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Pak-Iran gas pipeline

US warns Pakistan of potential consequences over gas pipeline project

Washington warns Islamabad about potential risks but also reaffirms support in fight against terrorism

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States has issued a cautionary warning to Pakistan regarding its involvement in the Pak-Iran gas pipeline project, while reaffirming its commitment to assist Pakistan with its energy challenges. Matthew Miller, a spokesperson for the US State Department, addressed concerns related to the pipeline project during a recent press briefing. "We will continue to enforce our sanctions against Iran. And as a matter of course, we also advise anyone considering business deals with Iran to be aware of the potential ramifications of those deals," Miller stated. This statement underscores the US's stance on maintaining pressure on Iran through sanctions, which could affect Pakistan's proposed pipeline project. The Pak-Iran gas pipeline project, which aims to extend an 80-kilometre pipeline from Gwadar in Pakistan to Iran, has faced significant delays. Initially scheduled for completion by December 2014, the project has experienced nearly a decade of setbacks. However, work has resumed, and the project is now expected to be finished in 24 months at an estimated cost of Rs44 billion. Despite the US's warnings, Miller assured

that addressing Pakistan's energy shortages remains a priority for Washington. "We continue to discuss energy security with the Government of Pakistan," he noted. This statement reflects the ongoing dialogue between the two countries to find viable solutions to Pakistan's energy needs, amidst the challenges posed by regional geopolitical tensions. In addition to the pipeline concerns, Miller strongly condemned the recent terrorist attacks in Balochistan that resulted in the deaths of over 50 people. He expressed solidarity with the victims and their families, highlighting the shared interests of the US and Pakistan in combating terrorism. "The United States and Pakistan have a shared interest in combating threats to regional security, and we will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with Pakistan in its fight against terrorism," Miller affirmed. The US's dual approach of warning about the pipeline's potential ramifications while pledging support for Pakistan's energy needs and security underscores the complex nature of international relations and the balance of strategic interests. As Pakistan moves forward with the pipeline project, it will need to navigate these geopolitical nuances while addressing its pressing energy requirements.

Pakistan-Egypt resolve to enhance defence coop

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The 14th round of the Pakistan-Egypt Military Cooperation Committee meeting was held here on Wednesday. Acting Defence Secretary Major General Amer Ashfaq Kayani led the Pakistani delegation, while the Egyptian delegation was led by Assistant Head of the Armed Forces Operations Authority for Civil and Military Coordination Abdel Rahman Abdel Rahman Mahmoud Wahdan. During the meeting, issues of mutual interest including all areas of bilateral defence cooperation were discussed. Issues related to defence training, delegation visits and joint production of defence equipment came under discussion. The two sides reiterated their commitment to continue working together to enhance cooperation in defence and security-related areas. The 15th session of the Pakistan-Egypt Military Cooperation Committee will be held in Egypt.



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Ambassador of Turkiye to Pakistan, Mehmet Pacaci, calls on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

OGRA announces delay of oil imports

OGRA spokesperson confirms development in statement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has announced a delay in the September shipments of oil marketing companies, with an additional three cargoes for October potentially being cancelled. This decision follows a meeting held earlier today with representatives from refineries and top-performing oil marketing companies. OGRA spokesperson Imran Ghaznavi confirmed the development in a

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SC's pending caseload hits record high

The report revealed that the backlog of cases has surged to 60,508

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: According to a report released for the period from August 16 to August 31, the number of pending cases in the Supreme Court has reached an all-time high. The report revealed that the backlog of cases has surged to 60,508, with an increase of 861 cases over the past 15 days. The Supreme Court currently had 33,269 civil appeals, 10,335 criminal appeals, and 28 suomotu notices pending. Additionally, there were 2,064 review petitions, 134 HR cell applications, and 3,361 jail petitions awaiting resolution.

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Says govt lost it's writ

Fazl wants parliament to lead from the front in dialogue with Baloch

"Groups equipped with rocket launchers and all kinds of modern weaponry are receiving extortion there," the JUI-F chief said

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, speaking on a point of order in the National Assembly today, said that the government's writ has ended in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). "Groups equipped with rocket launchers and all kinds of modern weaponry are receiving extortion there," the JUI-F chief said. The NA lawmaker said that the situation could be returned to normal in both provinces but it always worsened after statements insisting on the use of force. Recalling his visit to Afghanistan in January this year, the cleric said: "When the state fails, we go there and the [law and order] situation is brought under control." He claimed that he held "successful talks on border-related and all other matters" with the Kabul administration during his

Continued on Page 06

Opp alliance demands APC

Asad Qaiser laments Akhtar Mengal's resignation from National Assembly, calling it 'a regrettable development'

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Opposition Grand Alliance - Tehreek-e-Tahafuz-e-Ayten Pakistan (TTAP) - has called for an All Parties Conference (APC) to address the worsening security situation in Balochistan, expressing deep concern over the province's current state of affairs. During a press conference in Islamabad on Wednesday,

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Briefs

Mengal adamant on resignation

PM Shehbaz's aide Rana Sanaullah says "review petition" filed with BNP-M chief to withdraw his resignation

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan National Party (BNP-M) chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal on Wednesday refused to take back his National Assembly (NA) resignation, tendered over 'prevailing situation' in Balochistan, as the government assured the politician of addressing his grievances. "I have no intention of withdrawing [my] resignation," the veteran lawmaker said while speaking to journalists after meeting a government delegation, which was headed by Adviser to Prime Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Rana Sanaullah.

Hanif Abbasi warns PTI

Time to apologise as May 9 turncoats ready to testify

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader Hanif Abbasi urged PTI to apologise, stating that the May 9 turncoats are ready to testify. According to the report, during a speech in the National Assembly on Wednesday, Hanif Abbasi criticised PTI for seeking judges who would give them special treatment, saying, "They want judges who give them Mercedes and greet them with 'Good to see you.'" Hanif Abbasi further questioned what PTI would do if the party's founder is sentenced by a military court. "Will you set the country on fire?" he asked, adding, "Be patient, your night is long."

After amendments to law

ECP puts off Islamabad local government polls

Development comes after President Zardari assented to LG amendment bill passed by parliament amid opposition protest

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Following the amendments to Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government Act, 2015, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has put off local bodies elections, that were scheduled to be held on October 9, until further notice. "The ECP has decided to hold in abeyance, the Election Programme issued vide its notification even number dated 20/8/2024 for conduct of local government elections in Islamabad Capital Territory, till further orders," stated a notification issued today. President Asif Ali Zardari, on August 29, assented to the Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2024, after it was passed in the National Assembly and the Senate, amidst strong protest by the opposition. In the new bill, the government has increased the number of general seats of union councils (UCs) from existing six to nine and

Continued on Page 06

AC reserves verdict on Bushra's acquittal plea

Judge Nasir Javed Rana will announce verdict tomorrow after parties conclude their arguments

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: An accountability court on Wednesday reserved verdict on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi's acquittal plea in £190 million settlement case. The incarcerated former premier and his wife are accused of causing billions of rupees loss to the

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Info minister laments 'lack of mechanisms' to counter misinfo

"In the digital age, unfortunately, we don't have mechanisms to authenticate and verify information and it causes a lot of damage and losses," Tarar lamented, citing the example of how misinformation could damage Pakistan's fragile economy

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday lamented the "lack of mechanisms" to control and counter the spread of false information on digital platforms, stating that they cause damage to the country's image and fragile economy. Addressing an event in Islamabad, the information minister said that in the digital age, verification, and authentication had become "the two most important tools that provided people with a true perspective on what's going on and what the reality is." "If you look at the brief historical background, as far as newspapers and TV are concerned, you had some form of editorial control," the minister said. "You had systems, training, and people well-equipped to deal with information and how to disseminate it." "In the digital age, unfortunately, we don't have mechanisms to authenticate and verify information and it causes a lot of damage and losses," Tarar lamented, citing the example of how misinformation could damage Pakistan's fragile economy. "Our economy is very fragile

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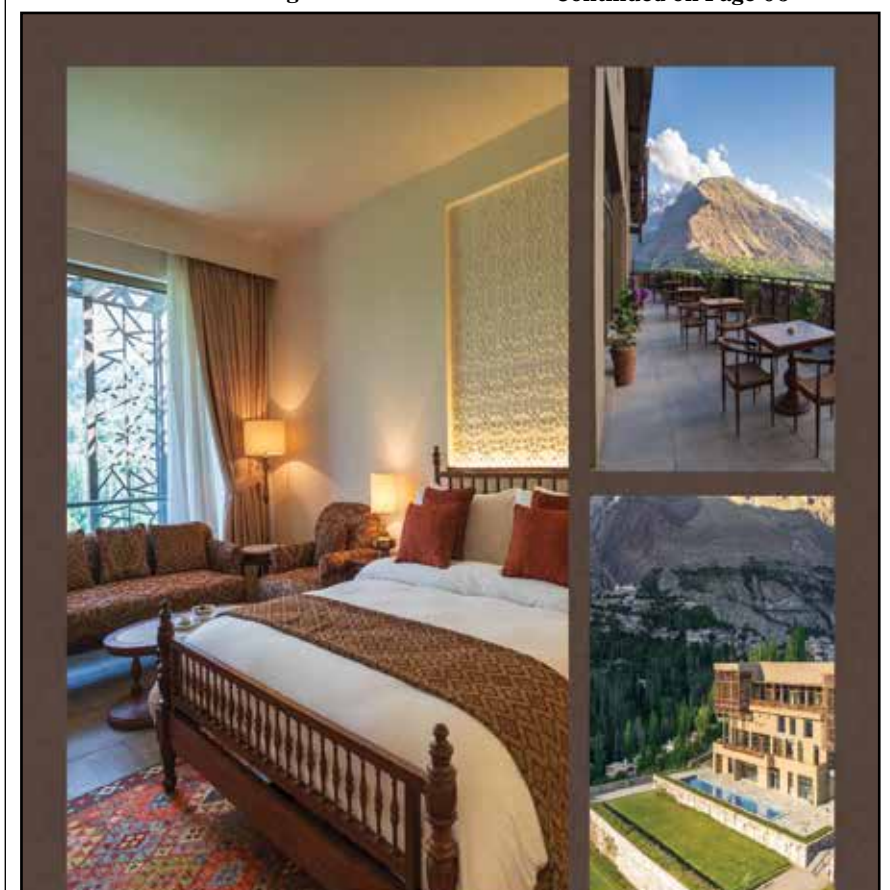
Non-bailable arrest warrant issued against KP CM

Warrant against provincial chief executive issued in case pertaining to arms and liquor recovery

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A court in the federal capital city on Wednesday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur in a case pertaining to arms and liquor recovery. The KP chief minister's plea seeking exemption from attendance before the court on

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Education Ministry launches Software Tech Parks at ICG F-6/2

Representatives from the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) also expressed their support for the project, emphasizing the strategic importance of such initiatives in positioning Pakistan as a competitive player in the global tech landscape

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT) on Wednesday officially launched state-of-the-art Software Technology Parks (STPs)/e-Rozgaar Centers at Islamabad College for Girls, F-6/2. This initiative represents a significant step toward fostering a vibrant tech ecosystem in Islamabad. Earlier, the Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, inaugurated the STP/e-Rozgaar Center at Islamabad Model College for Girls (PG), F-7/4. During the ceremony, he expressed his enthusiasm for the project, stating, "This initiative is a cornerstone in our efforts to empower the youth of Pakistan by providing them with the resources they need to succeed in the digital economy. These centers will not only bridge the gap between education and industry but will also serve as incubators for innovation and entrepreneurship."

Member of Parliament Abdul Aleem Khan, who attended the Open House as the chief guest, highlighted the vast potential of the initiative, noting, "The establishment of these technology parks is a transformative step for our young professionals. By providing them with modern facilities and a supportive environment, we are laying the foundation for a robust digital economy in Pakistan."

Speaking at the occasion, Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, Secretary MoFEPT, underscored the importance of the project, stating, "This initiative marks a significant milestone in promoting a vibrant tech ecosystem in Islamabad. The five IT parks established in model colleges are not just physical spaces; they are communities, platforms, and catalysts for growth." Representatives from the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) also expressed their support for the project, emphasizing the strategic importance of such initiatives in positioning Pakistan as a competitive player in the global tech landscape. In the initial phase, five

STPs/e-Rozgaar Centers have been established in the model colleges in Islamabad: ICB G-6/3, ICG F-6/2, IMCG (PG) F-7/4, IMCB F-8/4, and IMCB F-10/4. In just three months, existing halls have been completely transformed into modern spaces designed for collaboration and innovation.

The revamped areas are now equipped with air conditioning, free high-speed internet, and free electricity, offering an ideal environment for freelancers and startups. Additionally, these spaces include meeting and conference rooms, new furniture, and vibrant wall murals, creating a dynamic and inspiring atmosphere. Principal Prof. Sabah Faisal also spoke at the event, remarking, "We believe that a workspace should be more than just a place to work. It should inspire creativity, foster collaboration, and provide a sense of community." Registration for securing a free co-working space in these STPs/e-Rozgaar Centers is now open, and young entrepreneurs and freelancers are encouraged to apply: <https://tinyurl.com/TechParks>



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Oybek Arif Usmanov called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja in the Federal Capital. – DNA

Shaza discusses Uzbekistan envoy on enhancing coop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunications Shaza Fatima Khawaja and the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Aybek Arif Usmanov on Wednesday discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in the IT and telecommunications sectors. According to a news release, both agreed on the importance of increasing collaboration in these areas. Shaza Fatima Khawaja said that Pakistan values its relationship with Uzbekistan and highlighted the potential benefits of cooperation in technology. She said that both countries could gain significantly from each other's experiences in the field. The Ambassador expressed Uzbekistan's eagerness to strengthen cooperation with Pakistan in IT and telecommunications. He proposed the establishment of a joint working group between Uzbekistan's Ministry of Digital Technologies and Pakistan's Ministry of IT and Telecommunications. He suggested initiating a startup exchange program between the two countries.

