



# Islamabad POST

Thursday, September 19, 2024

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**WADA commends cultural diplomacy efforts in Pakistan**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Only J. Mansoor will be accepted as CJP: Hamid**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Italy's WC icon Schillaci dies aged 59**

Detailed News On Page-06



## Dar terms Russia a key player

# Russia to support Pak bid for BRICS membership: DPM

Two sides review bilateral cooperation, pledge to coordinate on multilateral platforms such as the UN and SCO

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk stated on Wednesday that Moscow supports Pakistan's inclusion in BRICS. During a joint press conference with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Islamabad, Overchuk responded positively to questions about Pakistan's request to join the group of leading emerging market economies. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar stated that discussions with his Russian counterpart focused on expanding economic relations between Pakistan and Russia. During the press conference, he noted that bilateral trade reached \$1 billion last year, and both countries prioritise expanding trade ties by addressing logistical and related issues. Dar stressed the potential for energy cooperation with Russia and expressed Pakistan's eagerness to develop connectivity projects, including rail and road networks, between the two nations and beyond. Regarding regional cooperation, he highlighted that Pakistan views Russia as a key player in West, South, and Central Asia, and strengthening mutually beneficial relations with Russia is a priority for Pakistan's foreign policy. He also mentioned Pakistan's commitment to working with Moscow towards achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan. Recognising Russia's historically strong ties with the Muslim world, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and its stance on the Palestine conflict, Dar appreciated Russia's position that freedom of speech should not be used to disrespect revered figures or religions, as it could hurt the sentiments of the Muslim Ummah. Dar expressed hopes for continued high-level contacts and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to deepening relations with Russia. On his part, Deputy Prime Minister Overchuk discussed the prospects for collaboration between Pakistan and the Eurasian Economic Union, which includes Armenia.

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**Russian DPM calls on COAS Asim Munir**  
COAS reiterates Pakistan commitment to fostering traditional defence ties with Russia

DNA

RAWALPINDI: H.E. Alexey Overchuk, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, paid a courtesy call on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), at the General Headquarters. During their meeting, they engaged in productive discussions on matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics, and bilateral cooperation across various sectors. The COAS reiterated Pakistan's commitment to fostering traditional defence ties with Russia. Both sides reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen security and defence cooperation in multiple domains. The visiting dignitary praised the Pakistan Armed Forces' pivotal role in combating terrorism and their tireless efforts to promote peace and stability in the region.



RAWALPINDI: Alexey Overchuk, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, pays a courtesy call on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), at the General Headquarters. - DNA

## PM speaks with King Charles III

Prime Minister Sharif reiterated Pakistan's commitment to the Commonwealth and the values enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif received a telephone call today from His Majesty King Charles III. The King formally invited the Prime Minister to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Samoa in October. Accepting the invitation, the Prime Minister said that the CHOGM in Samoa would be a significant moment in the history of the Commonwealth, being the

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## Constitutional Package Fazal becomes a hard nut to crack for the govt

"Proposed amendment draft not acceptable in any way," says JUI-F chief

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who took the centre stage as both the government and the opposition sought his support, has completely rejected the draft of the "controversial" constitutional package, aimed at making changes to Pakistan's judicial and parliamentary systems. "The draft we were given was reviewed, and it was in no way acceptable," the veteran politician said while talking to journalists after attending a luncheon at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Qaiser's residence on Wednesday. The government pushed the proposed constitutional package amid speculation about a potential extension in the tenure of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, who is set to retire in October this year, following the PTI's request last month for the early issuance of

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## Tarar refutes reports of joint presser with allies

"Will clarify govt's stance on constitutional package in meeting with bar councils today," says Azam Nazeer

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday refuted rumours suggesting that the government will hold a joint press conference with the allied parties. "No decision has been taken yet to hold a press conference with the allies," Tarar said during

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## 3 terrorists killed in Nankana shootout

Terrorists were planning to launch a major attack on Lahore

DNA

LAHORE: Three terrorists were killed and two escaped during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Nankana Sahib, CTD spokesperson said on Wednesday. The terrorists had opened fire on the CTD team, the spokesman said, adding: "In the exchange of fire, three terrorists were killed by the firing of their [own] comrades, while two [others] escaped." The CTD said it recovered three grenades, three detonators,

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## Briefs

### Toshakhana Trial court barred from issuing final verdict

IHC issues notices to respondents over couple's acquittal pleas and adjourn hearing till September 26

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The IHC on Wednesday stopped the accountability court from issuing a final verdict in the \$190 million settlement case against incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi. A two-member bench of the high court comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the couple's acquittal plea in the said case. The PTI founder on September 7 had filed a plea seeking acquittal in the \$190 million case after the Supreme Court's verdict in National Accountability Bureau (NAB) amendments case.

### ECP adjourns intra-party polls case

Barrister Gohar hoping the ECP would not delay PTI's intra-party election case any further

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

ISLAMABAD: The ECP has adjourned the hearing of PTI intra-party election case until October 2, following a request by PTI for additional time to submit required documents. A three-member bench, led by ECP Member Sindh Nisar Durrani, presided over the proceedings, with PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar representing the party. During the hearing, ECP Member Balochistan questioned whether PTI's intra-party elections were conducted in Chamkani, Peshawar, to which Barrister Gohar clarified that the elections took place in Islamabad.

## Imran accuses govt of dismantling PTI 'Amends a bid to give extension to 3 umpires'

PTI founder claims that investigations into May 9 events will unfold if Chief Justice Isa steps down

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has alleged that a constitutional amendments are being pursued to extend the terms of three top officials, including Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, Islamabad High Court's chief justice, and the Chief Election Commissioner. Speaking to the media at Adiala Jail, Imran claimed that the government, despite losing previous political battles, is now resorting to these amendments to safeguard fraudulent election results and protect officials in power. "They are amending the constitution to extend the terms of three umpires," Khan said. He warned that if Chief Justice Isa is removed, investigations into the May 9 protests and the alleged rigged elections will be launched. Imran criticised the delay in addressing the May 9 events, accusing the government of trying to dismantle his party. He pointed out that he had been targeted with over 140 legal cases before May 9, adding that attempts to

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## PTI links talks on amendments to Khan's release

How can a constitutional amendment be passed by an incomplete parliament, asks Ali Muhammad Khan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Ali Muhammad Khan has urged the government to release the party's founder, Imran Khan, from Adiala Jail before engaging in talks on constitutional amendments. Speaking to the media in Islamabad on Wednesday, Ali Muhammad outlined PTI's stance, stating, "First, release Imran Khan from prison, then we

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## President rejects IIOJK Legislative Assembly polls

The President expressed these views while talking to a delegation of migrants from IIOJK, residing in Pakistan since 1989, led by Mr Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Wednesday

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has categorically rejected the elections for the Legislative Assembly of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), asserting that these polls are no substitute for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. He emphasised that such elections are unacceptable to the people of Kashmir and called upon the international community to hold the Modi government accountable for ongoing human rights violations in IIOJK. He further urged the need to take concrete steps toward conducting a plebiscite in line with relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions. The President expressed these views while talking to a delegation of migrants from IIOJK, residing in Pakistan since 1989, led by Mr Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Wednesday. Welcoming the delegation, the President condemned the Legislative Assembly elections in IIOJK, terming them as part of India's broader strategy to consolidate its illegal occupation of the region. He highlighted that such

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## Trump calls India 'very big abuser' on trade

Republican candidate slams India but says Modi is "fantastic" during a campaign event

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: Former US president Donald Trump on Tuesday said that he plans to meet Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi next week during the latter's visit of the United States for several

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# Action ordered against transporters for overcharging

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE :Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has directed authorities to crackdown on overcharging transporters, ensuring that the recent reduction in transport fares, due to lower oil prices, benefits citizens. "Every passenger, every citizen, and every student must receive full relief from the petrol price reduction," she emphasized, instructing that any overcharged fares be returned to the public. The CM tasked the provincial transport minister, commissioners, deputy commissioners, transport authority officials, and district administration to conduct strict field inspections to enforce compliance. Earlier, the CM was briefed by the relevant authorities that after the announcement of reduction in transport fares by the federal government, the Punjab government

has also issued a new schedule of reduction in private transport fares for 37 cities. As directed, the transport fares for passengers have been reduced from Rs 40 to Rs 250. Maryam Nawaz was briefed that vehicles in 41 cities of Punjab have been checked to learn about fare collected from the passengers. She was apprised that once again, Rs 105,540 extra fare charged from the passengers has been returned, and Rs 358,500 fine has been imposed on the overcharging transporters. The CM was also briefed that 30 vehicles had been stopped to operate, Niazi Express has been sealed and Rs 1.5 Lakh has been slapped in fine on Niazi for not displaying fare list. On the directive of the chief minister, a helpline has also been made active for citizens' complaints and their redressal. Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that keeping the planet clean is

indispensable for the protection and survival of environment. In her message on International Clean Up Day, she said "Keeping our environment clean is our collective social responsibility." The CM advised to adopt proper garbage disposal practices, and do not use plastic, saying that environment-friendly sustainable measures are being taken under Suthra Punjab Programme. Maryam Nawaz said for the first time in history, rural areas were also being cleaned, adding that garbage recycling, plantation and cleaning of public places were being organized. The CM underscored that citizens should also take responsibility in keeping the environment clean. She appealed to citizens to keep cities, villages and streets clean and play a role in protecting the environment. "Remember, a clean Pakistan is a healthy and developed Pakistan", she concluded.



ISLAMABAD: First digital parking has been launched in Sector G-8 of the Federal Capital. —ONLINE

## Pak, Russia-coop following Deputy PM's visit hailed

LAHORE :SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Ifthikhar Ali Malik Wednesday termed the visit of Russia's Deputy Prime Minister, a commitment to deepening cooperation in various sectors, laying the groundwork for a more robust and mutually beneficial partnership between Pakistan and Russia. Commenting here octogenarian trade leader of South Asia, hoped current visit will open new avenues for collaboration and enhance regional stability. He said visit underscores the growing importance of economic and strategic ties between two countries especially in areas of trade, energy, and connectivity. He said both were exploring ways to enhance their economic cooperation, and this visit will provide a platform to deepen those efforts. He said focus will be trade, where the two sides were looking to diversify and increase the volume of goods exchanged. Pakistan offers a growing market for Russian products, while Russia's vast resources and technological expertise could play a pivotal role in supporting Pakistan's development ambition, he added. Ifthikhar Ali Malik said energy cooperation was another critical aspect of this bilateral relationship and Russia has significant expertise in energy infrastructure, and Pakistan, facing challenges in meeting its growing energy demands, can benefit from Russian investment and technology. About connectivity, he said it was also key to this growing partnership—APP

## 2% cess on export in KP reduces business by 70%

PESHAWAR :The recent decision by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government of imposing a levy of two percent Infrastructure Development Cess (IDC) on commercial value of export consignments has left drastic impact on business in the province by shrinking export upto 70 percent. Leading businessmen from KP including known exporter, Khalid Sultan and Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi have expressed the fear that if the decision is not withdrawn, it would further reduce export volume from the province, affecting livelihood of thousands of people. In a joint press statement issued here on Wednesday, both Khalid Sultan and Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi said a large number of export businesses have been diverted to

other provinces after levy of two percent cess in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "Taxation on commercial value of export consignments amounts in millions over calculation and exporters are diverting transportation of goods to other province to avoid this unbearable financial burden," observed Khalid Sultan. Export of sugar to Afghanistan has been totally diverted to Chaman border post because of levy of huge amount of Rs. Two million duty on each truck, Khalid claimed. Diversion of sugar laden truck from KP to Baluchistan costs around Rs. Two to Three hundred thousands which is a good option for businessman to avoid payment of Rs. Two million, he explained. The export of perishable items including vegetable, fruits, meat, poultry, eggs etc have also been diverted

from Peshawar to airports of other cities, he continued. Similarly, he added, export of other items which usually were exported from Peshawar airport, dryport and Torkhem border post, have been diverted to other cities of the country, impacting annual revenue generation of government. Khalid Sultan also expressed the fear of reduction in flights of international airlines from Peshawar in wake of reduction of revenue in cargo business. He said Emirates flights carry around two tonnes of cargo goods from Peshawar to international destinations and reduction in this source of earning can ensue in reduction in flights. Zia Sarhadi lamented extension of Infrastructure Development Cess on reverse cargo under Afghan Transit Trade.—APP

## Man electrocuted

FAISALABAD:A man was electrocuted to death in the area of Thikriwala police station. Rescue 1122 said here on Wednesday that truck helper Adeel (25), resident of Chak no.471 Samundri, was busy in removing fault from his vehicle when he accidentally touched live electricity wire passing near the parked truck at Sadhar bypass adda. Consequently, Adeel received fatal electric shock and died on the spot. The body was handed over to heirs after completing necessary formalities, he added.—APP

