. Until he finds accommodation, he will be unable to repatriate his family who are hiding in Afghanistan. Local councils are currently prioritizing families over single migrants due to shortages. Without permanent housing, he fears he will soon become homeless, with the UK Home Office ramping up efforts to clear a backlog of asylum applications, and seeking to reduce the amount of time people whose applications are approved are allowed to remain in government-funded accommodation - with some evicted in as few as seven days. The pilot has yet to receive a notice of eviction, which he also needs to present to a local authority to apply for social housing. He told The Independent: "I'm trying a lot to find a shared house or flat but it is very, very difficult to find it. I'm still waiting for my leaving (eviction) letter from the Home Office. I haven't received it yet but if the situation is continuing like this maybe I will become homeless." He added: "I can work and I can study. I will try and search to see if I can use my pilot training here in the UK. I'm thinking about how can I get the duty that I had in Afghanistan in aviation. If I could get a job, I could stand on my own feet soon." - Agencies

India tells Canadian diplomat to leave over killing row

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: India confirmed on Thursday that it had demanded a further reduction in Canada's diplomatic presence, following reports that New Delhi had ordered dozens of foreign service officers repatriated in a dispute over the killing of a Sikh separatist. Relations between Delhi and Ottawa nosedived two weeks ago when Canada raised the possibility of Indian government involvement in the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar near Vancouver in June. The fallout prompted tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions and a forceful denial from India, which said any suggestion it played a role in Nijjar's killing was "absurd". Indian foreign ministry chief spokesman Arindam Bagchi would not confirm a Financial Times report this week that Canada had been told to repatriate 41 of its 62 diplomats by October 10. But he did say that India "assumed that there would be a reduction" in Canada's presence after asking Ottawa to match the number of diplomats New Delhi had serving there. "Given the much higher diplomatic presence of Canadian diplomats here, and their continued interference in our internal affairs, we have sought parity in our respective diplomatic presence," he told reporters at a regular news briefing. India has already advised its nationals against travelling to parts of Canada and has temporarily stopped processing visa applications to Canada. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has described the situation as "extremely difficult" and said on Tuesday that Ottawa was seeking to avoid escalating the situation.

New Zealand thrash England by nine wickets in WC opener



AHMEDABAD: New Zealand thrashed England by nine wickets in the opening match of ICC Men's ODI World Cup 2023 in Ahmedabad on Thursday. The centuries from

Devon Conway and Rachin Ravindra put the defending champions on the backfoot completely in chase of 283. Conway and Ravindra added 273 unbeaten runs in 211 balls for the second wicket partnership to power their side to a comprehensive victory. Conway smashed 152 runs in 121 balls, meanwhile Ravindra scored 123 in 96. Earlier, England's Joe Root made 77 in an otherwise inconsistent batting display by holders England, who posted 282-9 against New Zealand in the first match of the 50-over World Cup on Thursday. Put in to bat in a rematch of the 2019 final, England's otherwise formidable lineup did not really fire but Root, Jos Buttler (43) and Jonny Bairstow (33) ensured their side at least have a competitive total to defend. Root reverse-scooped Trent Boult for a six but eventually lost his stumps to Glenn Phillips attempting another reverse shot, which effectively snuffed out England's hopes of a 300-plus total. Matt Henry claimed 3-48 for New Zealand, while their three spinners shared five wickets on a hot afternoon at the Narendra Modi Stadium. New Zealand rested regular captain Kane Williamson (knee injury) and fast bowler Tim Southee (thumb injury) to give them more time to recover from surgery. Lockie Ferguson also missed out with a minor injury. England left out Ben Stokes, who is nursing a minor hip injury. His replacement Harry Brook (25) hit Rachin Ravindra for two fours and a six before throwing away his wicket in the spinner's eventful first over. - Agencies