CDA Chairman wants early development in E-12

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, on Wednesday directed that development work in Sector E-12 should be completed at the earliest to facilitate the allottees. This decision was made during a meeting chaired by Randhawa to discuss the development of Sector E-12. An anti-encroachment operation will be conducted to vacate the land of Sector E-12 from illegal occupants. The Islamabad Police and civil administration have been tasked with finalizing the operation for carrying out the development work. Randhawa emphasized the need to resolve all problems hindering the development works of Sector E-12.

NA adopts amendments to appointment of special committee on Kashmir

The motion said that the National Assembly Secretariat will be the secretariat of the committee and the rule of the procedure for the parliamentary committee on Kashmir 2021 shall apply to the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir shall be added

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Wednesday adopted amendments to the appointment of the Special Committee on Kashmir under Rule 244 B of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business, National Assembly 2007. The motion, moved by Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture Attaullah Tarar, was passed on July 9, 2024. Amendments passed by the House are regarding the appointment of the Special Committee on Kashmir under rule 244 B of the Rules of Procedure

and Conduct of Business, National Assembly 2007. The motion further said the word special committee and the words parliamentary committee shall be substituted and in sub-clause two after the expression Senate, the expression the chairman of the committee shall be from the National Assembly. The motion said that the National Assembly Secretariat will be the secretariat of the parliamentary committee on Kashmir 2021 shall apply to the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir under rule 244 B of the Rules of Procedure Act, 1973 [The Pakistan Coast Guards (Amendment) Bill, 2024] moved by Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture Attaullah Tarar was also introduced in the House. The amendments to the bill include special provisions for the Pakistan Coast Guards Act, specifically regarding the appointment of prosecutors said Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture Attaullah Tarar. He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is focused on reforming the system. He highlighted that special measures are being implemented to prevent leakages and end smuggling activities.

PPP making efforts to organize itself in traditional stronghold

DNA

PESHAWAR: The provincial and district level leadership of PPP is making efforts to reorganize the party grassroots level and for this purpose holding meetings at the Village Council in district Malakand to regain glory in its traditional former stronghold. In this connection, a meeting was held at the Hujra of Haji Islam in Union Council, Meherdi of the Tehsil Dargai with Tehsil President Haji Mohammad Tayyab in the chair. Besides, the president of PPP district Malakand and former candidate for the National Assembly constituency, Syed Ahmad Ali Shah Bacha, general secretary Tehsil Dargai Mohammad Younas

general secretary Ismail Khan and Tehsil Coordinator PPP digital, party workers from across the village council attended the meeting at large. The participants of the meeting after reposing full confidence in the provincial and district leadership discussed matters relating to party organization and various proposals for further strengthening of the party. Addressing the participants of the meeting, the district and tehsil leadership said that a new cabinet for the Village Council Meherdi will be announced soon. Similar meetings are also scheduled in other village councils of the district. A similar meeting of the party has also been held at the scenic Village Council of Jabban with President Tehsil Dargai, Haji Mohammad Tayyab in the chair. Besides, District President Syed Ahmad Ali Shah Bacha, Younas Khan, Akram Khan, Mohammad Rahim, Mir Azam Khan and Shahabullah Shahab all party workers of the village council participated in the meeting. The participants of the meeting expressed their resolve for waging struggle for the strengthening of the party at grassroots level in the district. District Malakand was once considered a stronghold of PPP was called as mini-Larkana for its leadership. However, since the general elections of 2018, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) has been reigning the district.

US Consul General Urbom visits Mazar-e-Quaid

KARACHI: US Consul General in Karachi Scott Urbom on Wednesday visited Mazar-e-Quaid and paid his respects to the founder of Pakistan Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Consul General Urbom laid a floral wreath at the Mausoleum and signed the guest book on behalf of the people of the United States. Speaking to media on the occasion of his visit, the US Consul General expressed his wish to strengthen economic and people-to-people ties between the United States and Pakistan. "I want to increase education and business opportunities," Urbom said. Pakistan and the US share a long history of bilateral relations involving cooperation in various domains including security, social uplift and business, he added. – APP

Dengue cases continue to climb in KP

PESHAWAR, Sep 04 (APP): The Health Directorate of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided to monitor the dengue patients after a surge in the positive cases across the province. According to an official report, the number of people affected by dengue in different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has climbed to 177, of which 11 patients were undergoing treatment in different hospitals, while the rest of the people had been prescribed treatment at home and being monitored regularly. It said that during this season, 29 positive cases were reported in Peshawar. – APP

OGDCL joins UN global compact to promote SDGs

As part of the initiative, the OGDCL will engage with a global network of companies and organizations united by a shared vision of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan's leading oil and gas exploration company, on Wednesday announced its official membership in the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, to promote sustainable development goals (SDGs) and ethical corporate governance and create a better world. According to news release, by joining the UNGC, OGDCL aligns with a global network of over 17,000 companies and 4,000 non-business participants committed to creating a sustainable future. As part of the initiative, the OGDCL will engage with a global network of companies and organizations united by a shared vision of achieving the Sustainable Development



Goals (SDGs). This membership reaffirmed the OGDCL's commitment to embedding the UNGC's ten universally recognized principles into its strategic and operational frameworks. These principles focus on human rights protection, fair labor practices, environmental stewardship, and anti-corruption measures. As a member of this global initiative, OGDCL will actively engage with companies and organizations worldwide to share knowledge, resources, and best practices. This collaboration will enhance OGDCL's efforts in corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability, reinforcing its role as a responsible corporate entity. OGDCL is committed to integrating sustainability into its core operations, advancing global sustainability, and positively impacting the communities and ecosystems it serves.

AJK to commemorate Pakistan's Defence Day with zeal

MIRPUR-AJK: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) is set to commemorate the Defence Day of Pakistan on September 6 with renewed dedication to support the country's valiant armed forces and defend the motherland's ideological and geographical frontiers. On this day in 1965, the Indian forces made an abortive attempt to cross the international border and attack Pakistan under the cover of darkness. However, the brave Pakistani military and the nation thwarted the enemy's nefarious designs with full vigor. In AJK, the historic day will dawn with special prayers in mosques, seeking stability, progress and prosperity

for Pakistan as well as the success of the Kashmir freedom movement. Fateha and Quran Khawani will also be held to pay homage to the martyrs. Various social and political organizations in AJK including the Traders Wing of Mirpur will hold ceremonies and rallies to express solidarity with the Pakistani nation and the valiant armed forces. People will visit the mausoleums of martyrs to offer their respects. AJK's television and radio stations will air special programs highlighting the significance of the Defence Day and the pivotal role played by the Pakistani military in repelling the enemy's attack in 1965. – DNA

UNICEF-Pakistan, climate ministry join hands to build climate resilience

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Pakistan, Abdullah A. Fadil called on Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam here on Wednesday to discuss boosting collaboration in protecting children from adverse impacts of climate change. During the meeting held here, both sides pledged to work closely to protect children from devastating consequences of climate

change-caused disasters, particularly floods and diseases, spokesperson of the Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Ministry Muhammad Saleem said. The ministry official further said that PM's climate aide Romina Khurshid highlighted during the meeting with Unicef country representative in Pakistan that the children of Pakistan are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, as extreme weather events such as floods, heat waves, droughts, glacial lake outburst floods and shifting rainfall patterns threaten their health, education, and overall well-being. During the meeting, Romina Khurshid highlighted that as the world grapples with the intensifying climate risks, children in Pakistan are emerging as one of the most vulnerable groups and facing severe implications of various climate change-caused disasters, particularly floods, heat waves, the spokesperson Mr. Saleem added. "What we have learned from recent climate change-caused disasters in Pakistan, is that the country,

already one of the most climate-affected countries globally, is experiencing intensified impacts including extreme heat waves, flooding and shifting weather patterns. These climate disruptions are disproportionately affecting children, who are particularly sensitive to environmental changes due to their developing bodies and lower adaptive capacity," remarked Ms. Alam. The ministry official also said that during the meeting it was highlighted that addressing the climate vulnerability among children is not possible without targeted interventions particularly in health, education, water and sanitation sections, to protect future of the younger generation. Suggesting sectoral interventions, the PM's climate aide said that investing in healthcare infrastructure and services to address climate-induced health challenges, with a focus on maternal and child health for strengthening overall health systems; building resilient educational facilities and implementing strategies to ensure that children's education is not disrupted by climate events so as to ensuring educational continuity.



Revenue Division
Federal Board of Revenue
Government of Pakistan

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Hiring of Core IP Bandwidth & Dark Fiber Connectivity
Services for FBR Data Centers located at Islamabad & Karachi
RFP No. 1(43)SS(IT)/2024

Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) invites bids from experienced and reputable firms having valid registration with tax and other relevant authorities, for provision of services related to "Hiring of Core IP Bandwidth & Dark Fiber Connectivity Services for FBR Data Centers located at Islamabad & Karachi". The firms submitting their bids must be appearing on the Active Taxpayers List issued by Federal Board of Revenue, Government of Pakistan.

- The eligible bidders may download the Bidding Document from FBR Website www.fbr.gov.pk/tenders and PPRA Website https://www.ppra.org.pk/dad_tenders.asp. However, eligible bidders opting to download the Bidding Documents must inform FBR on the email mentioned below failing which FBR shall not be responsible if the bidder does not receive clarifications and amendments, if any. In case of any discrepancy between the downloaded document and hard copy, the latter shall prevail.
- Bids, prepared in accordance with the instructions provided in the bidding documents, must reach at the following address on or before **19-09-2024 at 1100 Hrs**. Bids will be opened on the same day at **1130 Hrs** in the presence of authorized representatives of the bidders who may choose to attend. In case the day of bid submission and opening falls on a public holiday, the next working day shall be considered as the deadline for the same.
- To obtain further information and inspect the Bidding Documents, Bidders should contact:

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

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



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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Malaysia-Pak ties established in all spheres since independence: HC

“It is not merely a celebration but, more importantly a reflection of the resolve on the journey of nationhood that brought Malaysia the strength she enjoys today

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, has said that Malaysia values its relations with Pakistan immensely and admirable bilateral relations have been established in all spheres since the countries' independence. Today, on Malaysia's Independence Day, I would like to express that the strategic partnership established between Malaysia and Pakistan, which affects the all sectors of economy and including trade in every sector, the High Commissioner said while addressing the 67th Malaysian National Day ceremony held here Wednesday. He said, "Malaysia's 'strategic partnership' with Pakistan holds immense potential and both Malaysia and Pakistan share a deep-rooted bond, and we are committed to further strengthening our brotherly ties, particularly in areas such as trade, investment, and technological collaboration." The High Commissioner said that Malaysia was the third largest trading partner of Pakistan and bilateral trade between Malaysia and Pakistan was



\$1.8 billion.

He said that there were huge opportunities of cooperation in the Halal Industry, Green Technology, Energy, Tourism, Education and Industry and Trade between Pakistan and Malaysia. He said that with the theme 'Malaysia MADANI: Jiwa Merdeka', this year's celebration highlighted the spirit of togetherness across all segments of society, reflecting the holistic unity of a developed and progressive nation that safeguards its diverse populace and fosters a shared national identity. "It is not merely a

celebration but, more importantly a reflection of the resolve on the journey of nationhood that brought Malaysia the strength she enjoys today. This moment did not only signify the birth of a new nation but also laid the foundation for the formation of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 when Sabah and Sarawak joined hands with the federation. Together, we have grown, through trials and tribulations, emerging stronger as a united nation. As we celebrate our 67th year of independence, we must also recognize the

significant strides Malaysia has made in building a resilient and dynamic economy, and our country has grown into a key player in the global market with a diversified economy that spans sectors such as manufacturing, technology, and services. This economic progress is not only a reflection of our nation's hard work and determination but also a crucial foundation for our future aspirations," the envoy said. He said that the significance of this day lied not only in remembrance of the struggles and sacrifice



of the founding fathers but also in recognizing the diverse cultural tapestry that defines Malaysia today. "The principles of unity, tolerance, and mutual respect remain central to the Malaysian identity, reflecting a nation that has learned to embrace its multiculturalism as an indelible strength," he said. The High Commissioner said, "Every year, on August 31, Malaysians from all walks of life—regardless of race, religion, or political belief—unite to celebrate the National Day, marking the moment when our beloved

nation gained independence on this very day in 1957. He said that it was a day for us to honor their legacy by continuing to uphold the values of unity, tolerance, and respect that they envisioned for Malaysia. He said the evening before that historic day, Malaysians stood united at the Selangor Club in Kuala Lumpur, witnessing the lowering of the British Union Jack and the hoisting of our flag, Jalur Gemilang. "The following morning, in a moment that has been etched in the annals of history, thousands gath-

ered at Merdeka Stadium, where the Duke of Gloucester, representing Her Majesty the Queen, handed a symbol of independence to our first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman", he added. "Tunku Abdul Rahman, with the strength of timbre accompanied by the people's spirit, declared 'Merdeka' seven times, marking the dawn of a new era for Malaysia," he said. He said, "In moving forward, let us renew our commitment to building better Malaysia for future generations.

Govt to provide matching grants for olive units

ISLAMABAD: The government will provide matching grants for the installation of olive processing plants and olive crop containers to promote olive cultivation on a commercial scale and to increase its value addition, thereby enhancing the farm income of micro-farming communities in the country. The matching grants will be provided for the installation of processing plants through public-private partnerships, aimed at facilitating the proper processing and value addition of farm produce, ensuring a fair rate of return for local farming communities, said Dr Tariq, National Project Director for Pakistan's Promotion of Olive Cultivation.