## Two kite-flyers arrested

FAISALABAD:D-Type Colony police arrested two kite-flyers and recovered kites and other paraphernalia from their possession. Police said here on Wednesday that the team on a tip-off conducted raid in Iron Market and nabbed two accused namely Javaid Rasheed Khan, resident of Allama Iqbal Colony and Naveed Sakhawat, resident of D-Type Colony red handed while flying kites on rooftop of their shops. The police recovered 12 kites and other paraphernalia from them and launched investigation after registering separate cases on violation of the Punjab Prohibition of Kite Flying Ordinance 2001, spokesman added.—APP

## Kid drowns in canal

LODHAN: A kid drowned at Sodal Wali bridge canal at Jalalpur Road here, when he slipped while crossing the canal through temporary bridge here on Wednesday. According to Rescue officials, six-year-old minor named Zeeshan, son of Akhtar of Sodal Wali bridge, was crossing the canal through a temporary bridge made by placing a pole when suddenly he lost control and fell into the canal and drowned. Upon receiving the information, Rescue teams rushed to the spot and fished out the body of the kid after rescue and search operation. The rescue team handed over the body to heirs after fulfilling legal requirements.—APP

## Murree transporters warned against overcharging travel fares

DNA

RAWALPINDI :Deputy Commissioner Murree, Agha Zahir Sherazi has warned the transporters against not complying with government prescribed policy after fuel price cut. He asked the transporters to reduce the fares on every route and display the fare lists. He directed the relevant authority to take strict action against transport owners who do not reduce travel fares. The government has re-

cently reduced the petroleum prices according to which, diesel has been reduced by Rs 13.6 paisa and petrol by Rs.10 per litre. All fares have also been reduced in the same proportion. According to the details, the deputy commissioner on Wednesday chaired a meeting with the transporters in which secretary RTA, traffic police officials and rescue-1122 reps were also present. DC said that the fruits of the reduction in the prices of petroleum products should reach the people,

the transport owners should reduce the fares and immediately display the fares in prominent places at the stations. Further, while issuing instructions to the traffic police, he directed to ensure the implementation of the prescribed fares and in this regard, any complaint received from the public should be redressed in time. "The vehicles should be checked to ensure compliance with the lease and strict action should be taken against the violating transport owners", he directed.

## ACE to probe theft of 29,000 vials of insulin

MULTAN :In a shocking incident, as many as 29,000 insulin vials worth Rs 20 million were allegedly stolen from the Health Department's warehouse in Multan and it left thousands of citizens in urgent need of the life-saving drug without access. The case was initially registered with Shah Shams Police Station, where Multan Police quickly launched an investigation. As part of the operation, three officials of Health Department were handed over to the Anti-Corruption Department for further inquiry. The source informed that Chief Police Officer (CPO) Multan referred the inquiry to Director Anti-Corruption for thorough investigation. The theft has triggered public concern, especially as the stolen insulin vials were meant to be distributed to diabetic patients across the region. With a large number of citizens depending on these crucial supplies, their health remains at risk as authorities work to resolve the situation. Just days before the theft, the Punjab Health Department had suspended two key officials. The missing insulin has caused a severe shortfall, leaving countless citizens without vital medication. Authorities were under pressure to recover the stolen vials and bring the perpetrators to justice swiftly to restore public confidence and ensure the health needs of those affected are met. This developing situation continues to highlight the need for tighter security measures in the handling of essential medical supplies, especially in regions where such incidents can directly impact the well-being of thousands, the sources stated.—APP

## Cotton production drops by over 63pc

MULTAN :Country's cotton production has dropped by 63.55 per cent this year, says the latest report by the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA), here on Wednesday. By September 15, 2024, only 1.43 million bales have been produced which is a remarkable drop from 3.93 million bales during the same period last year. Punjab, the country's largest cotton-producing province, has seen a severe 65.13pc decline, with only 538,686 bales produced. In comparison, 1.54 million bales were produced by this time in 2023. The Sindh province has also faced a sharp reduction of 62.5pc, producing just 895,342 bales this year compared to 2.38 million bales last year. Balochistan, contributing the least, has managed to produce only 34,900 bales so far. According to cotton experts, the steep decline is being largely attributed to climate-related challenges. Record-breaking heat, pest infestations, and erratic rainfall have devastated crops in key growing regions. This year, heatwaves of up to 48°C scorched cotton fields across Punjab and Sindh and it led to lower yields. Similarly, continuous rains over the past two weeks in Sindh have further delayed cotton picking and it resulted in labour shortages and price surges. Despite hopes for improvement with the end of the monsoon season, the situation remains grim for many farmers, the experts remarked. High production costs are another critical issue affecting cotton growers. Fertilizers, pesticides, and labor costs have surged and it left farmers unable to maintain their crops. Compounding this problem is the lack of climate-adaptive cotton varieties, a challenge that research institutions have struggled to address due to insufficient funding. The Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC), once at the forefront of developing resilient crops, now faced severe budget cuts, hampering efforts to innovate and protect future yields. Experts warn that without investment in research and development, the country's cotton sector can face continued decline. Despite the negative outlook, some areas have reported improved fruiting and the situation offers hope for a possible recovery. Agricultural specialists also stressed that swift action was required, particularly in guiding farmers on pest management and climate resilience. They added that urgent intervention from both the government and research bodies was needed to stabilise the cotton industry. Without such measures, the country's economy, heavily reliant on textile exports, could face lasting damage, they concluded.—DNA

## Turkmenistan to become first Central Asian nation to utilize Gwadar Port

ISLAMABAD: Turkmenistan is set to become the first Central Asian nation to utilize Pakistan's Gwadar Port under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a draft agreement between the Port of Gwadar and the Port of Turkmenbashi is under review at the cabinet level. The partnership aims to enhance regional trade by linking South and Central Asia through improved rail, fiber, and transit routes, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. This deal is expected to reshape trade dynamics in the region, boosting regional trade prospects and instilling hope and confidence in the port's potential. Experts believe this strategic development at

Gwadar will pave the way for vast regions of Central Eurasia, Afghanistan, Southern Russia, and Southwest China to converge at Gwadar. The agreement reflects both nations' dedication to strengthening trade links and promoting broader regional integration. Khalid Taimur Akram, a Central Asia and regional expert and analyst, noted that this access could offer numerous benefits to other landlocked Central Asian nations and Pakistan. Located near the Strait of Hormuz, Gwadar is strategically positioned to serve as a transit point for energy supplies to and from Central Asia. It would provide a shorter and more efficient trade route to the international seas,

thereby reducing transportation costs and time for countries such as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. He said the trade from Gwadar port to Central Asian Republics (CARs) will reduce the distance to 50 percent as compared to routes through Iran, with freight charges reduced by around 30 percent. He underscored that with lower costs and shorter transit times, the volume of trade through Gwadar is likely to increase. This can lead to greater economic integration between Pakistan and CARs, fostering stronger regional ties. Akram also emphasized that by providing an alternative to traditional trade routes, Pakistan's

Gwadar Port will diversify trade options for Belt and Road (BRI) countries including CARs. This diversification reduces reliance on a single route, thereby enhancing trade security. Turkmenistan's export statistics highlight its robust trading capacity, presenting a significant opportunity for Gwadar Port to capitalize on. As per data from trading economics, exports in Turkmenistan increased to USD14.1 billion in 2023 from USD 13.5 billion in 2022. Exports in Turkmenistan averaged USD5.7 billion from 1992 until 2023, reaching an all-time high in 2023 and a record low of 64.34 USD Million in 1992. — DNA



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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### SEPTEMBER

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

### Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

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



### Enquiry

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



### Hospitals

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



### Departments

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

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# NADRA facilitation centre starts work at ICCI

Prominent among those who attended the inaugural ceremony included Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari, President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajraan, Ajmal Balooch, ICCI executives and members Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, Malik Bashir Awan, Saifur Rehman, Imtiaz Abbasi, Ameer Hamza, Shahid Abbasi and other

### STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), emphasized that the business community is economy's real driving force and resolution of its issues should be the government's top priority to ensure ease of doing businesses. This statement was made during the inauguration of the newly established National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) Facilitation Centre at the Chamber launched along with Mohammad Faheem Khan, Director General NADRA, ICCI executives and members. Bakhtawari highlighted his commitment to selfless service to the business fraternity, citing it as his top priority throughout his tenure. He expressed gratitude for achieving numerous milestones, attributing his success to Allah Almighty. Expressing utmost gratitude to Chairman NADRA, Lt Gen Muhammad Munir Afsar Malik for his complete cooperation for the establishment of the Centre, he said that all credit goes to the Chairman for accepting his request for the Centre and initiating work on it on emergent basis for its completion within short span of time. He also expressed the hope that this fully equipped Centre offering range of services, including, Normal CNIC, Urgent CNIC, Family Registration Certificate (FRC) Birth Certificate etc. to the community will greatly benefit the members and contribute to Chamber's success. Under his leadership, ICCI has risen to the top position among country's chambers, thanks to the contri-



butions of various committees formed to promote linkages with key departments. The hard work of these committees has yielded significant results, earning the Chamber widespread recognition. He said that a Mediation Council Office, Police Facilitation Centre, Tax Ombudsman office have already been working and offering all the necessary services to the community. He proudly mentioned his initiated mega projects including establishment of

a state of the art Expo Centre at the heart of the twin cities, establishment of an Industrial Estate at Neela Dulla Interchange, Health Insurance of the ICCI members by expressing the hope that the dream of completion of these projects will soon materialize and the community will derive the benefit. The ICCI President vowed that he is determined to continue the social service of the business community as well as the residents without any discrimination after

the completion of his tenure as his corporate social responsibility by expressing the hope that the business community in the ICCI election for 2024-26 will vote for the Founder Group members by keeping their services for it and will enable them to bag the victory with sweeping majority. On his part Mohammad Faheem Khan, Director General, NADRA apprised the attendees about the services to be offered by the Centre by

commending ICCI President for his concerted efforts for the facility. Prominent among those who attended the inaugural ceremony included Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari, President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajraan, Ajmal Balooch, ICCI executives and members Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, Malik Bashir Awan, Saifur Rehman, Imtiaz Abbasi, Ameer Hamza, Shahid Abbasi and other.

## Shaza vows to elevate cutting edge space technologies for growth

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja Wednesday reaffirmed the government's commitment towards leveraging cutting-edge space technologies for national growth. She was addressing the 'PAKSAT-MM1 Satellite Application Conference' held here to celebrate the operationalization of the PAKSAT-MM1 satellite. She stated that the success of PAKSAT-MM1 would revolutionize communication infrastructure, bringing significant benefits to all sectors of the society. The satellite will help expand outreach of internet connectivity to the far flung areas of the country which, she said, is a vital step towards digitally connected Pakistan. The digitalization and technology development are the gateways towards socio-economic prosperity in the country, she emphasized. The minister also highlighted that Pakistan's ranking in the UN's e-governance development index has improved by fourteen points. She mentioned that Pakistan is one of two countries in Asia that have moved from the middle tier of digital e-governance to the high tier, describing this as a significant achievement. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman SUPARCO, Muhammad Yousuf Khan expressed his pride in the dedication and efforts of the team involved in the successful launch of PAKSAT-MM1. He said that Pakistan has taken a significant step towards realizing its digital ambitions with the successful launch of PAKSAT-MM1. He emphasized the satellite's critical role in socio-economic development and its contribution to Pakistan's presence in the global space industry. The chairman expressed that PAKSAT-MM1 is rightly placed to serve a number of unserved and unattended remote areas in Pakistan, where applications of communication satellites such as DTH, community internet, tele-education, tele-medicine, assets tracking are yet to be provided. The chairman invited local industry to join hands in developing eco systems for space-related activities including design and development of satellite systems and its applications. The speakers at the conference highlighted the role of PAKSAT-MM1 in advancing Pakistan's digital Pakistan vision by enabling greater connectivity, economic growth, and digital inclusion across the country. They underscored the satellite's potential to bridge the digital divide and promote the development of underserved regions. The conference concluded with stakeholders committing to harness the full potential of space technology for a digitally empowered Pakistan and new opportunities for national development. Expected to remain operational for over 15 years, PakSAT-MM1 provides high-speed band, VSAT connectivity, and other essential services, showcasing Pakistan's technological advancements and commitment to a Digital Pakistan. The event attended by dignitaries, industrial leaders, government officials, and experts marked a significant milestone in Pakistan's space and digital transformation journey.—DNA

## India seeking to install a 'puppet assembly' in IIOJK through sham elections

### STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Kashmir Council European Union Ali Raza Syed stated on Wednesday that India had planned to establish a puppet assembly in Illegally Indian Occupied occupied Jammu and Kashmir through sham election drama. In a statement Ali Raza Syed condemned India's decision to terminate Article 370 and 35A on August 5, 2019, which ended IIOJK's special status. He also criticized New Delhi's changes to the territory's domicile rules, allowing non-Kashmiris to settle in the disputed territory and altering its demographic composition. He said India was misleading the international community by staging assembly elections, despite deploying one million troops and banning freedom of expression and independent media. Ali Raza questioned the legitimacy of the elections while key Kashmiri leaders, including Masarrat Aalam Butt, Muhammad Yasin Malik and human rights defender Khuram Parvez, remained imprisoned in Indian jails.