He further informed that matching grants would also be provided to local olive farmers for the purchase of storage containers, adding that this will help ensure quality and adherence to international standards for the production of extra-virgin olive oil, ultimately boosting the country's exports. Talking to APP here on Wednesday, he said that over one million olive plants will be planted during the current year tree plantation drive, which will help the efforts to boost local edible oil production and support the government's initiatives to increase green cover. The other objective of the plantation drive is to expedite the efforts to con-

serve soil, water and mitigate potential climate impacts on the ecosystem, he added. These olive plants will be planted during two tree plantation drives: the first drive will take place from September to November, and the second from March to April, he said that over 5.6 million plants have already been planted and there is large-scale cultivation of olive trees for olive oil. About 500,000 to 800,000 olive oil nursery plants are planted every year. In addition to the olive plantation efforts across potential areas of the country, a target has been set to install drip irrigation systems over 10,000 acres of water-stressed ar-

as, he said adding that this initiative aims to facilitate olive cultivation on marginal lands and enhance the farm income of local farmers. There is significant potential for wild olive grafting in areas such as AJK, Gilgit-Baltistan, and FATA. A grafting drive was launched in these regions, which proved successful, resulting in a large number of wild olive trees being grafted to produce olives, he added. He said that the government was also working to enhance the value addition of olive products to promote the cottage industry to enhance the income of rural women to make them economically empowered and independent.—APP

AIOU hosts consultative session on 'The Art of Parenting'

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) recently convened a consultative meeting on "The Art of Parenting Manual," focusing on training master trainers. The session aimed to develop strategies for equipping trainers with the skills to guide parents effectively on essential aspects of child development and upbringing. The meeting brought together experts from various sectors across Pakistan, including representatives from the Aga Khan University, Aga Khan Foundation Pakistan, the Ministry of Human Rights, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, National Institute of Psychology at Quaid-e-Azam University, and the National Rehamatul-Hil-Alameen Authority. During the discussions, participants underscored the importance of the manual in fostering a brighter future by contributing to the character building and overall development of children. The participants also emphasised on the critical role that master trainers will play in this endeavor. Special attention was given to the needs of children with disabilities, transgender children, and the prevention of child exploitation. Participants highlighted the significant role parents play in shaping their children's physical, emotional, and psychological growth. In Pakistan, many parents face substantial challenges in raising their children due to a lack of structured guidance and support. "The Art of Parenting Manual" has been introduced to address these challenges, providing much-needed assistance to parents in their child-rearing efforts.—DNA

Feasibility study being carried out to install smart meters

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday informed the National Assembly that a feasibility study was being carried out in phase 1 to install smart meters at every transformer to check power pilferage adding that as per an estimated \$ 6 billion would be required to switch around 28 million domestic consumers on smart meters. Responding to various supplementary questions during Question Hour, the minister said that out of 28 million domestic consumers, 17 million falls under the protected category who utilized upto 200 units per month.—APP

Govt. sends 860,000 Pakistanis abroad for employment

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Ehsan Ul Haq Bajwa Wednesday informed the National Assembly that the government has sent 860,000 Pakistanis abroad in 2023 for employment. In response to a calling attention notice regarding the involvement of individuals traveling abroad through agents or mafias and engaging in begging activities, particularly in Gulf countries, which tarnishes Pakistan's image, he assured that individuals sent abroad under the Ministry's programs are thoroughly vetted. The selection process adheres to strict criteria, ensuring that only qualified candidates are chosen and minimizing the possibility of their involvement in begging, he added. He said that there is ongoing communication between the ministry, relevant authorities and embassies. To date, no institution has reported data suggesting otherwise, he added. If any Pakistani, he said, is found engaging in begging abroad, strict action will be taken under the 1979 Ordinance, with cases referred to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for further investigation and legal proceedings. He further explained that the Ministry is responsible solely for sending individuals abroad who meet legal requirements and have no connection with those traveling for purposes such as Umrah, student visas, visits, or pilgrimages. The Bureau of Immigration, he said, has launched a campaign to combat this issue, and the Ministry of Interior, along with the FIA, is taking action against agents involved in such activities. Highlighting the economic contribution of overseas Pakistanis, he said that they contribute \$30 billion annually to the country's economy and are considered a valuable asset. He assured the assembly that a robust legal framework exists for sending Pakistanis abroad for employment, making it unlikely for them to be involved in begging activities.

UN bound to materialize Kashmiris' self-determination right

The APHC spokesman stated that the elections in IIOJK are sham, as true representatives of the people, including Masarrat Aalam Butt, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Muhammad Yasin Malik, and Syeda Aasiya Andrabi, have been caged

ISLAMABAD The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has stated that it is the responsibility of the UN to initiate the process of restoring the Kashmiris' inalienable right to self-determination. According to Kashmir Media Service, APHC spokesman Advocate Abdur Rahid Minhas, in a statement issued in Srinagar said that Jammu and Kashmir is recognized as an international dispute under the UN Security Council resolutions, and that the plebiscite is the principal demand of the oppressed people of Jammu and Kashmir. "The APHC leadership is the real representative of the oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir to raise the demand for the exercise of plebiscite

as per UN resolutions," he added. The statement pointed out that any kind of election under Indian occupation forces has no meaning and value, while the Indian government has snatched the identity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and is changing the demography of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, which blatantly violates UN resolutions. The APHC spokesman stated that the elections in IIOJK are sham, as true representatives of the people, including Masarrat Aalam Butt, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Muhammad Yasin Malik, and Syeda Aasiya Andrabi, have been caged, while the movement of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq is restricted by the BJP regime. The Kashmiris are demanding a

plebiscite, not elections, under UN supervision to decide their political future, as promised by the world community, the statement said. He said the All Parties Hurriyat Conference embodies the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, leading the effort to resolve the Kashmir dispute in line with UN resolutions. Meanwhile, APHC AJK leaders, including Mehmood Ahmed Saghar, Altaf Ahmed Butt, Zahid Safi, Zahid Ashraf, and Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, condemned Indian Foreign Minister Jaishankar's statement on Kashmir, terming it "nothing but deceit, deception, and lies." They said the Indian Foreign Minister is trying to deceive the world conscience and mislead the international community on the Kashmir dispute.—APP

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Briefs

Engineering goods export up by 26.78% to \$28.426 mln in July 2024

ISLAMABAD: The export of engineering goods from the country witnessed an increase of 26.78 per cent during the first month of the current fiscal year 2024-25 compared to the same month of last year. The country exported engineering goods worth \$28.49 million in July (2024-25) against the export of \$22.423 million in July (2023-24), showing a growth of 26.78 per cent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). The engineering goods that contributed in trade growth included transport equipment the export of which went up by 575.55 per cent to \$2.099 million during the month under review from \$0.311 million last year while the export of specialized machinery for a particular industry also rose by 125.61 per cent to \$5.509 million from \$2.442 million. Similarly, the export of rubber tyres and tubes surged by 13.57 per cent to \$6.103 million from \$5.374 million whereas the export of other machinery increased by 19.35 per cent to \$7.030 million to \$5.890 million.—APP

ANF recovers over 28 kg drugs; arrests four accused

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting raids across the country managed to recover over 28 kg drugs and arrested four accused including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He said that ANF teams were conducting raids to net drug traffickers supplying drugs in educational institutions. 46 intoxicated tablets were recovered from an accused arrested near two educational institutes located on Gojra Road, Jhang. The accused confessed selling drugs to students of educational institutions. He said, strict action would continue under zero tolerance policy against those involved in selling drugs to students as such elements were destroying the future of the youth. Along with educational institutions, the ANF teams are also engaged in curbing the supply of drugs across the country, he added. The spokesman said that in an operation, 544 grams ice was recovered from the bag of a Jeddah bound passenger going from Allama Iqbal International Airport. 53 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a female passenger, going to Jeddah at Islamabad Airport. 470 grams ice was recovered from a parcel booked for Bahrain at GPO Sialkot.—APP

PML-N believes in dialogue, consultation: Sanaullah

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Inter-Provincial Coordination Rana Sanaullah said on Wednesday that Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), being a pro-democratic party, believes in dialogue and consultation. Talking to a private news channel, he said that the PML-N leadership offered dialogue and consultation for the betterment of Pakistan several times. Shabbaz Sharif, being an opposition leader in the past, offered a charter of economy to bring the country out of an economic quagmire. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), on the other hand, was always involved in undemocratic activities, they chose the way of anarchy against the principles of democracy. PTI gave the mandate of dialogue to Mahmood Khan Achakzai, on the other hand, the leadership of PTI consistently negated dialogue with PML-N. Today, all the political stakeholders, except PTI, believe that political stability is in strengthening democracy.—APP

Raabta initiative : Serena Hotels hosts panel on advancing disability rights and inclusion

The Raabta initiative by Serena Hotels continues to support and facilitate meaningful dialogues that drive positive social change and promote equity across all sectors. Through events like this, Serena Hotels is reinforcing its dedication to creating platforms for important conversations that contribute to the betterment of society

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, as part of its public diplomacy initiative Raabta, has organised a significant panel discussion titled "Building an Inclusive Society: Advancing Disability Rights and Inclusion." The event, curated by Sidra Iqbal, has brought together leading experts and advocates in the field of disability rights to explore strategies and best practices for creating a more inclusive society. This discussion has aimed to raise awareness about the challenges faced by people with disabilities, share successful initiatives, promote collaboration among various stakeholders, and inspire concrete actions towards advancing disability inclusion. The panel has featured a diverse group of speakers, including Sabeen Bilal, a Special Education Expert, who has provided valuable insights into educational strategies that support the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education. Azima



Dhanjee, Founder of ConnectHear, has highlighted the importance of technology in advancing accessibility communication for the

deaf community. Fahmina Puri, an Inclusion Expert and Disability Advocate, has shared her extensive experience in mainstream-

ing disability across development projects. Sana Khurshid, a Lawyer and Disability Activist, has been instrumental in advo-

ating for disability-inclusive policies, drawing on her own experiences as a quadriplegic wheelchair user. Haseeb Abbasi, a former Sargent Shriver Glob-

al Messenger for Special Olympics, has shared his inspiring journey of overcoming challenges and his

advocacy for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, shared his thoughts on the occasion, "At Serena Hotels, we believe in fostering an environment where everyone is included and valued. We have ConnectHear app deployed at our reception and restaurants to assist our guests with their communication needs. Serena Hotels is an equal opportunity employer and we have multiple associates who identify as persons with disabilities and some of them are here to attend this event. By bringing together experts and advocates, we hope to inspire action and collaboration that will lead to a more inclusive future for all." The Raabta initiative by Serena Hotels continues to support and facilitate meaningful dialogues that drive positive social change and promote equity across all sectors. Through events like this, Serena Hotels is reinforcing its dedication to creating platforms for important conversations that contribute to the betterment of society.

'Korean Week 2024' to strengthen relations with cultural events

ISLAMABAD: South Korean Ambassador to Pakistan, Park Kijun, announced on Tuesday that the South Korean Embassy will host "Korean Week 2024" from October 22nd to 27th in Islamabad. The event aims to enhance people-to-people connections and deepen the bilateral relationship between South Korea and Pakistan. Ambassador Park emphasized the importance of advancing the relationship between South Korea and Pakistan beyond mere friendship, advocating for a transition from cordial ties to a more complementary bilateral partnership. Highlighting the significance of the upcoming event, Ambassador Park shared details of the "Korean Week," which will feature four major activities: the National Foundation Day and Armed

Forces Day Reception, the Korea-Pakistan Cultural Gala, Korea-Pakistan Movie Day, and the 17th National Ambassador's Cup National Taekwondo Junior Championship. The Korea-Pakistan Cultural Gala, in particular, will be a public event designed to foster a deeper understanding of the strong historical and cultural bonds shared by the two nations. "We hope to attract as many participants as possible to this gala. We are closely collaborating with the EP Wing of Pakistan's Ministry of Information to ensure the success of this event," Ambassador Park added. Raisa Adil, an official from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, remarked on the longstanding historical and cultural ties between Pakistan and South Korea, noting the recent celebration of the 40th anniversary

of their bilateral relationship. "Korean companies like Daewoo, Hyundai, and Samsung are household names in Pakistan. Moreover, Korean culture, particularly through K-pop, dramas, and films, has a significant presence in Pakistan. 'Korean Week' will showcase movies, music, and other cultural events that highlight these connections," she stated. Second Secretary Jee Eun Seok also expressed optimism about the upcoming event, emphasizing that it will offer Pakistani audiences a valuable opportunity to explore and appreciate Korean culture. The announcement was made in the presence of senior officials from the Korean Embassy, including Park Jae-lark, Deputy Head of Mission; In Yong Lee, Counselor; and Ms. Gong Sooyun, First Secretary.—APP

Services' trade up by 5.7% in July

ISLAMABAD: The export of various services witnessed 5.70 percent increase during the first month (July) of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding month of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. According to the latest PBS data, Pakistan earned \$621.53 million from the export of services during July 2024 as compared to services' export of \$588.02 million in July 2023. On the other hand, the services' imports witnessed a decline of 8.07 percent during the month under review and were recorded at \$780.50 million as compared to the exports of \$848.97 million in July 2023. Based on the figures, the services' trade deficit shrank by 39.08 percent during the first month of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of previous year. The services trade deficit was recorded at \$158.97 million during July 2024 against the deficit of \$260.95 million during July 2023. On month-on-month basis, the export of services decreased by 2.37 percent in July 2024 when compared to the imports of \$636.60 million in June 2024. The imports of services witnessed a sharp decline of 25.34 percent in July 2024 compared to imports of \$1,045.44 million in June 2024, PBS reported. It is pertinent to mention here that the merchandise exports from the country increased by 14 percent during the first two months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding months of last year. Exports during July-August (2024-25) were recorded at \$5.050 billion against \$4.430 billion during July-August (2023-24), according to PBS data.—DNA

Naqvi meets Chairman Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Maulana Khabir Azad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with Chairman Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Pakistan Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabeer Azad. During the meeting measures to establish peace and eliminate terrorism and sectarianism were discussed. In addition, matters related to Religious harmony, tolerance, and inter-sect unity were also discussed. Interior Minister said that terrorists have no religion, adding that scholars have always guided the nation in the fight against terrorism and still there is dire need for it. He stated that in order to develop an effective narrative against the terrorism, a national campaign to consult scholars of all sects will be started soon. He underscored that the war against terrorism is the war for survival of Pakistan. He stressed that scholars need to again play their role in order to



eliminate the menace of terrorism. He pointed out that the enemy wants to harm national unity by creating unrest but we will defeat the nefarious designs of the enemy through our unity. Abdul Khabeer Azad said that the "Paigham-e-Pakistan" is a great narrative that has declared

terrorism, extremism, and sectarianism as haram. He added that everyone needs to play their role in promoting inter-sect and interfaith harmony and national unity in the current situation. He praised the efforts and services of Federal Interior Minister towards establishing peace in the country.