## Pakistan to showcase climate actions, solutions at COP29: Romina

### STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC), Romina Khurshid Alam emphasized the significance of COP29 as a platform for Pakistan to present its climate actions, challenges, and potential solutions. The PM's Aide was addressing a meeting of development partners regarding preparation for 29th COP of UN-FCCC here on Wednesday. Speaking at a meeting with development partners, she highlighted the need for collaboration to achieve climate diplomacy goals, promote gender equality, and advance smart agriculture initiatives through private sector engagement. Alam underscored the urgency of addressing climate change in Pakistan, which ranks among the most vulnerable countries globally. She pointed

out that despite contributing less than 1% to global carbon emissions, Pakistan faces severe consequences from climate disasters, including floods and droughts that have devastated infrastructure and livelihoods. The floods in 2022 alone caused over 24 billion PKR in damages. She called for input from development partners to enhance Pakistan's participation in COP29, aiming to secure increased climate finance for adaptation projects as well. Alam also stressed the importance of gender equality in climate action, referencing a successful recent regional parliamentarians meeting held in Islamabad focused on empowering women in the green economy. Through these efforts, she aims to position Pakistan as a proactive player in global climate discussions and advocate for justice regarding loss and damage caused by climate change.

## Dead body of unknown woman recovered from Margalla Hills

ISLAMABAD: The body of an unidentified woman was found on Wednesday along the road in the Margalla Hills, about 1.5 kilometers from Monal, the victim was allegedly gunned down by unknown assailants. The police said, the woman had been shot in the head by unknown outlaws. The Kohsar Police, led by SHO Shafiq Fayaz, reached the scene and shifted the body to Polyclinic Hospital for further investigation. The police have collected the fingerprint samples of the deceased to determine her identity. The investigation into the murder is ongoing, with officers working to uncover any leads on the suspect or motive behind the killing.—APP

## ANF seizes 539 kg drugs in eight operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting eight operations across the country managed to recover 539 kg drugs worth Rs 30 million and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that 200 grams hashish was recovered from a motorcyclist rounded up near a university in Bosan Road, Multan. The accused namely Osama Rehman Khan, a resident of Khanewal, confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions in Multan. The arrested accused used to supply drugs to the students of various universities and colleges through the canteen and hostel staff. In another operation, 500 grams opium was recovered from an accused arrested near a university in Rawalpindi. 500 grams hashish was recovered from a house near Sadiqabad, Rawalpindi and an accused was arrested. 100 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused netted near a university in Sector H-11, Islamabad. 300 grams hashish was recovered from a car intercepted near a hotel in Mansehra and an accused was arrested. The arrested accused confessed to supplying drugs to the students of educational institutions. In an operation, 2.4 kg opium was recovered from a parcel booked for Sheikhpura at a courier office on Ring Road Peshawar. 14 kg hashish and 1 kg ice were recovered from a vehicle on Pasi Coastal Highway, Gwadar and an accused was arrested during the operation. In another operation conducted in Pishin, Balochistan, 520 kg hashish was recovered. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.—APP

## AIOU sets October 15 as last date for admissions

The deadline for submitting admission form is 15th October. Please note that applications for admission can only be submitted online

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has set October 15 as the last date for the 2nd phase admissions of Autumn semester 2024. According to the AIOU, the programmes offered in this phase include Associate degree in Arts (BA General), Associate degree in Commerce (B.Com), Associate degree in Education, BS (ODL) programs, B.Ed programs, BBA, postgraduate diplomas and certificate courses. Admission forms and prospectus of all the programs are available on the university website. The students can visit regional offices or call the university helpline at 051-111 112 468 for further information. The deadline for submitting admission form is 15th October. Please note that applications for admission can only be submitted online. Detailed information about all the programs offered is also available on the university website. For further information about admissions, students can contact the regional offices of the university or call the official helpline at 051-111 112 468. Professor. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice Chancellor AIOU has directed regional offices to guide and support prospective students, including providing free access to computers and the internet for those without these facilities to ensure they can complete their applications with ease.—DNA

## SEPTEMBER 2024

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## Briefs

## 12 held for carrying illegal arms, liquor

RAWALPINDI :Police have arrested 12 illegal armsholders and bootleggers and recovered arms, ammunition and liquor from their possession during a crackdown. According to police spokesman, City, Saddar Wah, Jatti, Kalar Syedan, and Chakri police held nine illegal arms holders namely Asad, Tahir, Ishaq, Zahid, Ishtiaq, Akash, Aamir, Shakeel and Usman Bilal and recovered six 30 bore pistols, a 12 bore rifle, two 9mm pistols and ammunition. In other raids, Waris Khan, Rawat and Gunjmandi police arrested Suleman, Umar, and Amjad and recovered 20 liters liquor from their possession. Police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigations were in progress. Divisional SPs commended police team and said that strict action would be continued against those carrying illegal weapons.—APP

## 72 dengue patients under treatment in allied hospitals

## STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI :As many as 72 dengue patients are currently under treatment in Rawalpindi's Allied hospitals. During the last 24 hours 30 more cases have been reported. According to the latest report released by the District Health Authority, this year's total positive cases reach 445. The largest number of cases, 20 were reported from Pothohar Town alone during the last 24 hours. Chak Jalal Din area remains among the top affected areas of the city. Five cases were reported from areas of Chaklala Cant Road (CCB). The report shows an increasing ratio of admitted to discharged patients, which indicates number of admitted cases are greater than those who have been released after complete treatment from the hospitals. Benazir Bhutto Hospital nests largest dengue cases with 36 patients, followed by Rawalpindi Teaching hospital with 15 patients under treatment. On the other hand, the CM Mobile Health Unit conducted a check up visit in Chak Jalal Din and other areas where 335 patients were checked out of which 233 patients were checked by the health unit in Chak Jalal Din. The health unit also conducted 104 different medical tests.

## 12 held for carrying illegal arms, liquor

RAWALPINDI :Police have arrested 12 illegal armsholders and bootleggers and recovered arms, ammunition and liquor from their possession during a crackdown. According to police spokesman, City, Saddar Wah, Jatti, Kalar Syedan, and Chakri police held nine illegal arms holders namely Asad, Tahir, Ishaq, Zahid, Ishtiaq, Akash, Aamir, Shakeel and Usman Bilal and recovered six 30 bore pistols, a 12 bore rifle, two 9mm pistols and ammunition. In other raids, Waris Khan, Rawat and Gunjmandi police arrested Suleman, Umar, and Amjad and recovered 20 liters liquor from their possession.—APP

## Leaked chat exposes PTI's anti-state narrative

ISLAMABAD :Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Daniyal Chaudhry on Wednesday said that leaked messages between Rauf Hasan and Jibril Ilyas confirmed that the events of May 9 were a planned conspiracy by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Talking to a private news channel, he said that these messages show May 9 was not a spontaneous incident, but rather a premeditated action aimed at undermining the army and state institutions. He said that despite PTI's anti-state agenda, their efforts will fail, and under the leadership of the Prime Minister and Army Chief, the country will overcome its security and economic challenges.—APP



ISLAMABAD: People enjoying parasailing at Khanpur Lake . —ONLINE

## Pak, Nepal need to jointly voice for climate action

Such projects, he said should have early warning systems and insurance for these dams in case of failure, whereas its design should be able to withstand these extreme events of earthquake, debris flow, GLOFs, forest fires that could damage these structures

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), Anil Pokhrel has urged the governments of Pakistan and Nepal to work jointly to raise effective voice for effective climate action at the global climate forums. Pokhrel underscored that the joint efforts at global forums of Pakistan and Nepal should focus on demanding the world community to ensure accessible climate finance instruments for the developing countries facing adverse impacts of climate change. In an exclusive interview with media at the sidelines of the regional climate dialogue, NDRRMA, Chief Exec-

utive, Anil Pokhrel said Pakistan and Nepal shared same Hindukush Himalaya region with similar landscape and monsoon patterns and also hazards like earthquakes, forest fires, floods, and landslides in its disaster-prone terrain in the Hindukush Himalaya Region. He added that the NDRRMA was eager to learn more about the NDMA, Pakistan's experiences during climatic disaster and also have an experience sharing opportunity. "In Nepal, we have been tackling hazards from a single aspect of disaster and missing inter-sectoral links of disasters. We have seen GLOF (glacial lake outburst flood) events, whereas glacial lakes and moraine dams are weakening," Anil Pokhrel said. The 2005 Earthquake in Muzaffarabad was a massive earthquake

and any such earthquake during monsoon would have more devastation like the glacial lakes' explosion chances were increasing due to faster melting in the north, he added. The NDRRMA chief pointed out that the forest fires' suite was also aggravating the GLOF activity as its black surface absorbs more heat and accelerates melting as permafrost is melting faster in the entire Hindukush Himalaya Region. "We need start looking at its intersectionality and complexity of disasters that also cascades into larger devastations downstream," he said. The debate of least greenhouse gas emitter, he said was decades old, whereas the countries like Nepal and Pakistan sharing same risks need to come together as a one singular voice to negotiate more

effectively at the forums like COP forums as the COP29 was ahead in Baku, Azerbaijan. Pakistan and Nepal should work together to narrate the hazards and risks devastations faced by the two countries due to increasing global warming and climate change impacts on the region due to the historical emissions of the developed world driving glacial melt, droughts and forest fires in the region, he added. "This is where the international finance structure has to be designed in such an effective way that it should be substantial, quick, and directly drawn by the climate vulnerable countries like ours that should help in recovery and reconstruction post disasters," Anil Pokhrel said. Commenting on mega dams construction in

the disaster Fault-line areas, the NDRRMA Chief Executive said the science and technology evolution around dams construction had evolved over the last few decades. The countries undertaking such projects should not forget in addition to one time investment in risks assessment and designing alongwith long-term observation, monitoring and network systems as there is a need to design a disaster component for it as if it fails then what do in that scenario, he added. Such projects, he said should have early warning systems and insurance for these dams in case of failure, whereas its design should be able to withstand these extreme events of earthquake, debris flow, GLOFs, forest fires that could damage these structures.

## AC raids at vegetable market, arrests 11 vendors

ISLAMABAD :The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration is cracking down on shopkeepers violating government regulations on edible pricing, resulting in the arrest of 11 vendors. According to a spokesman for the ICT administration, Assistant Commissioner Pothohar, Aneeq Anwar, led an operation at a vegetable market where 11 shopkeepers were arrested for selling vegetables at rates not approved by the government. He said that these vendors were operating without the required government permits, setting prices at their discretion, which is against the rules. On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, emphasized the importance of following the official rate list for vegetables and fruits. He stated that shopkeepers must adhere to this list to ensure fair pricing for consumers. Memon added that anyone found selling vegetables or fruits without the official rate list should face action. The ICT administration was committed to enforcing these rules to prevent unfair practices in the market. Irfan Memon directed officials to take strict measures against those who violate government-fixed rates and create an imbalance in the pricing system. The district administration has made it clear that it will continue its rigorous checks and actions against any vendors found violating the established prices.—APP

## 608 PSVs impounded during crackdown

RAWALPINDI :Police have ramped up inspections of Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) following the orders of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani and 608 unfit vehicles were impounded during 24 days. A police spokesman said the ongoing checks focus on vehicle fitness, route permits, and driver licenses. So far, 4657 vehicles have been issued challan tickets, with fines exceeding Rs. 05 million for various violations. The legal action has been taken against 406 drivers, while the licenses of 27 negligent drivers have been canceled. Additionally, 39 cases have been registered against drivers and owners of PSVs. The CPO Khalid Mehmood Hamdani emphasized that all measures are being taken to ensure the safety of passengers using public transport. As part of the campaign, vehicle speed and travel times are also being monitored.—APP

## IIUI, HEC inaugurates workshop on enhancing online teaching

ISLAMABAD: The Faculty of Education at the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the Iqbal International Institute for Research and Dialogue (IRD), and the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Development (QAD), successfully inaugurated the two-day workshop titled "Quality First: Enhancing Online Teaching in Higher Education." The event aims to strengthen the quality of online education across higher education institutions in Pakistan, focusing on best practices for course design, student engagement, and assessment in digital platforms. The workshop is part of NRPQ Project Quality Assurance for Online Teaching in Higher Education in Pakistan by Dr Fouzia Ajmal (PI) and Prof. Dr. N. B. Jumani (Co-PI). The opening ceremony was graced by the Acting President IIUI, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sarwar, who

lauded the participants for the urge to adopt the modern means of teaching and learning. He said that factor of relevance is mostly missing that must be the prime focus of the teachers. He discussed distance education, its utilization, future scope, its global needs and transformations on teaching and learning and ever changing job market. He said without compromising the quality is the way forward for success. He commended the Faculty of Education and its collaborators for organizing such a significant initiative, stating, "In today's rapidly changing educational landscape, maintaining quality in online learning is pivotal. This workshop is a testament to our commitment to uplifting the standards of higher education through innovative and modern teaching methodologies." Dr. Sarwar said. He also highlighted the importance of training faculty to adapt to new technologies and teaching strategies. Mr. Ubaidullah Anwar, Deputy