He said that the entire nation stands united with the valiant armed forces and security agencies to eliminate scourge of terrorism and extremism. Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi appreciated Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad's services for religious harmony, national unity and solidarity.

Local gas production stands at 3200 MMCFD

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Petroleum Division Dr Musadik Masood Malik on Wednesday apprised the National Assembly that the local gas production in the country stood at around 3200 million cubic feet per day (MMCFD) and about 200 MMCFD consumed in its extraction. Replying to various questions during Question Hour, the minister said that out of the available 3000 MMCFD, 1200-1300 MMCFD gas was being provided to fertilizer and power sectors. The remaining 1700-1800 MMCFD gas was pumped through gas companies' network to the consumers, he added. He conceded that Sindh was producing around 60 per cent of total gas production but currently both Sindh and Punjab provinces were facing a gas deficit as the indigenous gas reserves were depleting.

He said the government was taking measures to improve supplies which include awarding new blocks for oil and gas exploration and import of LNG. He said a package has been prepared to encourage domestic and international companies for offshore exploration of oil and gas. He said the oil and gas exploration companies have also been directed to optimize the existing resources. He said that the then government of PTI had imposed ban on the provision of new gas connections. However, under policy, gas connections within radius of 5 kilometer in areas of new gas-discovery were allowed, he added.—APP

HEC organizes 3-day session with Chambers of Commerce

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission's (HEC) Research, Development and Innovation Division (RD&I) under its flagship National Research Programme for Universities (NRP) organized three-day sessions with the Chambers of Commerce/Associations/Industry from August 28-30, 2024. According to the HEC Sources on Wednesday, the sessions entitled "Academia-Industry Collaborations for Applied/ Solicited Research and Strengthening of R&D to Establish Demand-Supply Chain" focused on three areas: Agriculture & Health, Electricals, Materials and Manufacturing and Textile, Leather & Household Items. As many as 40 representatives from aforementioned areas participated physically as well as through online link. Member (RD&I) HEC Dr. Bushra Mirza chaired the sessions. The emphasis was to engage industry for solicited research by identifying industrial problem/research areas. Dr. Bushra Mirza assured the industry representatives of HEC's collaboration and support for mutual research programmes that will benefit the industry through resource sharing and standardized ways, inculcating the trend of need-based applied research in future. The industry showed keen interest in joining hands with HEC and academia to proceed with the solutions to relevant problems and upgrading the testing laboratories to international standards of quality parameters. It also agreed to bridge the gap between academia and industry by fostering this initiative of HEC and exploring other areas of collaboration.—DNA

3 children drowned in rainwater in Tarnol

ISLAMABAD: Three children lost their lives by drowning in rainwater in the area of Tarnol, Islamabad, on Wednesday. According to the private news channel and police, the rescue officials reached the spot immediately after the incident was reported. Rescue officials said that a child fell into the water, and after that, his two sisters, who jumped in the water to save him, were also drowned. The rescue officials shifted the dead bodies to the hospital.—APP

President condoles death of Saudi Princess

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday expressed grief over the death of Saudi Princess Latifa bint Abdulaziz Al Saud. The president conveyed his condolences to Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, the royal family and the people of the Kingdom.—APP

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Hezbollah's retaliation

ISRAELI occupation forces (IOF) assassinated Fouad Shokor, a senior Hezbollah commander, in what was deemed a major Israeli escalation in the ongoing war on Gaza. The air raid also killed three women and two children, while injuring many more. The IOF aggression violated the existing rules of engagement in its war with Hezbollah and crossed multiple red lines. It targeted Beirut, as well as civilian infrastructure, and the attack resulted in several civilian deaths. Two days later, Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah promised in a televised speech supporters gathering for Shokor's burial that the Israelis would pay a high price for the unprecedented escalation since October 7, 2023. Nasrallah stated that Hezbollah is considering a meaningful, well-thought-out reaction to the strike. The battle with "Israel" has "reached a new phase," and retaliation is "inevitable", he said, adding that a regional escalation will be determined by "Israel's" response to the impending retribution. Just over three weeks later, at dawn on Sunday, August 25, the first phase of Hezbollah's retribution began. At 05:15 local time, Hezbollah forces launched a barrage of 340 Katyusha rockets at 11 IOF military installations in northern occupied Palestine. The goal of the first phase was to drown the Zionist Entity's air defense systems and exhaust the Iron Dome protection system, clearing the door for the second phase of the reprisal operation. Then, tens of drones of all sizes were launched from both the south and north of the Litani River, as well as from additional launching points as far as the Beqaa Valley, bringing the operation to its second and last phase. The primary targets of Hezbollah's operation were the Mossad headquarters in Ghilot (north of Occupied Yafa) and the base of Unit 8200, a military intelligence unit for electronic espionage. Nasrallah confirmed in a speech later on Sunday that the drones hit their intended targets as planned. Earlier, the IOF claimed to have carried out a pre-emptive air assault at 04:00 am using 100 fighter jets to prevent an impending missile and rocket attack. (Israeli) sources claimed that the IOF destroyed 5000 to 6000 rocket launchers. Hezbollah's attack was a well-thought-out reprisal, as promised. It was not out of proportion to provoke the region into an all-out battle, which would have contradicted Hezbollah's strategy in the current situation. At the same time, it displayed Hezbollah's tactical capacity to conduct an effective strike roughly 150 kilometers deep within the occupied Palestinian territories in 1948 while evading "Israel's" multilayered air defense systems while being placed on full alert, not to mention defeating the significant US and NATO intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support supplied to the IOF during this operation. It was the first time in history that a non-state actor, Hezbollah, launched such an attack against a nuclear power, targeting one of its critical military sites in a suburb of its capital without being met with a response. This demonstrates Hezbollah's reasonable level of deterrence against the Zionist entity, as well as the regional "balance of power." Hezbollah has effectively separated its response to Sayyed Fouad Shokor's assassination from its daily military attacks on the Gaza supporting front, allowing them to maintain that front operational as they see fit. This has averted the US and NATO engaging in a full-fledged regional war, which would have only helped Netanyahu.



US, China fracking boom

IN her first major interview as the Democratic Party's presidential candidate, US Vice-President Kamala Harris said she would not ban fracking, a reversal of her position during her first presidential run in 2020. The discourse around November's election is going beyond the usual issues of illegal migration or the need for tougher laws on guns and crime. This year, hydraulic fracking is taking centre stage. Fracking involves injecting water, sand or chemicals into a well to break up tightly packed bedrock and sand under the surface of the ground, enabling the extraction of natural gas and crude oil. It can also be used to extract oil and gas from under the seabed. This technology has significantly lowered costs for shale oil, by some estimates down from as high as US\$90 per barrel to nearly US\$30 per barrel. It's easy to see why this is an important issue to US voters as cheaper extraction costs can mean lower energy bills for consumers. According to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA), there were around 23,000 fracking wells in the United States in 2000. That number rose to 300,000 wells by 2015, representing half of US crude oil production. It's little wonder that fracking is a hot-button issue, especially in Pennsylvania, one of a few swing states with the power to determine the presidential election. Just as in other parts of the world, fracking has driven economic and industrial growth in the US. Any administration that bans it is bound to struggle to win over voters. The US is not alone in embracing fracking, though. Once thought to be in its infancy compared to its US counterpart, China's shale gas industry has experienced rapid growth since industrial exploitation began in 2012. An EIA assessment of world shale oil and gas resources listed China as having the largest recoverable shale oil reserves in the Asia-Pacific, estimated at 32.2 billion barrels of oil. That puts it in third place globally, behind the US and Russia, which had 78.2 billion and 74.6 billion barrels respectively. While China had less than half the US levels of shale oil, it is a global leader in recoverable shale gas, with 1,152.2 trillion cubic feet, well ahead of the 622.5 trillion cubic feet of the US. The US and China might not see eye to eye on much these days, but extracting shale gas and oil is something they have both agreed on for more than a decade. They have emerged as major players, reshaping the global energy sector and threatening the traditional monopoly of Russia and the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries. However, amid all its economic and geopolitical benefits, it is becoming increasingly clear that fracking is taking a huge environmental toll. The specific risks vary as countries can have different methods of extraction based on their unique geology, but two widely held concerns are increased earthquakes and groundwater contamination. Studies in China have shown a marked rise in seismic activity in the Changning-Weiyuan National Shale Gas Demonstration Area, located in the southern part of the Sichuan Basin. Changing district in Yibin, Sichuan province, has reported at least five unusual earthquakes of 4.0 magnitude or greater since 2017, and studies have linked this seismic activity to nearby fracking activity.

Two secrets to China's rise

Qamar Bashir



These practices were just starting to take root in the industrial sector but had not yet reached the desired level of effectiveness. To accelerate progress and create a highly skilled workforce capable of transforming the industrial and manufacturing sectors, the government established numerous institutes across the country to teach English at the school level. Additionally, they began sending hundreds of thousands of students to universities in the US and Europe to acquire critical knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities

Twelve years ago, I visited China as a participant in a Seminar on Press and Publication for Developing Countries, alongside participants from over twenty nations. During our month-long training and informative visit, we toured many leading organizations, departments, and industrial undertakings. At that time, China was still grappling with the challenge of opening up to the world while maintaining its one-party structure and socialist ideals, all while striving for nationwide progress and development. In the industrial sector, we observed strict government control. Although industrial and manufacturing processes had begun to improve, the focus was still largely on quantity rather than quality. However, it was evident that the leadership recognized the need to adopt modern management and administrative methods. These practices were just starting to take root in the industrial sector but had not yet reached the desired level of effectiveness. To accelerate progress and create a highly skilled workforce capable of transforming the industrial and manufacturing sectors, the government established numerous institutes across the country to teach English at the school level. Additionally, they began sending hundreds of thousands of students to universities in the US and Europe to acquire critical knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities necessary for modernizing Chinese enterprises. At that time, the organizations we visited used conventional methods to present their performance, focusing primarily on numbers without emphasizing customer satisfaction, quality control, employee value, or creating an enabling environment for optimal employee performance. There was little emphasis on streamlining industrial and manufacturing processes to achieve high quality and product durability. After twelve years, upon returning to China, we observed two significant changes. The most important was the government's recognition of the critical need to develop high-quality human resources, starting from the grassroots level. The government rightly understood that all state resources should be directed toward empowering and educating the people. Their goal was to ensure that the populace was happy, confident, knowledgeable, and highly skilled. This approach would not only enhance the quality, style, and dignity of work processes but also enable each skilled individual to create more wealth and contribute higher taxes, ultimately enriching the state. With increased financial resources, the

state would gain the financial space necessary to further invest in human resource development. As the state becomes wealthier and more prosperous, it would earn respect, dignity, and value in the international community. This financial space could then be used to secure raw materials from around the world and invest in research and development, fostering a culture of innovation that would allow China to compete globally by producing high-quality products that rival those of other nations. Over the past decade, China has significantly increased its investment in developing high-quality human capital, aiming to make its people happier and more prosperous. In education, spending rose from USD 349 billion in 2013 (4% of GDP) to USD 870 billion in 2023 (5.3% of GDP), with a strong emphasis on vocational training, digital literacy, and STEM education to create a more skilled and adaptable workforce. Healthcare investment similarly grew from USD 357 billion (5.5% of GDP) to USD 1.1 trillion (7% of GDP), focusing on improving access to modern healthcare services, addressing public health challenges, and ensuring better overall well-being. Additionally, the widespread adoption of WeChat has revolutionized how people meet their obligations toward the government and manage everyday tasks, from making purchases to accessing public services, further enhancing convenience and efficiency in daily life. China's per capita income also saw a substantial increase, rising from approximately USD 7,000 in 2013 to over USD 12,000 in 2023, reflecting the overall improvements in living standards and economic prosperity driven by these investments. The second major transformation in China over the past decade has been the adoption of ultramodern management, administration, and marketing practices across all companies, corporations, and bodies, whether in the government or private sector. Ten years ago, many Chinese companies were primarily focused on manufacturing and cost efficiency, often lagging behind in advanced management practices and innovation. However, by 2023, these companies have evolved into world-class entities, rivaling top-notch global competitors. In 2013, China's corporate sector was still emerging on the global stage, with many companies struggling to adopt best practices in customer focus, quality assurance, and innovation. The emphasis was largely on scale and production capacity rather than high-quality management. Research and development (R&D) spending by Chinese companies was around 2% of GDP, with most of it concentrated in state-owned

enterprises (SOEs). By 2023, China's corporate sector has undergone a dramatic transformation. Companies across the board have embraced best management practices, such as customer-centric strategies, rigorous quality assurance, aggressive marketing, and extensive automation. The corporate R&D spending has surged to 2.5% of GDP, with private companies playing a significant role. This shift has resulted in Chinese companies rising to the ranks of world-class firms, competing fiercely in global markets. For example, in 2013, China had only two companies in the top 100 of the Fortune Global 500 list. By 2023, this number had grown to 14, with many more companies gaining international recognition for their innovation, quality, and customer focus. Additionally, the adoption of cutting-edge technologies like AI, big data, and automation has further propelled Chinese companies to the forefront of global competition. This transformation is evident in sectors such as technology, where companies like Huawei and Alibaba have become global leaders, and in automotive, where Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers are challenging traditional automakers worldwide. Pakistan can draw valuable lessons from China's transformation into a highly efficient, innovation-driven economy. Firstly, shifting focus from an export-led growth model to a more balanced, high-value economy is crucial. This requires upgrading industries to compete globally by adopting best practices in management, quality assurance, and innovation. Government-led initiatives, similar to China's "Made in China 2025," can play a pivotal role in guiding this transformation, supported by increased funding for research and development and incentives for private sector growth. Embracing technological advancements, particularly in digital transformation and automation, is essential to enhancing efficiency and global competitiveness. Investing in education, especially in STEM fields, will help create a skilled workforce capable of driving innovation. Additionally, addressing urbanization challenges and meeting rising domestic demand for quality goods can fuel further innovation. Finally, adopting sustainable practices and complying with environmental regulations can give Pakistan a competitive edge in both domestic and international markets. These lessons can help Pakistan build a more resilient, prosperous, and innovation-led economy.