Director HEC explained the role of HEC and its efforts for the open and distance learning policy as well as he clarified certain misperceptions about this mode of learning. This workshop draws on international standards, incorporating the Quality Learning and Teaching (QLT), Quality Matters (QM) framework, and HEC's Online Education Toolkit. Through this collaborative effort, the event seeks to equip participants with the skills necessary to enhance the quality of online teaching and learning. The workshop's resource persons include experts from renowned institutions including Prof. Dr. Muhammad Idrees (Pakistan Institute of Education), Prof. Dr. Tamim Ahmed Khan (Bahria University), Dr. Azhar Mahmood (IIUI), Mr. Shahid Minhas (SDPI), Dr. Zarina Akhtar (IIUI), Dr. Rukhsana Durani (Allama Iqbal Open University), Dr. Fatima Maqsood (IIUI).—DNA

## Ustad Amanat remembered on his 50th death anniversary

ISLAMABAD :The 50th death anniversary of legendary classical singer Ustad Amanat Ali Khan observed on Wednesday. One of the greatest musicians and ghazal singer Amanat Ali Khan was born in 1922 in Patiala. He was the grandson of Ali Baksh Jarnail, who was the founder of the Patiala Gharana. After the creation of Pakistan, his family migrated to Lahore. Following in their tracks, Ustad Amanat learned the art of music from his elders. He released many Ghazals, including Insha Ji Utho Ab Kuch Karo, Honton Pe Kabhi Unke Mera Naam, Mora Jiya Na Lagay, Kab Aogay, Yah Na Thi Humari Qismat, Yeh Arzoo Thi Tujhe Gul Key Ru-Baru Kartey, and many others, which are still remembered by fans. He was also given the Pride of Performance Award by the Government of Pakistan due to his excellent music services.—APP

## NUML organizes seminar on Seerat-un-Nabi PBUH

ISLAMABAD: A seminar on Seerat-un-Nabi SAWW was organized at the National University of Modern Languages NUML (NUML) on Wednesday. Prof. Dr. Habib ur Rehman Asim was the chief guest on the occasion, while Director General NUML Brig Shahzad Munir presided over the session. Pro Rectors, Deans, Directors, heads of departments and a large number of students also attended the seminar. Chief guest Dr. Habib ur Rehman highlighted the various aspects of the Seerat of Hazrat Muhammad SAWW and stressed that acting upon the Seerat is the key to success for the Ummat. He was of the view that mere describing the Seerat with tongue is not enough we must act on it.—APP

## The silent war between air pollution and rural health, livelihood

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Air pollution is often seen as an urban issue, but its impact on rural areas is just as severe, quietly undermining traditional ways of life. In Pakistan's countryside, pollution from agricultural practices, waste burning, and traditional cooking methods is increasingly harming both health and the environment. The consequences include not only respiratory and heart diseases but also broader economic and environmental challenges that threaten the sustainability of rural lifestyles. While city dwellers face smog from industries and traffic, rural communities experience a different type of air

pollution. In many villages, traditional cookstoves and three-stone fires are still commonly used. These methods, which rely on biomass fuels like wood, crop residue, and kerosene, emit harmful fine particulate matter and toxic gases such as carbon monoxide. According to health experts, this incomplete combustion contributes significantly to air pollution, creating indoor air hazards that are especially dangerous for women and children. Particularly vulnerable to the effects of air pollution are pregnant women, children, and the elderly. Dr. Fareed Somroo, a health expert, in an interview with APP said that exposure to fine particulate matter can lead to low birth weight, developmen-

tal issues, and increased risks of preterm birth in infants. Pregnant women exposed to pollutants face higher risks of miscarriage and complications like pre-eclampsia. For the elderly, who often suffer from pre-existing conditions, air pollution increases the likelihood of chronic respiratory and heart diseases, further straining rural healthcare systems. The pollutants from traditional cooking practices not only damage health but also contribute to deforestation and the release of black carbon, which worsens global warming. Prolonged exposure to these pollutants leads to respiratory infections, lung diseases, and increased risks of heart attacks and strokes. In rural areas where healthcare

is limited, these health issues are particularly troubling. Addressing the challenge of air pollution in rural areas requires comprehensive action. Climate expert Naseer Memon in response to this scribe suggests enforcing emission standards in industries and promoting cleaner technologies across both urban and rural settings. He emphasizes the importance of adopting improved cookstoves and alternative fuels to reduce indoor air pollution. Memon also advocates for better waste management practices in rural areas, including banning the open burning of trash and crop residues. He recommends promoting biodegradable materials and implementing recycling



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## Storm warning on immigration

**P**AS-DE-CALAIS, France, Sept. 3: Illegal immigration kills again. The umpteenth sinking of a boat in the English Channel on the way to Britain claimed the lives of 12 Eritreans, including children. Rescuers managed to save 51 others. On Sunday, eight others died in the same conditions. Forty-five people have now died attempting these crossings since January, setting a record. In 2021, there were 30, including 27 in the same shipwreck. Since 2018, 136,000 people have made the crossing using these boats of death, on which smugglers now shamelessly transport 70 to 80 people, in comparison to 30 to 40 people previously, into a country where immigration is increasingly being condemned by the far right. Southport, England, July 29. No one has forgotten the tragedy. In a dance hall, someone savagely attacked children with a knife, killing three girls aged 6 to 9. A 17-year-old was arrested. The police had declared that his attack was not linked to terrorism and urged people to remain calm, but false information very quickly portrayed him on social media as an illegal migrant, an asylum seeker, a Muslim, who had arrived in the UK by boat. None of this was true. As soon as he came to power, Prime Minister Keir Starmer reacted firmly against the far right and the assailants who had attacked Muslims, asylum seekers and police officers across the country. Following the latest shipwrecks in the English Channel, he announced that he would speed up the process regarding asylum applications, increase the deportations of illegal migrants and fight harder against smugglers. The UK, where carrying firearms is strictly limited, is now experiencing an upsurge in knife-related violence, often involving young individuals. Since 2010, the number of incidents has increased by a third. This is similar to Germany. Solingen, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, Aug. 23. A Syrian refugee stabbed participants in a "festival of diversity," killing three people and injuring several others. Before him, on June 2 in Mannheim, a 25-year-old extremist from Afghanistan stabbed a 29-year-old policeman to death. Each crime shook the country. In response, the government of Olaf Scholz pledged to restrict the carrying of knives in public and to speed up the deportation of illegal refugees. As the triple homicide in Solingen occurred only a week before important regional elections in Saxony and Thuringia, Scholz announced a stricter policy on migration and had 28 Afghans deported to Kabul. This was a first since the Taliban returned to power in 2021. However, this did not reassure the public, which was up in arms regarding the government's handling of immigration. The Alternative for Germany won the elections in Thuringia, the first victory of its kind for the far right in the post-Second World War period. In Saxony, the same party was hot on the heels of the Christian Democrats. Scholz's Social Democratic Party fell back and his allies collapsed. A serious setback for the chancellor, one year before the legislative elections of September 2025. The far right is attracting more and more German voters, thus becoming an earthquake in a country that claimed to be a proud advocate for welcoming migrants back in the days of Angela Merkel.

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## Afghanistan feature in White Houserace

**T**HREE years after the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan, both Democrats and Republicans are revisiting the incident. Neither side is providing a credible or comprehensive explanation as to why Kabul fell into the hands of the Taliban on Aug. 15, 2021. Instead, the lack of an Afghan strategy on the part of both the Biden and Trump administrations is being filled with mutual accusations of "you lost Afghanistan." The issue now is how the Afghan problem will fit into the 2024 presidential election campaign. Republicans believe that Democrats are vulnerable on the issue of Afghanistan. It was the Biden administration that failed to stop the Taliban's onslaught on Kabul and protect the government of then-President Ashraf Ghani. More problematic was the Daesh suicide bombing attack on Kabul airport that killed 170 Afghans and 13 American military personnel during the evacuation. Republicans in Congress last week released a report, which was the culmination of a three-year investigation into the factors and circumstances that led to the US failure in Afghanistan. Among its findings were: "(The Biden administration) had the information and opportunity to take necessary steps to plan for the inevitable collapse of the Afghan government, so we could safely evacuate US personnel, American citizens, green card holders and our brave Afghan allies." Days earlier, as the report on Afghanistan was being finalized, House Republicans subpoenaed Secretary of State Antony Blinken, requesting his testimony on the Afghan withdrawal. So far, he has not responded to their demands. Instead, a State Department spokesperson said: "The secretary has testified before Congress on Afghanistan more than 14 times – more than any other Cabinet-level official. It is disappointing that, instead of continuing to engage with the department in good faith, the committee has issued yet another unnecessary subpoena." Additionally, a White House spokesperson described the Republican report as "cherry-picked facts, inaccurate characterizations and preexisting biases." The timing of the report on Afghanistan holds significant weight in the 2024 election race, but it remains unclear if it will influence voters. The report aims to blame President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris for failing to maintain the pro-Washington government in Afghanistan. According to Texas Republican Rep. Michael McCaul, who chaired the investigation as a member of the House Foreign Relations Committee, "at each step of the way, the administration picked optics over security." The report itself is a thorough attempt to uncover what happened in Afghanistan. It spans more than 350 pages and includes testimony from numerous senior military officers at the Pentagon. Seven lengthy public hearings were held and about 20,000 pages of State Department documents and correspondence were examined. Among the key sources was retired Col. Seth Krummrich, who was the chief of staff for the Special Operations Command Central. He noted: "I called their advance 'the red blob.' We tracked the Taliban advance daily, looking like a red blob gobbling up terrain."

## BRICS great powers gather in Riyadh

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

China and the GCC are very close energy partners. More than 30 percent of China's oil imports come from GCC exporters and it is the destination for 25 percent of the GCC's petrochemical exports. They are now discussing cooperation on renewable energies, including nuclear and hydrogen energy. The two sides are enhancing their cooperation on security, including on nuclear security, nuclear safety and civilian uses of nuclear technology, in implementation of the ambitious Joint Action Plan 2023-2027, which was adopted at the GCC-China summit of December 2022. This plan is one of most extensive that GCC has concluded with any partner and covers almost all areas, including nuclear energy and space exploration

**R**IYADH last week hosted four high-level meetings with four of the original five BRICS members. Although not planned that way, the meetings with BRICS members indicated how the Gulf Cooperation Council countries are balancing their strategic partnerships. On Wednesday, Chinese Premier Li Qiang met with the Saudi leadership and also with the GCC. And on Sunday and Monday, the GCC foreign ministers met with the foreign ministers of Russia, India and Brazil. These four important powers are founding members of BRICS and hold similar views on global affairs, including on the war in Gaza and the underlying Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Brazil, China, India and Russia represent important strategic pivots in their respective regions. China is the largest and most powerful nation in East Asia, just like India in South Asia, Brazil in South America and Russia in Eastern Europe. With a combined population of more than 3 billion people, they account for about 40 percent of humanity. Economically, the four countries and the six GCC member states together represent a formidable economic force, with a combined gross domestic product of \$29 trillion, accounting for more than 26 percent of the global economy. The highest ranking of the foreign dignitaries was Li, who became the eighth premier of China in March 2023. He is believed to be President Xi Jinping's right-hand man and was chosen as a member of the Chinese Communist Party's most powerful standing committee in October 2022. Like other senior Chinese officials, Li expressed great interest in the GCC-China strategic partnership, which was established when Xi met with the GCC's heads of state in December 2022, but their engagement goes back decades. China has been very consistent as probably the superpower that is most supportive of the organization, in addition to being quite keen on its partnerships with individual GCC member states. The GCC has signed more agreements with China than any other nation, in standards, patents, civil aviation, economic cooperation and strategic dialogue. More agreements are under discussion. China and the GCC are very close energy partners. More than 30 percent of China's oil imports come from GCC exporters and it is the destination for 25 percent of the GCC's petrochemical

exports. They are now discussing cooperation on renewable energies, including nuclear and hydrogen energy. The two sides are enhancing their cooperation on security, including on nuclear security, nuclear safety and civilian uses of nuclear technology, in implementation of the ambitious Joint Action Plan 2023-2027, which was adopted at the GCC-China summit of December 2022. This plan is one of the most extensive that the GCC has concluded with any partner and covers almost all areas, including nuclear energy and space exploration. China is the GCC's top trading partner, having replaced the EU in that spot some years ago. In 2023, two-way trade in goods jumped to \$287 billion. Trade in services and investments are also growing rapidly. To promote more trade and investment, the two sides are now quite close to concluding a free trade agreement. India is the GCC's third-biggest trading partner after China and the EU, with two-way trade at \$174 billion. The two sides have also agreed to upgrade their political and security dialogue. In recognition of this fact, they last week agreed on a joint action plan for the next five years. The plan includes trade and investment promotion and cooperation in the areas of energy, agriculture and food security, transport, health, education and cultural engagement, in addition to political and security dialogue. The GCC established a strategic dialogue with Russia in 2011 and the two sides have had many rounds of political consultations at the ministerial and sub-ministerial levels since. The two sides share common views on fundamental issues such as Gaza, Palestine and Yemen, where Russia has been consistently on the right side of history. However, the GCC and Russia do not see eye to eye on a number of other important issues, such as Syria and Russia's military ties with Iran. The GCC states have voted for UN resolutions on Ukraine but have refrained from imposing sanctions. Russia has praised the GCC's balanced position on the conflict and especially its members' mediation, which has resulted in several waves of repatriations of prisoners and reunification of children with their families. Russia has recently promoted the idea of building a Eurasian security architecture that takes into account the interests of all countries without exception, as President Vladimir Putin said both in June and in

February in a speech before the Russian Federal Assembly. In his remarks before GCC foreign ministers last week, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov highlighted the fact that, since the inception of the Russia-GCC strategic dialogue format in 2011, international relations have undergone significant changes and significant global geopolitical transformations have taken place. The concept of a rules-based world order, which the US and its European allies cling to, is increasingly becoming obsolete, Lavrov said. Instead, a new, just and democratic multipolar world order is emerging, centered on the UN and a balanced consideration of the interests of all countries. The influence of states in the Global South and East is rapidly expanding, with the GCC states playing a rapidly increasing and major role, he added. GCC-Russia trade is relatively limited, at about \$21 billion in 2023, but there are important economic links and greater potential for more trade and investment. Through OPEC+ and the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, Russia and the GCC oil and gas producers coordinate their policies to maintain market stability. Brazil and the GCC established their first links about 20 years ago by concluding agreements with MERCOSUR, in which Brazil is the dominant power. In 2005, the Brazilian President Lula da Silva convened in Brasilia the first ever Arab-South American summit, which was followed by two more summits in Da Silva's first two terms. The GCC countries were fully supportive of his ideas and Qatar hosted the second summit in Doha. Following the first summit, joint investment and trade-promotion events with Brazil led to a quadrupling of trade exchanges in just a few years, while direct shipping and air links were also established between Brazil and the GCC countries for the first time. Now that Da Silva is back in power, he may again try to energize the two regions for greater political and cultural engagement and more trade and investment. In addition to Gaza and the Palestine question, maritime security is a top priority for all of these nations, all of which expressed alarm at the Houthis' Red Sea attacks. While of course differences remain on this and other issues, the 10 countries vowed to strengthen their partnerships and work together to tackle global and regional challenges. It was indeed a very busy week for Riyadh.

## Were the exploding pagers in Lebanon part of a larger Israeli blunder?

Jamal Kanj

The political posturing and the unusual public nature of these discussions—potential dismissals of a minister, and talk of military action—suggests that a decision to launch a war against Lebanon may have been imminent. Furthermore, the infighting within the Israeli government appears to have caused confusion or disorganization exhibited by "unapproved" actions taken by Israeli military units along the Lebanese border. As an example, on September 16, leaflets in Arabic were dropped in South Lebanon ordering residents to leave their homes and warning...

**B**ENJAMIN Netanyahu's security cabinet has approved a plan to wage a war on Lebanon under the pretext of returning Israeli settlers to their colonies in the northern part of historical Palestine. Historically, the Israeli government does not usually discuss its military plans in the public arena. The security cabinet meeting, initially scheduled for Sunday, was delayed to Monday until after the arrival of American envoy Amos Hochstein. Following their meeting, Israeli Prime Minister told Hochstein thanked the US for its support, but "Israel" "will do what is necessary" for the return of the Israeli settlers to the "Jewish only" colonies located along the frontlines with Lebanon. According to Israeli sources, the Biden administration wanted to avoid a broader regional conflict that might involve the Resistance in Lebanon, Yemen and Iran, at least until after the US elections in November. However, all indications suggest that Netanyahu is resisting the American demands, and even disregarding the opinion of his own war minister who does not believe it's the right time to expand the war. Netanyahu's preparations for the war could also include dismissing Yoav Gallant and replacing him with Gideon Sa'ar from the racist New Hope party. This prompted Biden to send Hochstein to warn the Israeli prime minister of dangerous consequences if he moves ahead and dismisses Gallant. The political posturing and the unusual public nature of these discussions—potential dismissals of a minister, and talk of military action—suggests that a decision to launch a war against Lebanon may have been imminent. Furthermore, the infighting within the Israeli government appears to have caused confusion or disorganization exhibited by "unapproved" actions taken by Israeli

military units along the Lebanese border. As an example, on September 16, leaflets in Arabic were dropped in South Lebanon ordering residents to leave their homes and warning that civilians who remain become legitimate Israeli targets. But shortly afterward, the Israeli military announced that no official evacuation order had been issued and that the leaflets were distributed without proper authorization. Besides the hollow excuse of the lack of proper authorization, army units do not have printing machines to prepare leaflets that include the exact date and timing - 4:00 p.m. (13:00 GMT) - by which civilians should complete their evacuation. Leaflets are typically brought by other specialized units to the frontline. This raises the question: Could the leaflets have been part of earlier war plans? Did Hochstein's visit force a delay in the timing, but the change wasn't communicated down to the unit responsible for distributing the leaflets? Then on the following day, Tuesday September 17, approximately 3000 pagers exploded simultaneously across Lebanon. Is there a connection between the original timing of the leaflets and the detonation of the pagers? The above two incidents suggest a serious misstep and could have possibly derailed the original Israeli war plans against Lebanon. In fact, these miscalculations may potentially become larger than "Israel's" security screw-up on October 7, 2023. Before arguing the points for this hypothesis, one must acknowledge that booby-trapping the pagers was possibly one of the most sophisticated espionage operations orchestrated by the Israeli Mossad; no less than the assassination of Ismail Hanieh in Tehran. Having stated the above, however, one might be surprised in concluding that as far-reach-

ing as this covert action was for the Israeli spies, in all likelihood, this was a failure. The Israeli terrorist assault resulted in the killing of 11 Lebanese, including two children, and injuring close to 3000 individuals. Despite what was reported in the managed Western media, many were innocent civilians, some were driving cars, while others were shopping in crowded markets. In this attack, "Israel" did not aim to merely terrorize civilians, they do that daily. The targeting of the pagers was intended to disrupt the communication channels for Resistance operatives, as well as the civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and Civil Defense. Therefore, for the above to achieve optimum effectiveness, such an operation would need to have taken place during the initial Israeli military attack, not on a normal afternoon in Lebanon, hence the relationship between the "unauthorized" leaflets ordering Lebanese civilians to evacuate by 4 p.m. September 16, and the flub of the exploding pagers precisely 24 hours later. In essence, it appears that "Israel" had initially prepared to order the evacuation ahead of a planned military action on the 16th. At the same time, the pagers were programmed to detonate during the initial phase of the war, 24 hours later, to disrupt communication channels, and create confusion and disarray in the midst of war. However, the overextended Israeli army that failed to prevent the release of the evacuation leaflets on May 16, when the war was likely delayed, also did not halt the premature detonation of the pagers on September 17. The last oversight, the second within 24 hours, may have resulted in a missed strategic opportunity for the Israeli army, and another blunder for the Israeli leadership.



## Briefs

## President rejects IIOJK Legislative...

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measures could neither legitimize India's occupation nor suppress the freedom struggle of the Kashmiri people. He stated that India was trying to alter the demographic structure of IIOJK by turning the Kashmiri Muslims into a minority and transforming them into a disempowered community in their own land. The President said that Pakistan greatly valued the sacrifices made by the Kashmiri people for their rights and would continue to stand in solidarity with them. He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to provide moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people till the realization of their right to self-determination. The delegation apprised the President about the atrocities being committed by the Modi regime in IIOJK. It was highlighted that the entire Kashmiri leadership had been imprisoned to suppress the voice of the Kashmiri people. The delegation also apprised the President about the issues of the refugees in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

## Trump calls India 'very big abuser' on trade

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official events. During a campaign event in Michigan, Trump slammed India as a "very big abuser" on trade, but said Modi was "fantastic." "He happens to be coming to meet me next week," Trump told the crowd without providing further details. Modi will be travelling this weekend to Wilmington, Delaware - President Joe Biden's hometown - as part of the "Quad Leaders" summit alongside Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio. The four-day Quad grouping dates back to 2007, but Biden has strongly pushed the alliance as part of an emphasis on international alliances to rein in adversaries - especially China. The upcoming summit marks Biden's last with the group as US president, having abandoned his bid for another White House term, with Vice President Kamala Harris replacing him at the top of the Democratic ticket.

## 'Amends a bid to give extension to 3 umpires'

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remove him only intensified after the date. Imran expressed concern that if the new chief justice takes office, the true events of May 9 will come to light. He also criticised the government for undermining Pakistan's judicial and electoral processes and delaying the tribunal decisions on the February 8 election. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, believes that Justice Mansoor Ali Shah will be the next Chief Justice of Pakistan. Stressing the need for comprehensive judicial reforms in the country, Bilawal in a televised interview said on Tuesday, "On October 26, Justice Mansoor will become the next chief justice, there's no doubt about it." His remarks come as the current chief justice, Qazi Faez Isa, is set to retire later this year.

## PTI links talks on...

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can discuss constitutional amendments." He added that any approval of amendments must be accompanied by the restoration of the public mandate. The PTI leader questioned the legitimacy of the process, asking, "How can a constitutional amendment be passed by an incomplete parliament?" He also raised concerns about the role of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in the process, criticising PPP leader Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari. "It's unfortunate that the grandson is undermining the very Constitution his grandfather created," he remarked.

## Markhors down Dolphins to register three consecutive win

*Mohammad Rizwan-led side won by 92 runs*

DNA

FAISALABAD: Markhors claimed their third win of the Champions One-Day Cup after beating Dolphins by 92 runs in competition's sixth match at Faisalabad's Iqbal Stadium. Mohammad Rizwan-led side bowled out Dolphins for 192 while defending 285 Earlier, on the back of Kamran Ghulam's century, Markhors scored 284/9 with notable contribution Rizwan too. After losing two early wickets, including Bismillah Khan for a duck and Mohammad Faizan for just 1, Ghulam steadied the innings with a superb knock of 113 off 110 balls, including 12 fours and 3 sixes, before being dismissed by Sameen Gul. Skipper Rizwan added 51 off 67 deliveries, while Salman Agha contributed 49 off 47. Despite a few late wickets, the tailenders added crucial runs, with Zahid Mahmood remaining unbeaten on 15 and Akif Javed smashing 6 off the final ball of the innings. Faheem Ashraf was the standout bowler for Dolphins, claiming 4 wickets for 43 runs, including key dismissals



of Iftikhar Ahmed, Abdul Samad, and Mohammad Imran. Mir Hamza bagged two wickets. In the chase, Sahibzada Farhan provided a steady start, scoring 24 runs off 35 balls, including three boundaries but he could not convert big. However, his opening partner,

Muhammad Hurraira, struggled and was dismissed for a duck after facing 12 balls, caught behind by Bismillah Khan off the bowling of Akif Javed, leaving the team at 12-1. The top order faced further setbacks as Muhammad Akhlaq, the wicketkeeper-batter, managed

just 1 run from 2 balls before he, too. Captain Saud Shakeel contributed a valuable 41 runs from 56 balls with three boundaries, stabilising the innings after early losses. He was eventually caught by Akif Javed off Salman, leaving the team at 99-5. QasimAkram

also showed some resistance with 13 runs from 22 balls before being bowled by Salman, who proved effective in breaking partnerships. The middle-order effort was boosted by Asif Ali, who played an attacking knock of 50 from 43 balls, striking three boundaries and three sixes at a strike rate of 116.27. His partnership brought some momentum, but he was eventually dismissed. Faheem Ashraf added 15 runs from 28 balls but was dismissed lbw by Mohammad Imran, as the team struggled to build a solid partnership as Dolphins were bowled out for 192 in 43.5 overs. Imran and Salman shared three wickets each for Dolphins. Playing XIs Dolphins: Sahibzada Farhan, Muhammad Hurraira, Muhammad Akhlaq (wk), Saud Shakeel (c), QasimAkram, Asif Ali, Faheem Ashraf, Sameen Gul, Sufiyan Muqem, Usman Qadir, Mir Hamza Markhors; Bismillah Khan, Mohammad Faizan, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Rizwan (c) (WJ), Salman Agha, Iftikhar Ahmed, Abdul Samad, Mohammad Imran, Zahid Mahmood, Naseem Shah, Akif Javed.

## Fazal becomes a hard nut to crack for...

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a notification regarding the appointment of the next top judge. The ruling coalition left no stone unturned to woo the 'fate-decider' Fazl, with leaderships of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) holding a flurry of meetings with the cleric, but to no avail. Despite claims of securing the "magic number" needed to push the bill through, the government failed to table the amendments in parliament and postponed its move indefinitely - a development confirmed by PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqui. The amendments allegedly include legislation to extend the tenure of CJP Isa as well as an increase in retirement age of the judges. To pass the constitutional amendments, the government is short of 13 votes in the National Assembly (NA) and nine in the Senate.