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

America's hypocritical concern for Israeli hostages

Ray Hanania

he death of the Israelis who were taken hostage by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, is certainly an outrageous act of terrorism and a tragedy. There was absolutely no justification for the violent attack that took place. However, there are few similar expressions of empathy or sorrow from American politicians or the biased mainstream US news media for the hostages and victims of violence who are not Israeli. Israel has been taking civilian Palestinian hostages since it was founded in 1948. Many of these Palestinian hostages have been held in Israeli prisons for years, their detention

THE Israeli government's racist policies that discriminate against Christians and Muslims make a mockery of the issue of the Israeli hostages held by Hamas. All this week, American politicians have been releasing statements expressing empathy and anger over the reports that six Israeli hostages were found dead. The death of the Israelis who were taken hostage by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, is certainly an outrageous act of terrorism and a tragedy. There was absolutely no justification for the violent attack that took place. However, there are few similar expressions of empathy or sorrow from American politicians or the biased mainstream US news media for the hostages and victims of violence who are not Israeli. Israel has been taking civilian Palestinian hostages since it was founded in 1948. Many of these Palestinian hostages have been held in Israeli prisons for years, their detention renewed every six months, without ever being charged. Do you want data on the Israeli hostages? Visit most politicians' websites or do a Google search of the mainstream news media, which keeps extensive records for public viewing. President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, former President Donald Trump, vice presidential candidate J.D. Vance and a slew of other politicians — including those at the state and local level — have put out statements on the Israeli hostages and condemned Hamas. It is not so much about the hostages as it is about reinforcing their political standing. For example, Fox News reported that former Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan condemned the organization's secretary-general for not explicitly condemning Hamas in his statement following the discovery of the bodies of the hostages. However, if you want to learn about the Palestinian

hostages, there are very few sources of information. According to B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights, more than 3,340 Palestinians were being held without charge in administrative detention at the end of June. They are without attorneys and any hope of a trial. Those 3,340 Palestinians are hostages, too. The difference is simple. When Israel grabs a mother, grandfather or child out of their home in the middle of the night and whisks them away to a camp in the Negev desert, the US media generally does not report it because it is so commonplace. Israel is extremely secretive about the practice and the detainees it holds in its "Gulag archipelago," so we do not even know all of their names. Relatives are rarely given information or permitted to see them. The Palestinians, Christians and Muslims alike, are kept in secretive confinement, no different to the Jewish Israelis who are being held by Hamas in Gaza. In 2020, the Israeli prison system stopped providing information to B'Tselem on the Palestinian hostages and the mainstream news media rarely makes inquiries. Since then, the number of Palestinians taken hostage by Israel has increased at least tenfold. As a consequence, the Palestinian prisoners are left to rot, denied their rights and ignored due to an intentional Israeli government policy of ambiguity and secrecy. Few in the US care about the Palestinian hostages because pro-Israeli politicians and the news media generally do not talk about them. There is no political advantage in advocating for Palestinian hostages, as there is for Israeli hostages. Reporters do not publish the names, ages or pictures of the Palestinian hostages, nor do they provide details of their lives, as they do for the Israeli hostages. The media does not provide a platform for the families of the Palestinian hostages to plead for their release or lament their suffering and death, as they do for the Israeli hostages. The families of Palestinian hostages are not invited to the Democratic or

Republican conventions to boost public knowledge of their plight, unlike the families of the Israeli hostages. In America, the issue of the Israeli hostages is used to manipulate and fuel public anger, which is then exploited for selfish political gain. According to Justice for All, a not-for-profit organization that monitors abuses against all people, regardless of their race, religion or origin: "Since 2000, ten to twelve thousand Palestinian children have been arbitrarily detained in the Israeli military detention system, mostly on charges of throwing stones at Israeli soldiers, a charge punishable by up to 20 years in prison. These children are denied fair trials and fundamental rights, kept for years in pretrial or administrative detention, and sometimes released after years of arbitrary incarceration." But the American politicians who have expressed sympathy for the Israeli hostages do not express sympathy for the Palestinian hostages. Israel controls the media coverage of the Gaza conflict, so we do not know the real truth about the war, the Israeli hostages and the violence of Oct. 7. Israel's government suppresses the media coverage in the most extreme manner. Since Oct. 7, Israeli attacks have killed at least 111 Palestinian journalists. Aggravating the American hypocrisy is the absolute lack of concern or empathy for the continuing violence against Palestinians in Gaza. There is no doubt that Israel has used excessive violence in Gaza as a form of collective punishment against all Palestinians. It has not just targeted Hamas. The devastation in the Strip compounds the suffering that American politicians and the mainstream news media have largely marginalized. I pray for all of the hostages, not just the Israelis. And anyone who prays only for the Israelis while having no empathy or concern for the Palestinians is complicit in the entire hostage tragedy.

Briefs

Info minister laments 'lack of...'

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and one small false news item can cause losses to the image of the country that can't be measured," he said. Tarar stressed the need to impart training to digital journalists on how to verify and authenticate information online, in a similar vein to their counterparts in other mediums. "Since I took office, I have advocated that we need to equip our journalists and digital freelancers with proper skills, so they can become ambassadors of this country and contribute towards the image building of this country and protect vulnerable groups," the information minister said. Continuing his speech, Tarar cited the example of how misinformation affected his constituency in Lahore, with a wedge allegedly being driven between Christians and the government by religious extremists. "I have 70,000 Christian voters in my constituency," he said. "When I reached out to them I could sense fear... I could sense they were insecure. I told them I would hold an open mic, we would sit down and discuss what the problems are.

Non-bailable arrest...

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medical grounds was also rejected by the court. Civil judge Shaista Khan Kundi ordered the Barakahu station house officer (SHO) to arrest Gandapur and produce him before the court. Judge Kundi said the case was called thrice since morning and the suspect still did not show up. Assistant to the lawyer, FatahullahBurki said the chief minister could not turn up before the court due to the situation of floods. Hasan, on the other hand, said he would submit a medical report about Gandapur as he was unwell. Expressing bewilderment over the contrasting statements, the judge remarked: "You said he was not doing well while your assistant said it was due to flood that he could not appear." Judge Kundi said she previously gave relief to the KP CM on the last hearing as well and adjourned the hearing for a long time as requested.

ECP puts off Islamabad local...

FROM PAGE 01
the seats of women from two to three, according to The News. According to an amendment to Section 7 of Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2024, the electoral watchdog shall delimit union councils into nine wards for the election of members on the general seats. Previously, there were six wards in a union council. As per substitution of Section 15, all nine general members of each union council shall be directly elected by the voters registered in the corresponding union council. Meanwhile, an amendment to Section 17 stated that the words, the expression the Representation of People Act, 1976 will be substituted with the Elections Act, 2017. Another substitution of Section 11 noted there will be chairman and vice chairman of a union council as joint candidates, nine general members, one woman, one peasant or worker or business or technocrat, one youth member and one non-Muslim. Earlier, the election commission - in response to requests from political parties - had rescheduled polling for October 9 instead of September 29. "To facilitate the participation of various political parties and prospective candidates in the election process and to provide them with all possible accommodations, the election commission has officially notified the revised election programme, according to which polling will now be held on October 9, 2024," said a statement.

Sarfaraz opens up on his playing future after mentor

Former Pakistan captain will mentor Dolphins in PCB's new tournament

DNA

LAHORE: Former Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed has opened up on his future as a player after being named as the mentor of the Dolphins side for the Champions One-Day Cup, scheduled to be held in Faisalabad from 12-29 September. Sarfaraz is the active Pakistan player out of the five mentors announced for the Champions Cup. The 37-year-old has rated this as a great learning opportunity for him and confirmed that he will be available for domestic and international duties. "This is a great opportunity for me. It's also a chance for me to learn. I will strive to bring forward good players who can represent Pakistan," he said in a presser. "I will be available for the Pakistan team. When I will have domestic duties, I will fulfill them. Whenever I am selected, I will be available. "With time, everything will fall into place. Right now, I feel I can still play. I will continue to play as long as I can," he added. Pakistan recently slumped to a 2-0 Test series defeat to Bangladesh and Sarfaraz has asked fans to support. "My message to the fans is that this Pakistan team will make a comeback. Support your players. Support your players in the Champions Cup." Sarfaraz revealed how he picked his side for the forthcoming competition. "I have selected the team while working closely. We have chosen players from a draft



of 150 players. "We will focus on the development of U19 players and with my experience, we will try to

bring forward good players. "In just twelve to fourteen days, it's not possible to fix everything. What's done is done, but we will now try to set Pakistan cricket on the right path," he added.

Mentors of Champions One-Day Cup

Shoab Malik - Stallions
Misbah-ul-Haq - Wolves
Waqar Younis - Lions
Saqlain Mushtaq - Panthers
Sarfaraz Ahmed - Dolphins

Event schedule

(all matches at Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad)

12 Sep - Wolves v Panthers
13 Sep - Stallions v Lions
14 Sep - Dolphins v Panthers
15 Sep - Wolves v Stallions
16 Sep - Lions v Panthers
17 Sep - Dolphins v Wolves
19 Sep - Stallions v Dolphins
20 Sep - Lions v Wolves
21 Sep - Panthers v Stallions
22 Sep - Dolphins v Lions
24 Sep - Qualifier (Team No.1 v Team No. 2)
25 Sep - Eliminator 1 (Team No.3 v Team No.4)
27 Sep - Eliminator 2 (Losing Qualifier v Winning Eliminator 2)
29 Sep - Final

Federer 'feels sorry' for Nadal over Paris Olympics setback

'Overall he can do whatever he wants....he's been one of the most iconic tennis players we have ever had in our sport,' Federer says



MADRID: In a recent turn of events, Roger Federer admitted that he "felt a little bit sorry" for Rafael Nadal after witnessing his defeat at the Paris Olympics. The Swiss former tennis player was spotted at Arthur Ashe Stadium for the first time since retirement during the quarter-final

match between Grigor Dimitrov and Frances Tiafoe. During his visit, the former world's number one in singles attended an interview with USA TODAY where he was asked about his former rival, Nadal. In response he said: "I actually just spoke to him this last week. He wanted to

ask me something, and we had a chat, and, um, I felt a little bit sorry for him. That his summer didn't go as well as planned because, at the French Open he had a tough draw. Olympics, he had a tough draw as well." Meanwhile, the 38-year-old played 17 single matches across seven tournaments

this year and doubles alongside Carlos Alcaraz at the Paris Olympics and with Casper Ruud in Bastad. The Spanish duo was unable to get their hands on the medal at the Paris Olympics.

In this regard, Federer stated that: "He was hoping, I think, to make a medal. Of course, it was Alcaraz in the doubles. I think also to make a medal."

The veteran player ended the conversation by regarding his rival Nadal as one of the iconic players.

"But you know, overall he can do whatever he wants....he's been one of the most iconic tennis players we have ever had in our sport and that's what I told him. So I just hope he can go out on his terms and the way he wants to, um, but he's a great guy, great career," he concluded. Meanwhile, Nadal will be playing Laver Cup scheduled from September 20-22 in Berlin, which is the same event where Federer played his final match. - Agencies

Dravid to rejoin Rajasthan Royals as head coach

Dravid recently ended his tenure after India won the T20 World Cup

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: Former Indian head coach Rahul Dravid is poised to make a return to Rajasthan Royals (RR) as head coach ahead of the 2025 IPL season, ESPNcricinfo reported on Wednesday. Dravid has reportedly signed a contract with the franchise and has already held preliminary discussions regarding player retentions in preparation for the upcoming mega auction. Dravid has a history with the Royals, having captained the team in the 2012 and 2013 IPL seasons. He also served as team director and mentor during the 2014 and 2015 seasons. In 2016, Dravid moved to Delhi Daredevils (now Delhi Capitals) before taking up the role of head of the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru in 2019. He was appointed head coach of the Indian men's team in 2021, concluding his three-year tenure with the team's first ICC title in 11 years. In addition, the Royals are likely to bring on board former Indian batter Vikram Rathour as one of Dravid's assistant coaches. Rathour, who previously served as an India selector, was part of Dravid's coaching team at the NCA before becoming India's batting coach in 2019. Meanwhile, Kumar Sangakkara, who has been the Royals' Director of Cricket since 2021, will continue with the franchise and oversee their teams in other leagues, including Paarl Royals in the SA20 and Barbados Royals in the CPL. The Royals have not won the IPL title since the inaugural season in 2008; their closest effort was in 2022 when they finished as runners-up to Gujarat Titans. Although they failed to make the playoffs in 2023, finishing fifth in the league despite a strong start, they reached the playoffs in 2024 but were knocked out in Qualifier 2.

Pakistan fall to record low in Test Rankings

Consecutive losses have caused them to slip below West Indies and Sri Lanka

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan have dropped two places in the ICC Men's Test Team Rankings, falling to eighth position after a surprising series defeat at home to Bangladesh. Before the series, Pakistan were ranked sixth, but consecutive losses have caused them to slip below the West Indies to eighth, with 76 rating points. This is the lowest rating Pakistan have held in the Test rankings since 1965, except for a brief period when they were unranked due to an insufficient number of matches. "Extremely disappointed, we were excited for the home season but the story has been the same as Australia," Pakistan skipper Shan Masood said after the loss in the second Test to Bangladesh. "We have not learnt our lessons. We thought we were playing good cricket in Australia but not doing the job, that's something we need to work on." Bangladesh were 26/6 at one point in the Test match before they clawed their way back into the game with Litton Das and Mehidy Hasan Miraz stitching together a solid partnership to reduce the deficit. "It has happened four times in my tenure that we have let the team [opposition] back into the contest when we were dominating," Masood said, speaking of Bangladesh's comeback in Rawalpindi. "We should have done better after having them at 26/6.

Crowds give Nepal's first medallist hero's welcome

Goverdhan took bronze at the 2024 Paralympics in Paris, the first Games podium place in history for the Himalayan nation

KATHMANDU: Nepal gave their first Paralympic medallist a hero's welcome Wednesday as cheering crowds turned out for taekwondo star PaleshaGoverdhan's return home. Goverdhan, 21, took bronze at the 2024 Paralympics in Paris, the first Games podium place in history for the Himalayan nation who have also never won a medal at the Olympics. "I kept my promise, I brought a medal back home. This achievement is not just for me, but for everyone," Goverdhan said in a speech after her arrival. She said it had been a "long wait" for Nepal to win a medal. "It was thought to be impossible... I believe that now young taekwondo players and other players can see it is possible," she said. Traditional music and an army band played as Goverdhan, draped in the national flag, marigold garlands and traditional Buddhist scarves, emerged to loud cheers at Kathmandu's airport. Many young taekwondo athletes were among hundreds gathered to welcome back Goverdhan, who beamed a wide smile and held up her medal. "I am very happy, very inspired and proud for



the country," said 13-year-old taekwondo athlete Nandani Adhikari, who was among the crowds at the airport. "Her victory feels like our own," she said. Goverdhan, who is studying architectural engineering in China, won bronze in the women's K44-57kg para taekwondo category when she beat Serbia's MarijaMicev 15-8. Born with a congenital limb deficiency on her left hand, Goverdhan took up martial arts at school when she was 10 years old. Her father Pradeep Goverdhan said her coach spotted her talent and suggested she train professionally. "She has made us so proud. As parents, you are worried when your child is born with a deficiency like that. But we always encouraged her," he said. - Agencies

Tiafoe sets up all-American semi-final

SPORTS DESK

NEW YORK: Frances Tiafoe set up a US Open semi-final against Taylor Fritz to guarantee there will be an American man in the singles final in New York for the first time in 18 years. Andy Roddick was the last American man to win a Grand Slam singles title when he triumphed at Flushing Meadows in 2003. Roddick was also the last American man to reach a US Open final, having lost to Roger Federer there in 2006. But the wait for a home finalist will soon be over after Fritz ended his run of Grand Slam quarter-final disappointment by edging out Alexander Zverev 7-6 (7-2) 3-6 6-4 7-6 (7-3). The ever-entertaining Tiafoe then advanced when opponent Grigor Dimitrov was forced to retire injured. Tiafoe led Dimitrov 6-3

6-7 (5-7) 6-3 4-1 when the Bulgarian, hampered by an apparent hamstring injury, ended the match. "I didn't want to end it like that, for me or the crowd. But Friday is going to be one hell of a day," 20th seed Tiafoe said. "It's the biggest match of mine and Taylor's life." It is a third major semi-final for Tiafoe and a first for Fritz, who had lost all four of his previous matches at this stage of a major. He roared in delight after battling past German fourth seed and 2020 runner-up Zverev earlier on Tuesday. "Today just felt different," Fritz, 26, said. "I really felt like it was my time to go a step further. It's only fitting I'm doing it here on this court, at the Open, in front of this crowd." Fritz's victory followed New Yorker Emma Navarro beating Paula Badosa to reach the semi-finals of the women's singles. Taylor Fritz's big-

gest title to date is the Indian Wells crown in 2022. This has proved to be Fritz's breakthrough moment in his 33rd Grand Slam appearance. He lost to Novak Djokovic in the US Open quarter-finals in 2023, fell in the last eight at Wimbledon in 2022 and July this year and suffered defeat in the Australian Open quarters in January. After sharing two tight sets, the crucial moment came deep in the third when Zverev looked to have the momentum, having recovered an early break. He missed a straightforward backhand on break point at 4-4 which allowed Fritz to hold and then the fourth seed offered up three forehand errors to fall 0-4 behind. Zverev held off those three set points but Fritz eventually broke through at the fifth attempt. Fritz, who also beat Zverev from two sets down at Wim-

bledon this year, was able to neutralise the German's booming first serve and remain the more solid with the finish line in sight while hitting powerful serves of his own. He gained the initiative in the fourth-set tie-break by taking the first point on the Zverev serve and won a gruelling 24-point rally for the second break and a 5-2 lead. Fritz faltered momentarily, pushing a nervous forehand wide, but Zverev offered up two more errors to seal the result. Zverev said afterwards it was the most angry and disappointed he had felt after a match in a "long time." "I played terrible," said Zverev, who was unusually flat in the final set and complained about his racquet throughout as he chased a first Grand Slam title and a third US Open semi-final. "I just have no answers right now. He played quite

a good match. I did nothing to deserve to win." On the prospect of an all-American semi-final against Tiafoe, Fritz said: "I know the crowd would really want to see me play Frances so we get an American in the final. That could be crazy." Britain's Jack Draper is among those remaining in the top half of the draw. He plays Alex de Minaur in the quarter-final on Wednesday. Tiafoe's previous Slam semi-final appearance was also in New York, where he so often produces his best tennis by feeding off an animated crowd, while his dynamic, attacking style helps ratchet up the volume further. Roared on by a partisan crowd, Tiafoe was on the front foot immediately to put pressure on the Dimitrov serve. The first break came midway through the opening set and there was little jeopardy as the American closed it out. Dimitrov had been oddy

passive and quickly went a break down in the second but, urged on by coach Jamie Delgado, he backed his shot-making and was rewarded. He rescued the break and an electric end to the second set saw the pair go shot for shot in the tie-break. It came to an almost comical conclusion as, having earned three set points, Dimitrov double-faulted twice, only for Tiafoe to hand him the third with a double fault of his own. The match remained in the balance until an injury to Dimitrov suddenly turned it into a procession. With his opponent clearly struggling, Tiafoe professionally and respectfully stuck to the task at hand before a tearful Dimitrov admitted defeat. "Obviously, it's not the way I wanted to get through but being in another semi-final here is incredible," Tiafoe said afterwards.

OGRA announces delay of oil imports

FROM PAGE 01

statement, outlining the key points discussed during the meeting. The primary agenda was to address ongoing issues concerning refineries and the country's reserves of high-speed diesel. According to Ghaznavi, the delay affects September cargoes, and the fate of three additional cargoes scheduled for October remains uncertain. He indicated that if necessary, December shipments might also face cancellation. To manage the situation, cargoes that have already arrived will be placed in bonded storage, effectively removing them from the market by the end of September.

AC reserves verdict on Bushra's...

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national exchequer in a case also involving a property tycoon. Accountability Court Judge Nasir Javed Rana will announce the verdict on Bushra's plea tomorrow (Thursday) after the parties in the case concluded their arguments. The couple was produced at makeshift court room setup in Adiala Jail owing to security reasons in today's hearing, however, cross-examination of the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) investigation officer was not conducted due to the absence of the PTI founder's lawyer. Bushra's counsel Usman Riaz Gul gave arguments on her acquittal plea. The anti-corruption watchdog opposed the former first lady's acquittal petition in the case. Subsequently, the judge declared a request to initiate contempt proceedings against the NAB chairman "ineffective" due to the arguments raised by the prosecution and the defence on the acquittal plea.

Fazl wants parliament to lead...

FROM PAGE 01

Afghanistan visit before the 2024 nationwide polls. The JUI-F supreme called for immediate action from both the government and the opposition to address the law and order situation in Balochistan and KP. He warned against dismissing political leaders and institutions, emphasising that neglecting their roles could be a grave mistake. After strongly condemning the ongoing attacks on the armed forces and institutions, he urged both the government and the opposition to confront these challenges, saying parliament is the supreme institution. The politician, who headed a multi-party opposition alliance - Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) - which successfully ousted former prime minister Imran Khan via a no-trust move in 2022, highlighted that experienced political leaders are being sidelined in favour of inexperienced and emotional youth, leading to further complications.

Opp alliance demands...

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PTI leader AsadQaiser stated, "Our alliance is seriously concerned about the situation in Balochistan. We will meet with the National Assembly speaker and urge him to take action, including convening an APC on Balochistan." Qaiseremphasised the need to address the grievances of "our estranged Baloch brothers," noting that despite raising the issue in the assembly, the government has shown little interest. He also lamented Akhtar Mengal's resignation from the National Assembly, calling it "a regrettable development." He stressed the importance of a serious discussion on Balochistan, warning, "Our enemies are exploiting this situation. We are planning nationwide protests and rallies, including a day of countryside demonstrations." Latif Khosacriticised the government's economic policies and attempts to amend the Constitution, which he said have caused widespread public concern.

Briefs

Japan's Nikkei plunges 3% after Wall Street drop

TOKYO: Japan's key Nikkei index dropped more than three percent on Wednesday, weighed down by falls on Wall Street following lacklustre manufacturing data. The benchmark Nikkei 225 was down 3.06 percent, or 1,184.63 points, at 37,501.68 in early trade, while the broader Topix index was down 2.79 percent, or 76.21 points, at 2,657.06. "The Japanese market is expected to start with sharp falls as US stocks declined and the yen firmed" against the dollar, said senior market analyst Toshiyuki Kanayama of brokerage Monex. The dollar fetched 145.31 yen in early Asian trade, down modestly from 145.87 yen in New York. Overnight, major US indices spent the entire day in the red, with the Nasdaq finishing down more than three percent. The tech-focused Nasdaq closed down 3.3 percent, the blue-chip Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1.5 percent, while the broad-based S&P 500 shed 2.1 percent.

Among major shares in Tokyo, SoftBank Group was down 5.66 percent at 7,956 yen, while chip-making equipment manufacturer Tokyo Electron plunged 5.99 percent to 23,640 yen.—APP

DR Congo jail break attempt leaves 129 dead

KINSHASA: An attempted jail break from DR Congo's largest prison has left at least 129 people dead and led to women being assaulted, the interior minister said Tuesday. The circumstances around the bid to bust out of the Makala prison in the capital Kinshasa, which holds 10 times the number it is meant to house, in the early hours of Monday remain unclear. On Monday, witnesses told AFP they had heard gunfire at around 2:00 am that lasted for several hours in the area of the prison, a popular and residential neighbourhood. Democratic Republic of Congo Interior Minister Jacquemain Shabani in a statement released by video on Tuesday announced a provisional death toll of 129 people. They included "24 who were shot after warnings", he said. In the early hours of Tuesday, gunshots rang out again in the neighbourhood, several witnesses said. "I heard the gunshots around 5:00 am," Sacre, a taxi driver who did not want to give his surname, told AFP. He also said that the streets in the area were unusually calm with police and soldiers on patrol, AFP journalists saw.—APP

China to hold high-level IP conference

BEIJING: China is scheduled to hold the 3rd High-Level Conference on Intellectual Property for Countries along the "Belt and Road" from Sept. 11 to 13 in Beijing, the country's top intellectual property regulator said on Wednesday. The conference will invite heads from approximately 70 IP institutions of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) partner countries, as well as international and regional organizations, according to the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA). The event will also welcome embassy representatives in China, officials from relevant domestic departments, industry professionals and scholars, with an expected attendance of around 450 participants, the CNIPA noted. The participants will engage in in-depth discussions on regional cooperation, green development, digital transformation and IP value enhancement, senior CNIPA official Sheng Li told a press briefing. During the three-day conference, CNIPA, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the Eurasian Patent Office will host meetings to discuss topics related to the role of IP in driving innovative development of enterprises, Sheng added. China has actively promoted exchanges and cooperation with BRI.—APP

ICCI President pledges full support to combat drug menace

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari commended the ANF's initiative and stressed the need to raise awareness about the impact of drug trafficking on youth and families through social media campaigns

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, attended an interactive session titled 'Drug Trafficking through Export Consignments' organized by the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF). The session was well-attended by the representatives from the business community, Pakistan Customs officials and other stakeholders. Director General ANF Major General Abdul Moeeed welcomed the attendees and briefed them on the sophisticated methods used by drug traffickers for transportation, which not only harm the youth but also tarnish the country's image. He expressed his determination to eradicate the menace by bringing those involved to justice. The ANF chief highlighted the shift from plant-based to chemical-based drugs,



which has led to new techniques for transportation, including camouflaging drugs in export items. He emphasized that individuals from various industries, including pharmaceuticals and cargo overtly or covertly are being exploit-

ed by the mafia for the purpose. He assured that ANF will fully facilitate the business community in enhancing the exports of the country for the progress and prosperity of the country. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari commended the

ANF's initiative and stressed the need to raise awareness about the impact of drug trafficking on youth and families through social media campaigns. He assured that the business community would continue to support efforts to combat

the menace, which would ultimately enhance exports, benefiting both the business community and the country's economy. He also made the mention of the ICCI's initiatives for the purpose, including seminars, roundtables and awareness walks in collaboration with the Capital Development Authority, ICT Police and other stakeholders to sensitize the society so as to get rid of the evil. He added that for the sake of our future generations, everyone has to fight against this scourge with full force and determination and that our contribution to this count will be great work. Prominent among those who attended the session include United Business Group Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari, ICCI Vice President Eng. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Saifur Rehman, Hamayoun Kabir, Malik Mohsin Khalid, Zia Chaudhry and other.