## Tarar refutes reports of...

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an informal talk with journalists. The law minister's remarks come against the inability of the incumbent ruling coalition to secure the required numbers - a two-thirds majority - in the parliament to push through the prospective constitutional amendment which included several provisions including the extension of judges' retirement ages. The government on Monday confirmed that the amendments were "postponed indefinitely" after Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman didn't concede to the government's strenuous efforts to support the legislation which allegedly included legislation to extend the tenure of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa - who is retiring in October this year. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), which has strongly opposed the constitutional package terming it an individual-specific legislation, met Fazl a day earlier with former president Dr Arif Alvi along with party's Secretary General Salman Akram Raja in an effort to sway him against the prospective tweaks in the Constitution.

## PM speaks with King Charles III

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first summit that the King would chair since becoming Head of the Commonwealth. Prime Minister Sharif reiterated Pakistan's commitment to the Commonwealth and the values enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter. He said that the CHOGM in Samoa would provide a forum to discuss opportunities for enhancing intra-Commonwealth cooperation on a number of important issues, such as fostering sustainable development, strengthening democratic institutions, and empowering Commonwealth youth. Noting the King's longstanding interest in environmental issues and various initiatives for climate sustainability, the Prime Minister said that he particularly looked forward to engaging with Commonwealth leaders on climate change, especially as Pakistan is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

## 3 terrorists killed in...

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safety fuse wire, two rifles, bullets and explosives from the terrorists. "A search operation to arrest the escaped terrorists is underway," said the spokesperson, adding that CTD teams had set up a picket near Motorway Nankana Interchange A and the process of identifying the slain terrorists was underway. The spokesperson said that the terrorists were planning to launch a major attack on Lahore. Pakistan has experienced an increase in terrorist attacks as a total of 59 such incidents occurred countrywide in August compared to 38 attacks in the previous month, according to a digital database maintained by the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), an Islamabad-based think-tank.

## Portugal to launch €7 coin in tribute to Ronaldo

*The coin will feature an image of the five-time Ballon d'Or award winner*



WEB DESK

LISBON: Cristiano Ronaldo's home country Portugal is set to launch a new "7" Euro coin to honour the greatest sportsman of the nation. Through-

out his career, the CR7 has achieved success for club and country. The 39-year-old has smashed 130 goals for his national team along with numerous accolades, including leading Portugal to a historic victory in Euro 2016

and lifting the UEFA Nations League trophy with A Selecao in 2019. Recently, the four-time European Golden Shoe winner's star power got his hands on another historic milestone after smashing his 900th goal through

a "super kick" during a UEFA Nations League fixture against Scotland. As per reports, the coin will feature an image of the five-time Ballon d'Or award winner and "CR7" embossed on it. It is worth noting that the coin will be acceptable as a currency across the nation. Reflecting on his shirt number seven, the coin is named Euro "7". Meanwhile, the most-followed celebrity, making his mark on social media platforms has made history by becoming the first person to have one billion followers across all various platforms. Flashing back to his career, he started at Sporting Lisbon before entering Manchester United. Additionally, he then shifted to Real Madrid, where he established his dominance in world football. After a run with Juventus and a brief second coming at Old Trafford, the Portuguese football legend now contributes his skill to Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr.

## Italy's World Cup icon Schillaci dies aged 59

ROME: Italian icon Salvatore Schillaci, the top scorer at the 1990 World Cup, has died aged 59. Schillaci, better known as 'Toto', scored six goals to win the Golden Boot at the 1990 World Cup on home soil. Italy lost in the semi-finals, but Schillaci was also awarded the Golden Ball as the best player and gained hero status. Schillaci was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2022. Capped 16 times for his country, scoring seven goals, he represented Italian giants Juventus and Inter Milan after beginning his club career at Messina. Juventus, whom Schillaci joined in 1989, said: "We immediately fell in love with Toto. His desire, his story, his being so wonderfully passionate, and it showed in every game he played. "We at Juve were lucky enough to get excited about him before - in that incredible summer of 1990 - the whole of Italy did, captivated by those wonderfully energetic celebrations of his." Schillaci scored his first goal of the 1990 World Cup as a substitute against Austria, and after another substitute appearance against the United States earned his first start against the Czech Republic. Partnering Roberto Baggio up front, Schillaci scored again as Italy's campaign built momentum, and his hero status was confirmed with further goals in the subsequent knockout round matches against Uruguay and the Republic of Ireland in the quarter-finals. Despite opening the scoring in the semi-final against Argentina, Italy lost out on penalties in Naples - but Schillaci sealed the Golden Boot with his sixth goal of the tournament in the third-place play-off against England. He would finish runner-up to Germany's World Cup-winning captain Lothar Matthaus for the 1990 Ballon d'Or. Italian prime minister Giorgia Meloni said: "A football icon is leaving us, a man who has entered the hearts of Italians and sports fans around the world. - Agencies

## Russia to support Pak bid for BRICS...

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Belarus, Kazakhstan, Caucasus, and Russia. He noted that they discussed opportunities for implementing a free trade agreement between Pakistan and these five countries, looking forward to further discussions to finalise the agreement. Overchuk also stated that the upcoming intergovernmental commission meeting later this year in Russia would provide an opportunity to enhance trade and economic relations between the two countries. He added that their goals and visions for development and economic ties within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are well aligned, particularly regarding connectivity, climate agenda, food security, energy transition, and energy security. Moreover, Pakistan and Russia agreed to enhance dialogue and cooperation in various sectors, including trade, industry, energy, connectivity, science, technology, and education. This consensus was reached during delegation-level talks between Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and his Russian counterpart in Islamabad today. Deputy Prime Minister Overchuk's visit aligns with the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Vladimir Putin to transform bilateral relations into a strong, mutually beneficial economic partnership.

## IPL 2025: Ponting named Punjab Kings head coach

Ponting has signed a multi-year deal with Kings

SPORTS DESK

NEW DELHI: Ricky Ponting has been appointed as the head coach of Punjab Kings (PBKS) for the IPL 2025 season, just over two months after ending his seven-year tenure with Delhi Capitals. According to ESPN-cricinfo, Ponting has signed a multi-year deal with Kings, a franchise with several owners. He is expected to make the final decision on the rest of the coaching staff. There is

currently no information on which members from last year's coaching team will remain, including Trevor Bayliss (head coach), Sanjay Bangar (head of cricket development), Charl Langeveldt (fast-bowling coach), and Sunil Joshi (spin-bowling coach). Ponting will be the third head coach in four seasons for Kings, who finished

ninth in the 2024 season. They have not qualified for the IPL playoffs since 2014, when they were runners-up. Ponting's first task will be to shortlist players for potential retention for the next season while waiting for the IPL to finalise the retention rules. Key performers for Kings last season included Harshal Patel, who won the Purple Cap for the second time, as well as uncapped Indian players Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma. The squad also features India left-arm fast bowler Arshdeep Singh, wicketkeeper-batter Jitesh Sharma, and leg-spinner Rahul Chahar, along with a strong group of overseas players, including England's Sam Curran, Liam Livingstone, Jonny Bairstow, and South Africa's Kagiso Rabada.



## Harry Kane's record-breaking night

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: "I keep all the balls after hat-tricks. The lads might be sick of signing them, but keep them coming." Four-goal Harry Kane enjoyed another record-breaking night for Bayern Munich as they became the first team to score nine goals in a Champions League game. The 31-year-old England captain's performance in the 9-2 win over Dinamo Zagreb means he reached the following landmarks... Top English scorer in Champions League or European Cup history with 33 goals in 45 games, passing Wayne Rooney's old mark of 30. First English player to score four goals in a Champions League game First English player to score a hat-trick or more for a non-English team in the Champions League First player to score a hat-trick of penalties in a Champions League or European Cup match Scored his 50th,

51st, 52nd and 53rd Bayern Munich goals - in his 50th appearance for the club. Netted the 24th hat-trick of his career, the fifth time he has scored back-to-back trebles (or quadruples) Scored his ninth goals in five games this season for Bayern - as well as two in two for England On top of netting a rebound after Joshua Kimmich had a shot saved, and three penalties, Kane also had a goal disallowed, and right at the end of the game volleyed over the bar. Had he netted that chance he would have joined Lionel Messi, Luiz Adriano and Erling Haaland as the only players to score five in a Champions League game. He told Amazon Prime: "My son Louis, he loves playing football right now, he's only three but I'll take it [the match ball] home and put it next to his bed and he'll be happy when he wakes up in the morning." On breaking the English Champions League record, he added: "Whenever you're in a conversa-

tion with Wayne Rooney it means you're doing something well. He's one of the greatest English players and one of the best players there was in the game. It's a nice achievement." Former England defender Stephen Warnock, speaking on BBC Radio 5 Live, said: "Harry Kane is an exceptional professional. "One thing we know about Kane is he's never had blistering pace, his game is thought in the mind, he sees space and senses where the ball might drop - he is an intelligent footballer." This summer there were calls for Kane, England's all-time record goalscorer, to be dropped during the run to the Euro 2024 final. Warnock continued: "He will prove people wrong for the next couple of years. People are going to talk about it [his performances for England at Euro 2024]. It was a bad Euros for him. "It didn't go well and I think there was a number of factors; an injury he picked up in the late stages of the

Bundesliga, the style of play England had, or the wingers he was playing with didn't complement him. "He will score goals at Bayern Munich as he suits the way they play. The one thing about Vincent Kompany's teams is they do create so many opportunities." Kane scored 44 goals in 45 games for Bayern last season. He recently marked his 100th England cap with two goals against Finland. "He will be involved in 50 goals this season with goals and assists, but he will still get questioned about his England position," added Warnock. "I don't know why people want to question him, he is still phenomenal." For all Kane's goals - 417 for club and country now - he has yet to win a major trophy. Bayern failed to win the Bundesliga for the first time in 12 years last season. He has also lost two European Championship finals with England and a Champions League final with Tottenham. Former Bayern and Eng-

land midfielder Owen Hargreaves, on TNT Sports, said: "He played to the level you'd expect [last season]. The other players didn't. "Harry is going to win trophies - the only question is which ones." Bayern's first season without a trophy in over a decade saw Thomas Tuchel leave and Burnley boss Kompany take his place in the summer. They have won their opening four games under the Belgian, scoring 20 goals. This was the first time any team have scored nine goals in a European Cup game since Real Madrid beat Wacker Innsbruck 9-1 in 1990-91. It marked the joint second highest scoring Champions League game - and the joint third biggest margin of victory. The Champions League final this season is at Bayern's Allianz Arena home. "We're not managing expectations right now," said Kompany. "The final in Munich next year is a dream for the fans, a dream that needs to live. My priority is just to

focus on each game, one at a time, rebuild the energy and the desire to win the games." European football journalist Mina Rzkouli said: "I think Bayern Munich are going to be the team to beat. "There was criticism aimed at Vincent Kompany when he got the job, but what a way to start your Champions League campaign. "From an attacking point of view they're attacking on all cylinders." But Hargreaves said: "I don't think he [Kane] will win the Champions League, conceding two to Dinamo Zagreb." For a while it appeared the focus would maybe be on another London-born player - Michael O'Leary. The winger, who recently made his France debut, was making his European debut after a summer move from Crystal Palace. And the former Reading player scored twice, once in each half. The £50m signing looks as if he might be on for a fine season - having also netted in the Bundesliga at the weekend - but for now at least all the headlines were on Kane.