Mexican protesters try to disrupt vote on contentious reforms

MEXICO CITY: Protesting judicial workers on Tuesday blocked access to Mexico's lower house of Congress to try to prevent a vote on controversial reforms proposed by outgoing President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. About a thousand Supreme Court employees meanwhile joined a judicial sector strike against the plan, under which judges would be selected by popular vote — a prospect that has alarmed the United States and international investors. The justices of Mexico's highest court also decided to suspend their sessions this week in support of the stoppage. Before dawn, hundreds of judicial employees blocked streets leading to the ruling party-controlled Chamber of Deputies with cars, and placed tape across roads to prevent pedestrians from passing. "This is a crucial day... because they plan to approve (the proposals) quickly, without analysis,

without further dialogue," Patricia Aguayo, a representative of the workers, told a local radio station. The protests forced lawmakers to meet in a sports center in the east of Mexico City instead. Lopez Obrador's Morena party and its allies comfortably hold the two-thirds majority in the lower house needed to approve constitutional reforms, and nearly the same proportion in the Senate. Lopez Obrador, whose six-year term began in 2018, argues that the judiciary serves the interests of the political and economic elite. He has often criticized the Supreme Court, which impeded some of his proposed reforms in areas such as energy and security. The leftist leader, who enjoys an approval rating of around 70 percent, said at a press conference on Tuesday that judicial officials have the right to "defend their privileges." The plan, which is supported

by president-elect Claudia Sheinbaum, a Morena party member who takes office on October 1, has sparked diplomatic tensions with the United States and upset financial markets, causing a sharp fall in the peso. US Ambassador to Mexico Ken Salazar has warned that the changes would "threaten" a trade relationship between the neighboring countries that "relies on investors' confidence in Mexico's legal framework." The reforms could pose "a major risk" to Mexican democracy and enable criminals to exploit "politically motivated and inexperienced judges," Salazar said last month. He reiterated the opposition on Tuesday, telling journalists there was "a lot of concern" about the proposals. While judicial reform in itself was no bad thing, "If it is not done well, it can cause a lot of damage to the relationship" between Mexico and the United States, Salazar said.

Canada, also a member of the major free trade partnership with the United States and Mexico, has for its part said investors are worried. In response, Lopez Obrador has announced a "pause" in relations with the US and Canadian embassies, criticizing the ambassadors' statements as "interventionist." Human Rights Watch has urged lawmakers to reject what it called the "dangerous proposals," saying they would "seriously undermine judicial independence and contravene international human rights standards." The rights group expressed concern that the reforms would also eliminate restrictions on the military carrying out civilian law enforcement. "Given Mexico's long history of serious human rights violations and official cover-ups, legislators should be taking steps to strengthen human rights protections, not weaken them," it said.—DNA

Coal generates less than 50% of Australian electricity for first time

SYDNEY: Coal generated less than 50 percent of Australia's electricity in the last week of August, dropping to a record low as renewable production surged, data showed Wednesday. According to market monitor Open-NEM, coal generated 49.1 percent of the country's electricity, while renewables accounted for 48.7 percent as storms boosted wind production. Australia remains one of the world's leading exporters of coal and gas and has relied heavily on fossil fuels to keep the lights on. But climate finance expert Tim Buckley said August's record figures were caused by wild weather and a warm start to the spring which had reduced demand on the grid by up to 20 percent. Winds exceeding 150 kilometers (93.2 miles) per hour in the southeast of the country had also almost doubled the usual wind generation. "It's a historically low coal share for Australia in the national energy market, but it's also a sign of where we are going," Buckley told AFP. "It will only be a few years from now that coal is contributing virtually nothing," he added. In 2022-2023, fossil fuels accounted for 91 percent of the country's energy consumption — a wider measure than electricity production that includes fuel used in transport and industry. With most of Australia's 16 coal-fired power stations to close in the coming years, government and industry are racing to invest in the renewable energy sector. The government unveiled on Wednesday six battery projects to be built across South Australia and Victoria that will provide 1,000 megawatts of storage by 2027. Energy Minister Chris Bowen said the energy transition was going to happen because "the climate demands it, and economic reality demands it." "We must be implementing sensible solutions now, not in a decade, or two decades, to be certain that Australia's energy needs will be met." Buckley said while Australia's investment in the sector was growing, it lagged behind other countries.—Agencies

Russian attack kills three in Ukraine's Lviv: governor

KYIV, UKRAINE: A Russian attack on the city of Lviv in western Ukraine killed at least three people and wounded 25 others, the regional governor said Wednesday. "Unfortunately, we have a third dead person as a result of the night attack on Lviv. According to initial information, this is a 14-year-old girl," the region's governor Maksym Kozytskyi wrote on Telegram. "The number of injured increased to 25." Sirens rang out over the city of Lviv before sunrise on Wednesday, according to Mayor Andriy Sadovy, who advised people to take shelter as air defences worked to down a barrage of missiles. According to Kozytskyi, residential buildings were damaged in the attack, which also wounded several children. Since invading in February 2022, Russia has launched dozens of large-scale drone and missile attacks on Ukraine. Western Lviv has largely been spared the worst of the fighting over the two and a half years of war, but last week, Russian strikes targeted its energy infrastructure causing outages, according to officials.—APP

Venezuela opp candidate not seeking asylum

CARACAS: Venezuelan opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia has not sought asylum, his lawyer said Tuesday, despite an arrest warrant slammed by the international community over his claim that he was robbed of victory in a July presidential election. The Venezuelan public prosecutor's office said Monday a court had approved a warrant for Gonzalez Urrutia over "serious crimes" related to the opposition's insistence that strongman incumbent Nicolas Maduro and his allies stole the vote. Gonzalez Urrutia, who has been in hiding since shortly after the July 28 polls, had ignored three successive summons to appear before prosecutors investigating him. "No asylum has been requested," lawyer Jose Vicente Haro told reporters outside Gonzalez Urrutia's house in Caracas on Tuesday, adding the matter "has not been raised." The warrant prompted an outcry from the international community, with the United States, European Union, and nine Latin American countries rejecting it outright. US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Washington and its allies condemned the "unjustified arrest warrant," calling the action "just another example of Mr Maduro's efforts to maintain power by force." EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell on X "categorically" rejected the warrant. "Enough of the repression and harassment of the opposition and civil society. The will of the Venezuelan people must be respected." In a joint statement, Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay said they "unequivocally and absolutely reject the arrest warrant." Leftist allies Brazil and Colombia — who house millions of Venezuelan refugees — added to the clamor Tuesday, expressing "deep concern" about the warrant they said "makes it difficult to find a peaceful solution" to the post-election crisis. UN chief Antonio Guterres was following events with "concern," spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. Venezuela's National Electoral Council (CNE), most of whose members are allies of 61-year-old Maduro, declared him re-elected to a third six-year term within hours of polls closing, but without releasing detailed results. The opposition published its own polling station-level voting tallies which it says show Gonzalez Urrutia won the race by a landslide. The opposition count is at the heart of the charges against the 75-year-old ex-diplomat, which include "usurpation" of public functions, "forgery" of a public document, incitement to disobedience, sabotage, and "association" with organized crime and financiers of "terrorism." "No one in this country is above the laws, and the institutions," Maduro insisted Monday.—DNA

Nigeria's Lagos turns to waterways for green transport solution

LAGOS: Nigerian saleswoman Ivy Junaid says her daily half-an-hour commute from mainland Lagos to the city's island business district has changed her life. What was once often a three-hour nightmare drive to work with a pre-dawn start and gnarly traffic has become a quick sprint skimming across the waters of Lagos lagoon by boat. "You can actually get out of bed when you need to. You have breakfast at home, strut in here, strut into the boat and 30 minutes across the water," the telecoms employee said. "It's really a life-saving situation for most of us." Flanked by lagoon waters and the Atlantic Ocean, Nigeria's economic capital Lagos has long used its waterways as an alternative to the megacity's chaotic roads. But soon more commuters like Junaid in the city of 20 million could be travelling by boat under plans to massively expand waterway transport and multiply passenger numbers. With an around 410-million-euro (\$455-million) investment from France's AFD development agency and EU institutions, the programme — known as Omi Eko or Lagos Water in Yoruba language — also aims to tackle carbon emissions with a fleet of electric-powered ferries. Whereas most Lagosians live on the mainland part of the city, a lot of offices and workplaces are on the islands area — Victoria Island, Ikoyi, Lagos Island and Lekki — linked by a series of bridges. That means road traffic to the islands in the morning and back to the mainland after work can be heavy going. Even a small accident on a bridge or repair work can cause miles of tailback. Bad roads and flooding during the rainy season coupled with the chaotic fleets of informal "Danfo" minibuses that pack the roads compound the difficulties. The state government already has ambitious plans for more integrated public transport as Lagos barrels towards becoming the world's most populated city by the end of the century. Intracity trainlines and dedicated bus lanes fed by smaller minibus routes aim to reduce traffic. But only after years of delays, the first Blue Line train finally started running last year from a section of the mainland. Another Red Line is scheduled to open soon. With water on all sides, however, boat transport is an obvious solution — and one the project's funders believe could be replicated in Cameroon and Ivory Coast.—DNA

Pak new envoy Rizwan Sheikh holds phone discussion with key US lawmaker

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's new Ambassador to the United States, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, began his contacts with US lawmakers with a telephonic conversation with Congressman Tom Suozzi, a leading member of the Congressional Pakistan Caucus on Tuesday, according to a Pakistani embassy press release. It said they discussed Pakistan-US relations as further strengthening of bilateral cooperation between the two countries. Congressman Suozzi congratulated Ambassador Sheikh on assuming his new duties here. On his part, the Pakistani envoy underscored the importance of Pakistan-US relations to both the countries and the region. According to the press release, Ambassador Sheikh spoke of the "positive trajectory" in the bilateral partnership, saying, "We are determined to fully utilize this spirit of goodwill and friendship for further strengthening of multifaceted relations.—APP

No peace without justice for Grenfell fire survivor

LONDON: Emma Louise O'Connor can no longer hear a fire truck's siren without freezing up with fright after living through Britain's worst residential fire since World War II. Seven years since London's Grenfell tower went up in flames, the 35-year-old told AFP she is still struggling to recover from the trauma, demanding justice for the victims of the disaster that killed 72 people. A first report by a public inquiry into the 2017 tragedy laid the bulk of the blame for the fire's rapid spread across the building on its highly flammable cladding. While the tower was located in the capital's affluent area of Kensington and Chelsea, most of its inhabitants were on low incomes. With the inquiry preparing to publish its final report on Wednesday, O'Connor remembers all too well how quickly events — and the flames — overtook her. "I ordered a delicious curry and my partner ordered pizza," she said. "We didn't even think that would be our last takeaway at our home." Once in bed in her room on the flat's 20th floor, she remembered hearing the first two fire engines pull up outside. Two more swiftly followed, before a fire alarm started blaring on a floor below. An avid watcher of a television drama about members of the London Fire Brigade, O'Connor was initially curious about why they were there. So she and her partner decided to leave the tower, despite the advice at the time being to wait inside to be rescued — a decision which most likely saved their lives. During the inquiry, O'Connor was confronted with surveillance camera footage of her "ridiculously smiling" as she descended the stairs. "I was excited," she said. "But then I got down to the ground floor... my facial expression, it was like: 'Okay, now something is quite seriously wrong.'" The couple had to duck under the flames to flee. sat down nearby, they then watched on as the building they once called home burnt to a husk. "And then I went into shock." The couple was eventually rehoused in another flat in Kensington, less than a kilometre from the tower. But far from being a safe haven, her new flat made her trauma "a lot worse". O'Connor, who says she has autism, arthritis-inflicted mobility issues and post-traumatic stress disorder, placed the blame on the many fire stations in the vicinity. Every time a fire truck leaves on a call-out, she has to endure the siren's shriek. On one occasion, she narrowly avoided being run over while she stood fixed to the spot in the middle of the road. Of the final report, "I expect them to name names" of those responsible, O'Connor said, pushing the government to implement the recommendations already made by the inquiry. Bitter with the administrations that have come and gone since the fire, she added she expects the cladding manufacturers who prioritised profit over safety to be punished. Even today, seven years on, she struggles to attend commemorations for those who died in the fire. "I have so much survivor's guilt that every time the names (of the victims) are read, it's like my name should be there," she said. "But now I've concluded that we're here for a purpose and that purpose is to make sure that everyone's homes is safe for them." —APP

Apartheid Israel is targeting Gaza, WB simultaneously

NEW YORK: A UN rights expert warned Tuesday that Israel's intensification of its military assault against the northern West Bank marks a dangerous escalation of grave violence and human rights violations committed by Israel against the Palestinian people since October 7. "Israel's genocidal violence risks leaking out of Gaza and into the occupied Palestinian territory as a whole," Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, said in a statement. "The writing is on the wall, and we cannot continue to ignore it. There is mounting evidence that no Palestinian is safe under Israel's unfettered control. While this was also true before Hamas' attack on 7 October, the risk has since intensi-

fied," Ms. Albanese said. "Apartheid Israel is targeting Gaza and the West Bank simultaneously, as part of an overall process of elimination, replacement and territorial expansion," she said. "The long-standing impunity granted to Israel is enabling the de-Palestinisation of the occupied territory, leaving Palestinians at the mercy of the forces pursuing their elimination as a national group," Ms. Albanese added. Continuous genocidal incitements by top Israeli leaders and officials remain unpunished, and are often acted upon by soldiers, armed settlers and others, revealing the intent to destroy the Palestinian people under occupation, the UN expert said. Increasingly loud calls by Israeli leaders for turning the towns in the West Bank and refugee camps into a "mini-Gaza", are

translating into military operations that are causing heavy death tolls and widespread destruction to the West Bank's urban areas. Systematic aerial and ground attacks on Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarim and Tubas governorates, particularly targeting refugee camps, have intensified in the past few months. Recently, on 28th August, Israeli occupation forces launched a full-scale military operation against these areas that have already killed 22 Palestinians and injured dozens. Bulldozers have destroyed critical infrastructure, including roads, water and energy grids. New checkpoints have been established, following Israel's Foreign Minister Katz's declaration that "We must deal with the threat just as we deal with the terrorist infrastructure in Gaza,

including the temporary evacuation of Palestinian residents and whatever steps are required. This is a war for everything, and we must win it." An evacuation order has been issued to Nur Shams refugee camp in Tulkarim and a city hospital in besieged Jenin, currently treating 150 patients. The Israeli occupation forces have blocked entry to the three main hospitals and imposed a curfew, while Israeli ground forces have invaded and besieged Shu'fat refugee camp in East Jerusalem. The expert notes that since 7 October 2023, 652 Palestinians have been killed outside of Gaza, including 151 children, thousands injured, over 3,300 have been displaced and over 12,000 arbitrarily detained, de facto hostages of the unlawful

occupying Power. The increasing violence in the West Bank coincides with unprecedented levels of displacement, depopulation and land confiscation carried out by Israel in collaboration with settler militias in the area since the Oslo era. This continues even after the International Court of Justice concluded that this occupation is unlawful, and Israel must dismantle it together with the colonies and its associated regime. "The international community, made of both states and non-state actors, including companies and financial institutions, must do everything it can to immediately end the risk of genocide against the Palestinian people under Israel's occupation, ensure accountability and ultimately end Israel's colonisation of Palestinian territory." —Agencies

Briefs
IHC grants bail to Ali Wazir

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has granted bail to former MNA Ali Wazir. The bail petition was presented by Justices Babar Sattar and Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan, who approved the bail application. The court has ordered Ali Wazir's release on bail against a surety bond of Rs25,000. Ali Wazir, who is currently imprisoned in Adiala Jail, faced charges of terrorism. His bail application was previously rejected by the Anti-Terrorism Court, prompting him to seek relief from the Islamabad High Court.

Churna declared 2nd marine protected area

DNA

QUETTA: The Balochistan government on Wednesday approved Churna Island as a designated Marine Protected Area (MPA), the second in Pakistan, according to a press release by the World Wildlife Fund-Pakistan (WWF-P). Churna is an island in the Arabian Sea, located around 6.8 km northwest of Mubarak Village. According to the press release, the provincial government had declared Astola Island as the first MPA in June 2017.

The non-governmental organisation appreciated the Balochistan government's efforts in securing this designation, while also lauding Secretary Forest and Wildlife Department Dostain Jamaldini and Chief Conservator Wildlife Sharifuddin Baloch for playing a role in the process. Churna Island, like Astola Island, is among the limited marine areas in Pakistan that have coral habitats and are termed a biodiversity hotspot. "However, Churna Island, located near Karachi, is being extensively used for scuba diving, snorkelling, cliff jumping, jet skiing, and other recreational activities.

"It is considered an important fishing ground where a large number of fishermen from Sindh and Balochistan operate," the press release noted. The marine ecosystem and diverse wildlife inhabiting Churna Island are under serious threat due to many anthropogenic activities including the development of power plants, single-point mooring, an oil refinery in the immediate vicinity, as well as recreational activities that are conducted in the area, the press release said. "WWF-P believes that declaration of Churna Island as an MPA is an important step towards ensuring that the fragile ecosystem of the area is protected."

China hits back at Canada EV tariffs with canola probe

BEIJING: China has announced a probe of Canadian canola imports, escalating a trade fight between the two countries.

The move, which could lead to tariffs on a key Canadian export, came a week after Canada said it would impose new border taxes on Chinese-made electric vehicles, steel and aluminium. Beijing also said it would file a complaint with the World Trade Organization over the EV tariffs, which it criticised as "discriminatory" and "unilateral". Canada's minister of agriculture said plans for the canola investigation were "deeply concerning" and the government was closely monitoring the situation. The latest tit-for-tat comes as a rising number of governments, including the US and European Union, erect barriers against Chinese-made electric cars. In announcing the EV tariffs last week, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said countries such as China had "chosen to give themselves an unfair advantage in the global marketplace". — Agencies

Fin Minister engages with Standard Chartered on expanding investment

The dialogue focused on exploring potential collaborations between the Government of Pakistan and Standard Chartered Bank, particularly in sectors such as infrastructure development, digital banking, and sustainable finance



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a virtual meeting with Mr. Sunil

Kaushal, Global Head of Corporate & Investment Banking at Standard Chartered Bank, to discuss expanding investment opportunities in Pakistan. The meeting was attended by Mr. Rehan Shaikh, CEO of Standard Chartered Pakistan, the Finance

Secretary, and other senior officers of the Finance Division. During the discussion, the Finance Minister underscored the positive trajectory of Pakistan's macro-economic indicators and expressed the government's commitment to maintaining eco-

conomic stability through various reforms. "Our government is dedicated to creating a conducive environment for foreign investments, ensuring that Pakistan remains a competitive and attractive destination for global investors," Senator Aurangzeb remarked. The dialogue focused on exploring potential collaborations between the Government of Pakistan and Standard Chartered Bank, particularly in sectors such as infrastructure development, digital banking, and sustainable finance. Mr. Kaushal expressed his confidence in Pakistan's economic outlook and reiterated Standard Chartered's long-term commitment to the country. "Standard Chartered views Pakistan as a key market with vast opportunities and we are committed to deepen our engagement with the country by extending all kinds of investment and financial support needed to fulfilling the country's economic ambitions, in the present as well as the years to come," he stated. The meeting concluded with both parties agreeing to explore specific investment projects in the coming months. The Finance Minister assured the delegation of the government's full support in facilitating their initiatives and expressed his optimism about further strengthening the partnership with Standard Chartered Bank.

No electricity loadshedding being carried out, says govt

Discos executing load management in areas based on losses in corresponding feeders, says Azam Nazeer Tarar

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Amid heightened scrutiny and ambiguity surrounding the independent power producers (IPPs) the federal government has claimed that no loadshedding is being carried out in the country due to generation shortfall. Speaking on the National Assembly floor on Wednesday, Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said that distribution companies (Discos) are carrying out load management in areas based on losses in corresponding feeders. The minister's remarks come as the incumbent government faced much scrutiny owing to exorbitant electricity bills and hours-long power outages across the country — especially during this year's summer. Ever since coming to power in February earlier

this year, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's administration has faced challenges on multiple fronts with power sector being one of them. The Centre faced country-wide protests over prolonged loadshedding and sky-high bills throughout the summer.

The incumbent rulers have also faced flak on the IPP issue with calls to review the government agreements with them as the government has admitted that the country has the highest electricity tariffs in the region. However, Energy Minister Awais Leghari has said that the nation would receive "good news" regarding the IPPs soon. Speaking in the lower house of parliament today, Tarar also underscored that feeders with up to 20% losses are exempted from loadshedding. The minister also said that in the first phase, smart meters will be installed on trans-

formers to keep a check on electricity theft. Informing the House that Private Power and Infrastructure Board was working on promotion and development of Alternative and Renewable Energy technologies for power generation in line with the government's vision to diversify the energy generation, the lawmaker accentuated that as many as 58 alternative and renewable energy based projects were operational which were producing 3,837 megawatts of electricity cumulatively. Out of these, winds projects amounted to 1,845 megawatts, he added. Meanwhile, expressing his view on the parliament floor, Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik lamented the depletion of indigenous gas reserves and said that the incumbent administration was awarding new blocks for oil and gas exploration along with the import of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Azma Bokhari: Ready to remove reservations of IMF

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari asserted to talk and clear reservations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on subsidy in electricity bills. Addressing a press conference, she highlighted the Punjab government's 'ApniChhat, Apna Ghar' project under which interest-free loans were being provided to build homes. Citizens could get a loan with a monthly installment of Rs 14,000 to pay back in seven years. She revealed that more than Rs 78,000 citizens had applied for this project and around 0.2 million calls had been received for information and guidance of this project. She stated that banks and other financial organisations take service charges for such projects but the government will pay the service charges and tax for the ApniChhat, Apna Ghar program. Bokhari added that CM Maryam Nawaz herself balloting this program every month for strict scrutiny and to avoid inclusion of convicted and criminals in this program. She also clarified that projects were being announced after finalisation of programs funding and all

Azma Bokhari highlighted key projects of Punjab CM including lowering rates of Roti (Bread), decreasing fares of transportation and introducing air ambulance service. Talking about surge in crime rates, Punjab info minister stressed for a zero-tolerance policy against any gang war and lawlessness

details. Punjab information minister berated other provinces for copying Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz and her projects and also issuing statements against her. Azma Bokhari highlighted key projects of Punjab CM including lowering rates of Roti (Bread), decreasing fares of transportation and introducing air ambulance service. Talking about surge in crime rates, Punjab info minister stressed for a zero-tolerance policy against any gang war and lawlessness. She also criticised political opponents for doing politics on electricity bills relief for two months. Azma Bokhari informed that there was no emergency situation caused by rain however, crops had been affected and dengue was also under control in Punjab.

United Nations welcomes progress in Gaza polio campaign

The campaign was prompted by the discovery of a case of polio in a baby boy last month, the first in the Gaza Strip for 25 years

NEWS DESK

CAIRO: Good progress is being made in rolling out a polio vaccine to children in Gaza but a permanent ceasefire in the 11-month war is needed to ease humanitarian suffering, the main UN agency for Palestinians said on Wednesday. UNRWA said that three days into the campaign in areas of central Gaza, around 187,000 children had received the vaccine. The campaign will move to other areas of the Palestinian enclave for the second stage. The campaign was prompted by the discovery of a case of polio in a baby boy last month, the first in the Gaza Strip for 25 years. Israel and Hamas militants agreed to daily pauses of eight hours in the fighting in pre-specified areas to allow the vaccination program. No violations have been reported. "Great progress! Every day in the Middle Areas of #Gaza, more children are getting vaccines against #Polio," the head of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini, said on X on Wednesday. "While these polio 'pauses' are giving people some respite, what is urgently needed is a permanent ceasefire, the release of all hostages + the standard flow of humanitarian supplies including medical and hygiene supplies (into Gaza)," he said. Palestinians say a big reason for the return of polio is the collapse of Gaza's health system and the destruction of most of its hospitals during the war. Israel accuses Hamas of using hospitals for military purposes,

something the Islamist group denies. On Tuesday, COGAT, an Israeli defense ministry agency tasked with coordinating aid deliveries into Palestinian territories, said since the onset of the war, it has facilitated the entry of 282,126 vials of the polio vaccine, enough for 2,821,260 people. It also said in a statement that approximately 554,512 vials of vaccines have entered the Gaza Strip, enough for 4,973,736 individual vaccines for various diseases and potential epidemics in the territory. Gaza has around 2.3 million people and is one of the world's most densely populated places. Despite the success of the polio campaign, diplomatic efforts to secure a permanent ceasefire, release hostages held in Gaza and return many Palestinians jailed by Israel, have faltered. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted on Monday that Israeli troops would remain in the Philadelphia corridor on the southern edge of Gaza bordering Egypt, one of the main sticking points in reaching a deal. Hamas, which wants any agreement ending the war to include a withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Gaza, says such a condition, among some others, would prevent an accord. Netanyahu says the war can only end when Hamas is eradicated. The impasse is frustrating Israel's international allies and the 15 members of the United Nations Security Council. Slovenia's UN envoy — the council's president for September — said on Tuesday that patience is running out and the global body will probably consider taking action if a ceasefire cannot be brokered soon. Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters that the only way a deal could be reached was if Israel agreed to a US proposal on July 2, endorsed by the Security Council, and accepted by the group. Both Israel and Hamas blame failure to clinch a deal on conditions added by each of the two sides.

Sisi arrives in Turkiye on trip to mend ties

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Turkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan greeted Egypt's leader Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on Wednesday as he arrived in Ankara to seal their mended ties. The two men shook hands as El-Sisi stepped off his plane in the Turkish capital, according to images released by the Turkish presidency. After a decade of frosty relations, the two leaders said they had turned over a "new leaf" in ties in February, when Erdogan visited Cairo. In 2013, Ankara and Cairo cut ties after El-Sisi, then defense minister, ousted president Muhammad Mursi, an ally of Turkiye and part of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. Erdogan said at the time he would never speak to "anyone" like El-Sisi, who in 2014 became president of the Arab world's most populous nation. But relations between the two men have warmed over the past two years, their interests aligning on several issues, including the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. Despite the decade of estrangement, trade between the two countries never ceased: Turkiye is Egypt's fifth-largest trading partner, while Egypt is Turkiye's largest in Africa.

Bhachar becomes PAC chairman in PA

DNA

LAHORE: Leader of the opposition Malik Ahmed Khan Bhachar on Wednesday became Chairman of coveted Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Punjab Assembly. A notification in this regard was issued by the assembly secretariat. The secretary general of Punjab Assembly Ch Amer Habib gave notification to Bhachar on Wednesday. Bhachar became MPA for third consecutive term in Feb 8 elections from Mianwali. Earlier, he has also served as Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government and Community Development during the last government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

People of Balochistan more patriotic than us, says Omar Ayub

"A fact-finding mission should go to Balochistan and assess the situation," says PTI politician

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: As the political landscape of Balochistan witnesses turbulence in the wake of the August 26 terror attacks and the resignation of veteran lawmaker Sardar Akhtar Mengal, Omar Ayub — the leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly — has termed the people of Balochistan "more patriotic" than the rest of the country. Speaking during a session on the floor of the lower house of parliament on Wednesday, Ayub, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) secretary-general, insisted on taking Mengal's resignation seriously, asking for redressal of the grievances pertaining to the province's stakeholders. "A fact-finding mission should go to Balochistan and assess the situation," the politician said, demanding the formation of a committee that could talk to Balochistan's people. A day earlier, Balochistan National Party (BNP-M) chief Akhtar Mengal resigned as a member of the NA over the "worsening situation" of his province, declaring no confidence in the state, the president and the prime minister. "I announce my resignation from the Assembly today. I made this decision after witnessing the situation of Balochistan," said Mengal during the lower house's session. Regretting that he could not do anything for the people of the province, the politician said they had not been given the right to rule for a year and that he had a lack of trust in the whole system. "People are not interested in the issues of Balochistan and every time this issue is raised, we face a blackout," he said.

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