## Briefs

## Gold price decreases by Rs 300 per tola

AFTER registering gains in the last three sessions, gold prices in Pakistan declined on Wednesday in line with their decrease in international rates. In the local market, the price of gold per tola reduced by Rs300, clocking in at Rs267,700. Similarly, 10-gram gold was sold at Rs229,510 after it recorded a reduction of Rs257, according to rates shared by the All-Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Sarafa Association (APGJSA). On Monday, gold price gained Rs1,700 to settle at Rs268,000. It is pertinent to mention that gold markets remained closed on Tuesday because of Eid Milad-un-Nabi holiday. Meanwhile, the international rate of gold slipped on Wednesday. As per APGJSA, the rate was at \$2,569 per ounce (with a premium of \$20), a loss of \$18 during the day. Silver prices remained stable at Rs2,950 per tola. On Monday, gold prices hit a record high level of Rs268,000 per tola in Pakistan.—APP

## New AI laws to crack down on election deep fakes in the US

CALIFORNIA : Governor California Gavin Newsom signed several groundbreaking laws aimed at regulating the artificial intelligence (AI) sector, positioning the state as a leader in AI oversight. Among the new legislation announced, are three laws focused on curbing AI deepfakes that could influence elections in the US, and two others protecting actors from unauthorized AI clones of their likeness or voice. The law AB 2655 requires major platforms like Facebook and X to remove or label AI-generated election-related deepfakes. Additionally, AB 2355 mandates the disclosure of AI-generated political advertisements. These measures are part of a broader national conversation, as the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) is also considering similar regulations. Two other laws AB 2602 and AB 1836 specifically target the media industry, requiring studios to seek permission before using AI replicas of actors, living or deceased. These laws were backed by the Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. Newsom is also reviewing SB 1047, a contentious AI bill that some argue could stifle the open-source AI community. He has two weeks to sign or veto the measure.—APP

## Food commodities valued at \$ 1.011 billion exported in 2 months

ISLAMABAD: Food group exports from the country during the first two months of the current financial year grew by 42.39 per cent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of the last year. During the period from July-August, 2024, food commodities valued at \$1.011 billion were exported as against the export of \$710.651 million in the same period of the last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. In the first two months of the current financial year, the exports of commodities including rice grew by 95.58 per cent as 340,703 metric tons of rice worth \$646.667 million were exported as compared to the exports of 340,703 metric tons of \$233.992 million. The exports of fruits and vegetables increased by 11.20 per cent and 56.73 per cent respectively as the country earned \$51.128 million by exporting 157,806 metric tons of vegetables and \$96.159 million by exporting about 94,375 metric tons of fruits. In the first two months of the current financial year, the exports of tobacco grew by 291.14 per cent as 4,831 metric tons of tobacco worth \$20,003 million were exported as compared to the exports of 2,210 metric tons costing \$5.114 million of the same period of the last year.—APP

## Construction set to begin on white oil pipeline with SIFC backing

The White Oil Pipeline Project is poised to transform the country's energy landscape by ensuring a more reliable and cost-effective fuel supply

## MONITORING REPORT

STAKEHOLDERS for Pakistan's energy infrastructure, have reached an agreement to begin construction on the White Oil Pipeline Project, with the support of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The project, spanning 477 kilometres, will link key locations in Pakistan, including Machike, Thalian, and Taru Jabba, and is set to enhance the country's oil distribution system. The White Oil Pipeline Project is a flagship initiative led by the Pakistan State Oil (PSO), PARCO,

and the Inter-State Gas System, with Frontier Works Organisation overseeing the construction. Running parallel to the motorway, this two-part pipeline will connect the Attock Refinery with key sites like Chak Pirana and Fajirabad, ensuring smoother and more efficient oil transport

across the region. The pipeline's construction is expected to significantly reduce transportation costs, potentially saving the national treasury billions of rupees. By improving the supply of petroleum products, the project will also reduce the risk of fuel adulteration and increase safety.

Initial capacity for the pipeline stands at 7 million tonnes annually, with the potential to expand to 10 million tonnes. The project aims to reduce reliance on road transportation, improve environmental sustainability, and boost overall performance in oil distribution. The expedited

completion of this project demonstrates the government's and SIFC's commitment to advancing Pakistan's petroleum sector. The White Oil Pipeline Project is poised to transform the country's energy landscape by ensuring a more reliable and cost-effective fuel supply.



Farmers making bundles after harvesting the sesame crop at their farm here on Wednesday.

## POL imports up by 22.73% in two months

ISLAMABAD: The petroleum group imports increased by 22.73 percent during the first two months of the current fiscal year as compared to the imports of the same months of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The imports of overall petroleum group during July-August (2024-25) stood at \$ 2,664.594 million as against the imports of \$2,171.115 million during July-August (2023-24), according to PBS data. Among petroleum commodities, the import of petroleum products declined by 13.41 percent, from \$ 971.371 million last year to \$ 841.113 mil-

lion during the time period under review. However, the imports of petroleum crude increased by 107.15 percent, from \$ 456.238 million to \$ 945.087; natural gas liquefied by 10.65 percent, from \$ 645.430 to \$ 714.195 whereas the imports of petroleum gas liquefied went up by 67.41 percent and reached to \$ 98.044 million as compared to \$ 164.134 last year. The imports of all other petroleum group products also increased by 103.13 percent and went up to \$0.065 million from \$0.032 million. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the petroleum group imports witnessed an in-

crease of 1.35 percent during the month of August 2024 as compared to the same month of last year. The petroleum imports during August 2024 were recorded at \$ 1,398.324 million against the imports of \$ 1,379.680 million during August 2023. On a month-on-month basis, the petroleum imports into the country however, decreased by 31.45 percent during August 2024, as compared to the imports of \$ 499.017 million in July 2024, according to the data. 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. On the other hand, imports into the country also went up by 5.67 percent growing from \$8.165 million last year to \$8.628 million during the first two months of the current year. Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the months under review was recorded at \$3.578 billion against the deficit of \$3.735 billion last year, showing a decline of 4.20 percent.—APP

## Cash-strapped Sri Lanka eyes China development

COLOMBO: Colombo: Sri Lanka's economic collapse was partly blamed on struggling high-debt Chinese mega-projects, but candidates in Saturday's presidential election are banking on at least one of them to buck the trend. The strategically located Indian Ocean country suffered its worst financial meltdown in 2022, when it ran out of dollars to import essentials, sparking street protests that toppled the then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa. When the island nation plunged into chaos, CIA chief Bill Burns blamed its economic collapse on what he called "dumb bets" on Chinese-funded projects. These include an international airport without flights, a seaport without ships, an empty convention centre, and a \$113 million, 350-metre (1,155-foot) communication tower shunned by broadcasters. Colombo has since secured a \$2.9 billion IMF bailout loan, but whoever is elected will face huge loans and interest accumulated since Sri Lanka defaulted on its \$46 billion external debt. All top three candidates - incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe, opposition leader Sajith Premadasa and Marxist leader Anura Kumara Dissanayaka - are hoping a Chinese-funded real estate "Port City" development will woo much-needed foreign investors. Past projects, dubbed "white elephants" by critics, were built with generous loans from China's infrastructure development programme known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which Western nations criticise as a debt trap for developing countries. In December 2017, unable to repay a huge Chinese loan, Sri Lanka handed its Hambantota port in the south of the island to a Beijing company on a 99-year lease for \$1.12 billion. The Port City development began in 2014, when the China Harbour Engineering Company (CHC) invested \$1.4 billion to reclaim 269 hectares (665 acres) of land next to Colombo harbour. It bills itself as the "gateway to South Asia", a special economic zone with tax breaks of up to 40 years. For now, it remains largely empty. But Revan Wickramasuriya, the chief operating officer of the Port City Economic Commission, the state regulator of the zone, said the authorities expect to attract \$12-\$15 billion in foreign direct investment to construct buildings and set up hotels, housing, and a marina. "This is an asset that has been created for Sri Lanka", Wickramasuriya told AFP, underlining that "the government hasn't borrowed a single dollar to reclaim this land. Now it is up to the government of Sri Lanka to actually take this asset and monetise it," he added. CHC's Port City plan says it offers a "world-class global hub" for businesses, promising a "high-freedom, low-risk financial environment". While election campaigning season was in full swing, President Wickremesinghe, once critical of the project, took time to inaugurate a Duty Free mall at the site - yet to see major construction - and secured parliamentary approval to allow offshore banking. Key challenger Premadasa has vowed to continue with the project, but with unspecified amendments to the terms of the zone. The coalition of the main leftist candidate, Anura Kumara Dissanayaka, has said it would use it to attract "global IT players". But critics note several businesses moving to the special zone were existing Sri Lankan companies, and a few foreign firms already operating. "Why are these companies going to Port City? The simple and only reason is that they are getting very generous 25- to 40-year tax holidays," said Imran Furkan, from geopolitical risk analysis firm Treysnc. Furkan also said the development fed into strategic rivalry between China and India, which has previously seen neighbouring Colombo as firmly part of its sphere of influence.—APP

## Amazon names Kumar as new India head

AMAZON.com named Samir Kumar as its new India head on Wednesday, handing the reins to a 25-year company veteran as the e-commerce giant faces intense competition and regulatory pressures in the country. Kumar was part of a team that launched Amazon India in 2013 and will take over from Manish Tiwary on Oct. 1. He currently heads Amazon's consumer businesses in the Middle East, South Africa, and Turkey. Amazon had said without elaborating further that Tiwary resigned last month after an eight-year stint to pursue an opportunity outside the company. The change in leadership comes as the U.S. e-commerce giant is fast expanding in India, with plans to invest up to \$26 billion by 2030, even as it faces intense regulatory scrutiny. Newsagency reported last week that India's antitrust body found that Amazon and its biggest local rival, Flipkart, violated laws by preferring select sellers, prioritising certain listings, and steeply discounting products, hurting other companies. The regulator could impose fines on the companies along with mandating them to change their business practices.—DNA

## Google overturns \$1.66b antitrust fine in EU court

ALPHABET unit Google won its challenge on Wednesday against a 1.49 billion euro (\$1.66 billion) antitrust fine imposed five years ago for hindering rivals in online search advertising, a week after it lost a much bigger case. The European Commission in its 2019 decision said Google had abused its dominance to prevent websites from using brokers other than its AdSense platform that provided search adverts. The practices it said were illegal took place from 2006 to 2016. The Luxembourg-based General Court mostly agreed with the European Union competition enforcer's assessments of the case, but annulled the fine. "The court upheld most of the commission's assessments, but annulled the decision imposing a fine of almost 1.5 billion euros on Google, on the grounds in particular that it had failed to take into account all the relevant circumstances in its assessment of the duration of the contractual clauses that it had found to be unfair," the judges said. The AdSense fine, one of a trio of fines that have cost Google a total of 8.25 billion euros, was triggered by a complaint from Microsoft in 2010. Google has said it changed the targeted contracts in 2016 before the Commission's decision. The company last week lost its final fight against a 2.42 billion euro fine levied for using its price comparison shopping service to gain an unfair advantage over smaller European rivals.—APP

## Energy drink craze peps and pacifies weary Afghans

## STAFF REPORT

HERAT : A production line in a warehouse in western Afghanistan churns out 24 energy drinks every second, feeding a thirst for the tonic used to mask life's hardships and lift wilting spirits. The Taliban government has purged many signs of Western influence but a stimulant drink craze that arrived with US soldiers remains, and has even sprouted a thriving domestic industry. Alcohol is outlawed in Afghanistan but caffeine-rich energy drinks are consumed by all, from secret police to children, and advertised on billboards more than even Taliban state propaganda. Many homegrown brand names evoke the bygone war: "Commando", "Attack", and "Predator". "It's obvious that there are more struggles and hardships of life among the youth here," said Milad Ghaznavi at a Herat city supermarket aisle that boasted 40 varieties of the beverage.—APP

## Pakistan's business leaders greet 'Int'l, Tourism Expo in Tajikistan'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's business community on Wednesday greeted the three-day, first Dushanbe International Tourism Exhibition (DITE), 2024 to be held in Tajikistan and assured full participation in it. "Pakistan and Tajikistan have a significant role in regional economic connectivity, which will determine global trade goals and Tajikistan can be Pakistan's gateway not only to the Central Asian States but also to Europe, which can increase the volume of regional trade," President Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Atif Ikram Sheikh told APP here. He said that three days from September 25 to 27th, 2024, the EXPO Center in Dushanbe will host a major event for the regional tourism industry - the 1st Dushanbe International Tourism Exhibition (DITE 2024). The President FPCCI said that Tajikistan and Pakistan are to establish a Transit Trade Coordination Committee (TPTTCC), under ATPTT signed on December 2022 which would be responsible for monitoring and facilitating the implementation of the agreement. Atif said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan have vast cooperation opportunities in the trade and tourism sectors, on which the role of business chambers and the private sector is very important in the future. Meanwhile, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Bakhtawari told APP, that Islamabad's business community will fully participate in the first tourism expo in Tajikistan and there will be MoUs for cooperation in this sector between the two countries.—DNA

## More than 3,600 food packaging chemicals found in human bodies

## STAFF REPORT

PARIS: More than 3,600 chemicals used in food packaging or preparation have been detected in human bodies, some of which are hazardous to health, while little is known about others, a study published on Tuesday said. Around 100 of these chemicals are considered to be of "high concern" to human health, said lead study author Birgit Geueke from the Food Packaging Forum Foundation, a Zurich-based NGO. Some of these chemicals are relatively well-studied and have already been found in human bodies, such as PFAS and bisphenol A - both of which are the target of bans. But little is known about the health effects of others, Geueke told AFP, calling for more research into how chemicals used in packaging end up being swallowed along with food. The researchers had previously catalogued

around 14,000 food contact chemicals (FCCs), which are capable of "migrating" into food from packaging made of plastic, paper, glass, metal or other materials. They can also come from other parts of the food-making process, such as from conveyor belts or kitchen utensils. The researchers then searched for these chemicals in existing biomonitoring databases, which track chemicals in human samples. The team was expecting to find a few hundred FCCs, Geueke said. Instead, they were surprised to find 3,601 - a quarter of all the known FCCs. Geueke emphasised that this study could not show that all these chemicals necessarily ended up in bodies from food packaging, as "other exposure sources are possible". Among the "high concern" chemicals were numerous PFAS, also known as forever chemicals, which have been detected in many parts of

the human body in recent years and linked to a range of health problems. Also detected was bisphenol A, a hormone-disrupting chemical used to make plastics that has already been banned from baby bottles in many countries. Another hormone-disrupting chemical was phthalates, which has been linked to infertility. Less is known about oligomers, which are also byproducts of plastic production. "There is almost no evidence on the health effects of these chemicals," Geueke said. When it comes to toxicology, an old saying is that "the dose makes the poison". A limitation of the study was that it could not say whether there were particularly high concentrations of any of the chemicals, Geueke acknowledged. But she warned that these chemicals can interact with each other, pointing to a single sample that had up to 30 different PFAS.

Geueke recommended that people reduce their contact time with packaging - and to avoid heating up food in the packaging it came in. Duane Mellor, an expert in evidence-based medicine at the UK's Aston University and not involved in the research, praised the "very thorough piece of work". "However, it does not cover how much of these chemicals we are exposed to and hints at other sources of these chemicals in our environment," he told AFP. Rather than being "unduly alarmed", Mellor suggested that people "demand better data and minimise unnecessary exposure to chemicals which may ultimately impact our health". Some of the chemicals are also already facing bans. The European Union is in the final stages of banning the use of PFAS in food packaging. The EU has also proposed a similar ban for bisphenol A from the end of this year.

## US Fed set to make first rate cut since 2020

"We remain of the view that the Fed will opt for a 25bps (basis point) rate cut to start its easing cycle," EY chief economist Gregory Daco wrote in a note to clients

WASHINGTON: The US Federal Reserve is all but certain to cut interest rates on Wednesday for the first time in more than four years, a significant move likely to ripple through global financial markets. Senior officials at the US central bank including Fed chair Jerome Powell have in recent weeks indicated that a rate cut is coming this month, as inflation eases toward the bank's long-term target of two percent, and the labor market continues to cool. The decision will affect the rates

at which commercial banks lend to consumers and businesses, affecting the cost of borrowing on everything from mortgages to credit cards. Traders and analysts remain uncertain about how sharply the Fed will lower its benchmark lending rate from the current 23-year high of between 5.25 and 5.50 percent. Some are banking on a smaller cut of a quarter of a percentage point, and others are backing a bigger half-point reduction. A smaller cut would be a more predictable move, while a bigger

move would do more to boost demand - while also running the risk of reigniting inflation. "It's around points of inflection that we get the most mixed signals," Erica Groshen, a senior economics advisor at the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations, told media. "The Fed is trying to make sense out of them. And the markets are trying to make sense out of them, and trying to make sense out of how the Fed will interpret them," added Groshen, a former vice president at the New York

Fed. Futures traders saw a 63 percent chance on Tuesday that the Fed would announce a bigger, half percentage-point move on Wednesday, and a 37 percent chance it would go with a more conventional 25 basis point cut, according to CME Group data. When the Fed cuts interest rates, commercial banks in the United States generally follow, reducing borrowing costs and stimulating demand in the world's largest economy. For the Fed, a rate cut of any size would signal that consumer

four-decade high in 2022, was returning to target. While there is a "compelling risk management case to support a larger move," recent Fed communications and data did not "argue clearly" for a larger cut, economists at Deutsche Bank wrote in a recent investor note, predicting a 25 basis point cut. "We remain of the view that the Fed will opt for a 25bps (basis point) rate cut to start its easing cycle," EY chief economist Gregory Daco wrote in a note to clients.—APP



## Briefs

**PNS Shamsheer participates in 'talon grip one'**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship SHAMSHEER participated in Surge Ops TALON GRIP ONE while operating in support of Pakistan Navy led Multinational Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150). The ship is currently deployed in Gulf of Oman (GOO) to undertake Regional Maritime Security Patrol. During the deployment, PNS SHAMSHEER also undertook Passage Exercise with Royal Navy Ship HMS LANCASTER. The exercise was aimed to improve synergy and mutual understanding between the two Navies while demonstrating interoperability to undertake combined operations in the region. Pakistan Navy is maintaining presence in the Indian Ocean to keep the national and international sea lines of communications under surveillance. Pakistan Navy actively collaborates with regional and international partners deployed in IOR, fostering a collective effort for counter-piracy and anti-narcotics operations in support of CMF.

**KP govt to dismiss 1,800 employees**

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: In a major decision on Wednesday, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government decided to lay off 1800 employees who were hired during the interim government. Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur said his administration would go ahead with the decision and was also ready to face the protest by the illegally hired persons. He said the provincial government would not give income to those who were hired through an illegal process while adding those who came on merit need not be afraid of anything. He said the caretaker government did not have the authority to hire 1,800 employees in the first place. "Any person who dodged merit and a due process should be ready to face the consequences," Gandapur thundered.

**IHC restrains authorities from arresting Raja**

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has barred authorities from arresting PTI leader Salman Akram Raja after he filed a petition challenging a potential arrest. Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb presided over the case, where Raja's lawyer informed the court that an attempt was made to arrest him in Lahore. Citing concerns about future attempts, the lawyer requested protective bail and sought details regarding the charges against him. The judge halted Raja's arrest within Islamabad's jurisdiction and summoned records of all cases filed against him. The court has also issued notices to the interior secretary and other relevant parties, adjourning the hearing until tomorrow.

**'PTI conducted most transparent intra-party polls'**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan claimed on Wednesday that PTI was the only party which had conducted the most transparent intra-party elections. Speaking to reporters outside the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) after hearing in intra-party election case, Gohar said the PTI's party structure was intact, hoping that case would be fairly concluded in the next hearing scheduled on Oct 2.

# Japanese embassy celebrates cultural diplomacy with Pak

Japanese ambassador awards the "Japanese Ambassador's Commendations" to Ms. Shirai Mariko, Lahore Sogetsu Study Group and Lahore Bonsai Society, for contributing to Pak-Japan friendship



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, on 18th September 2024, conferred the "Japanese Ambassador's Commendations" to Ms. SHIRAI Mariko, Lahore Sogetsu Study Group and Lahore Bonsai Society at the ceremony held at his Official Residence in Islamabad. The Japanese Ambassador's Commendations are awarded to persons or organisations to commend their significant contributions or distinct service in accordance with the work of the Embassy of Japan. Ms. SHIRAI Mariko, General Manager of the Cox & Kings Pakistan (Pvt) Ltd., has played a role as the point of contact for Japanese travelers in Pakistan for many years. Ambassador WADA, speaking on the occasion, praised her active contributions to the Japanese community in Islamabad and thanked her for building bridges between the two cultures and supporting the important work of the Embassy. Lahore Sogetsu Study Group is a cultural organisation of Japanese-style flower arrangement, Ikebana. Ambassador WADA appreciated their voluntary display of Ikebana arts at Japan's Emperor's Birthday and Self-Defense Forces Day receptions, and admired their love towards the Japanese culture. Lahore Bonsai Society is a cultural organisation of Japanese-style potted trees. Ambassador WADA shared his experience and fondness for the art of Bonsai, and hoped for the continuing collaborations with them while thanking their voluntary contributions of Bonsai display to the Japan's receptions. Ms. SHIRAI, Ms. Neveen Syed, President Lahore Sogetsu Study Group, and Mr. Mian Umair, President Lahore Bonsai Society, were presented the certificates of commendations as well as the memorial trophies.

# US reiterates 'policy' denying support to Pak missile initiative

"... and when we have disagreements, we won't hesitate to act on those to protect America's interests," says State Dept

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States has reiterated its "long-standing policy" denying support to Pakistan's ballistic missile programme, saying it will continue to use sanctions and other tools to ensure its own national security and protect its financial system from being used by "proliferators". In a press briefing on Tuesday, addressing a query regarding the recent sanctions considered "biased and politically motivated" by Islamabad - as per the journalist, State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said that while Pakistan has been a long-term partner of the US, there are disagreements. "... and when we have disagreements, we won't hesitate to act on those to protect America's interests," he said, emphasising on the country's policy to deny support to Pakistan's missile programme. "... we will continue to use our sanctions and other - our other tools to ensure our national security cannot be - cannot be impacted, and that the US

financial system cannot be used by proliferators," said Miller. The statement comes days after the US imposed sanctions. Washington had similarly targeted three China-based companies with sanctions in October 2023 for supplying missile-applicable items to Pakistan. The Beijing Research Institute of Automation for Machine Building Industry, according to Miller's statement last week, had worked with Pakistan to procure equipment for testing rocket motors for the Shaheen-3 and Ababeel systems and potentially for larger systems. The sanctions also targeted China-based firms Hubei Huachangda Intelligent Equipment Co, Universal Enterprise, and Xi'an Longde Technology Development Co, alongside Pakistan-based Innovative Equipment and a Chinese national, for knowingly transferring equipment under missile technology restrictions, said Miller. In the briefing, the spokesperson also addressed a question pertaining to the "real reasons and concerns" that triggered the sanctions imposed on a Chinese research institute and several companies involved in supplying Pakistan's ballistic missile programme.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar welcomes the Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Alexei Overchuk, on his arrival at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. - DNA

# Israel must end presence in Palestinian territories: UN

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday adopted a Palestinian-drafted resolution that demands Israel end "its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" within 12 months. The resolution received 124 votes in favor, while 43 countries abstained and Israel, the United States and 12 others voted no. The action isolates Israel days before world leaders travel to New York for their annual UN gathering. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is due to address the 193-member General Assembly on Sept. 26, the same day as Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. The resolution welcomes a July advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice that said Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories and settlements is illegal and should be withdrawn. The advisory opinion - by the highest United Nations court, also known as the World Court - said this should be done "as rapidly as possible," although the General Assembly resolution imposes a 12-month deadline. The General Assembly resolution also calls on states to "take steps toward ceasing the importation of any products originating in the Israeli settlements, as well as the provision or transfer of arms, munitions and related equipment to Israel ... where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that they may be used in the Occupied Palestinian Territory." The resolution is the first to be formally put forward by the Palestinian Authority since it gained additional rights and privileges this month including a seat among UN members in the assembly hall and the right to propose draft resolutions.

# 3 dead, 100 wounded in new wave of Lebanon device explosions

BEIRUT: A second wave of device explosions killed three people and wounded more than 100 in Hezbollah strongholds of Lebanon on Wednesday, officials said, stoking fears of an all-out war in the region. A source close to Hezbollah said walkie-talkies used by its members blew up in its Beirut stronghold, with state media reporting similar blasts in south and east Lebanon. AFP TV footage showed people running for cover when an explosion went off during a funeral for Hezbollah militants in south Beirut on Wednesday afternoon. Three people were killed and more than 100 wounded in the latest attacks, the Lebanese authorities said, with the health ministry also describing the devices targeted as walkie-talkies. It came a day after the simultaneous explosion of hundreds of paging devices used by Hezbollah killed 12 people, including two children, and wounded up to 2,800 others across Lebanon, in an unprecedented attack blamed on Israel. There was no comment from Israel, which only hours before Tuesday's attacks had announced it was broadening the aims its war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip to include its fight against the Palestinian group's ally Hezbollah. - Agencies

# ECP's meeting on reserved seats remains inconclusive

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The second consultative meeting of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) concluded without any result regarding the Supreme Court's decision on the reserved seats. The high-level meeting, chaired by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, included commission members, the secretary, and the legal team. The meeting discussed the pros and cons of Supreme Court's verdict. Sources said that after the briefing, the commission decided to continue its consultations. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for Thursday. On Sept 14, the Supreme Court bench headed by Mansoor Ali Shah made it clear that the ECP could not delay implementation of the reserved seats' verdict. The verdict stated that those who submitted party certificates were considered PTI's successful candidates, and the Election Commission must implement this decision instantly or face consequences.

# Only Justice Mansoor will be accepted as CJP: Hamid

Lawyer convention has been called to reject constitutional amendment

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former Supreme Court Bar Association president Hamid Khan once again asserted that only Justice Mansoor Ali Shah would be recognised as chief justice (after retirement of CJP Qazi Faez Isa). Speaking to media at the Lahore High Court (LHC), he stated that the national convention slated for Sept 19 would reject the proposed constitutional amendment. "We would not accept any constitutional court," Hamid Khan stressed. He emphasised that they only recognised the Supreme Court and they would not accept limitation in its constitutional standing. Lahore High Court Bar President Asad Manzoor stated that the cabinet and Supreme Court must work within their ambit.

# AC grants relief to ex fin min Hafeez Sheikh

Accused have caused loss of 11 million dollars to exchequer, alleged NAB

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: An Accountability Court on Wednesday granted relief to former federal finance minister (finmin) Abdul Hafeez Sheikh and others accused in a corruption case. The case about the development of software for Port Qasim and other ports was heard in Karachi's accountability court. In its verdict on the jurisdictional application, the court accepted the plea of the accused and directed that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) reference be returned to the NAB Chairman. The defense argued that following amendments passed by the parliament, the accountability court no longer has jurisdiction to hear the case. The court further stated that the prosecution lacked evidence showing that the accused received financial benefits. The court added that it was a prerequisite for the NAB reference. Former federal minister Abdul Hafeez Sheikh and others are charged with abuse of power and corruption, according to NAB. The accused are alleged to have caused a loss beating 11 million dollars to the national treasury. The NAB filed a reference for recovery. The NAB reference named Azhar Majeed Khalid, Abdulhaleem Yousuf, Amir Zafar, and Irfan Sarfaraz as co-accused.



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