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Ukraine's war with Russia is 'closer to the end': Zelensky

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Ji announces nationwide protests

Detailed News On Page-08

Shang thrills home crowd with ATP title

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PM attends UNGA inaugural session

Now 'time to finalise' Gaza deal, says Biden

Guterres' speech summed up the state of the world as unsustainable, but said the challenges faced could be solved

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: US President Joe Biden, addressing the 79th, and his last, United Nations General Assembly session in New York on Wednesday, reiterated his support for a two-state solution, highlighting that the creation of a peaceful Palestinian state is the only path to permanent peace in the region. "Full-scale war is not in anyone's interest," Biden said, urging for continued dialogue despite the escalating violence. His remarks came as Israel continued military strikes in Lebanon, raising concerns of an expanding conflict. Biden, who has faced criticism for his administration's unwavering support for Israel, called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, where violence has escalated. He expressed deep concern for the plight of "innocent civilians" in the blockaded Palestinian enclave, describing their suffering as "hell." The US president proposed a ceasefire and hostage deal between Israel and Hamas, stating that such an agreement would help bring hostages home, secure Israel's safety, and alleviate the crisis in Gaza. He also warned against the risks of a broader "full-scale war" as Israel continues its operations in Lebanon, stressing the need for diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation. Turning to the war in Ukraine, Biden condemned Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion, asserting that it had failed to achieve its core objective of destroying Ukraine. He called on the international community to keep supporting Kyiv until victory is achieved, highlighting that "Ukraine is still free." Biden also voiced support for reforms to

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Peace not possible without resolution of Palestine, Kashmir issues

ALI FURQAN

NEW YORK: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Tuesday that durable peace in the world was not possible without permanent resolution of Palestine and Kashmir issues. Talking to media outside the United Nations General Assembly, he said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had raised both issues at all international fora. He said on Palestine issue, the PM had stated that war crimes were being committed in the area, genocide of armless Palestinians was being committed and the world should take notice and bring the perpetrator Israel to justice. He said the Prime Minister had also made clear that Pakistan wanted restoration of pre-1967 borders in which Jerusalem should be the capital of Palestine. "We want immediate ceasefire in Gaza and accountability of the aggressor Israel for war crimes and genocide being committed in Palestine", he remarked. Tarar said that Pakistan had dispatched

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NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif attending the inaugural session of United Nations General Assembly. - DNA

Pakistan condemns Israel's aggression against Lebanon

Reaffirms its full support for Lebanon's sovereignty

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan condemned in the strongest possible terms, Israel's latest military aggression against Lebanon, massacring hundreds of civilians. This act of aggression against the Republic of Lebanon is a grave violation of the UN Charter and international law. It is a dangerous escalation that has further endangered peace and security in an already volatile region. Pakistan reaffirms its full support for

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Aurangzeb hopeful of IMF review

The delay was also speculated to be related to the government's failure to arrange for fresh funds

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday said that the government remained "very hopeful" regarding the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s review of the 37-month \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) taking place today. The IMF said that the Fund's board will meet on September 25 to discuss the EFF for Pakistan. The decision came following speculation that the disbursement of funds was tied to delays in debt rollover confirmation

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'A necessity to end disparity' Constitutional court to be formed come what may: Bilawal

Addressing Sindh High Court Bar Association, PPP chief says legislation cannot be done via court

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has categorically said that the formation of the constitutional court is compulsory and his party will ensure its formation come what may. Addressing the Sindh High Court Bar Association on Tuesday, the PPP chief said that 19th constitutional amendment was introduced under duress "following a threat from the Supreme Court". "The judicial reforms would be undertaken in line with the Charter of Democracy (COD) come what may," he vowed. 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 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) request last month for the early issuance of a notification regarding the appointment of the next top judge. Bilawal continued that

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Imran backs Justice Mansoor's stance

The PTI chief backed Justice Mansoor Ali Shah's viewpoint on judiciary reforms during a media interaction

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Former Prime Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan has endorsed the stance of Justice Mansoor Ali Shah on the practice procedure ordinance, expressing support for the judge's position. Speaking to media from Adiala Jail, Imran agreed with Justice Mansoor's views on judiciary reforms, particularly concerning the Practice and Procedure Act. Imran also criticised the Supreme Court's recent decisions, claiming they expose a conflict of interest within the judiciary.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

PM Shehbaz meets Maldivian president

Reaffirmed Pak's commitment to enhancing cooperation with the Maldives

DNA

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a warm and cordial meeting with the President of Maldives Dr. Muizzu on the sidelines of 79th Session of UN General Assembly in New York. During the meeting, both leaders underscored the deep-rooted ties between Pakistan and the Maldives. The Prime Minister of Pakistan reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to enhancing cooperation with the Maldives in the fields of trade, tourism, education, investment and climate change.

SC reserves verdict on tribunals

CJP Isa-led five-member bench hears electoral body's plea against formation of eight election tribunals by high court

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday reserved the verdict on the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) appeal against the Lahore High Court's order appointing eight election tribunals in Punjab to address election disputes after the February 8 general polls. The development comes as the country's top electoral authority's plea was heard by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa-led five-member bench comprising Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi.

Boosts troops' morale

COAS pledges steadfast support to KP police

Gen Munir reaffirms military's unwavering commitment to thwart hostile forces' nefarious designs, says ISPR



DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir emphasised that Pakistan Army will continue to provide steadfast support and technical assistance to law enforcement agencies (LEAs), particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) police, to enhance their capacity, the Inter-Ser-

vice Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement on Tuesday. The military's media wing said the army chief made these remarks during his visit to Wana in South Waziristan district where he received a comprehensive briefing on the prevailing security situation, ongoing counter-terrorism operations, and development initiatives. "During his interaction with officers and troops, [the] COAS appreciated the high level of preparedness and exceptional morale to counter hostile threats. He reaffirmed Pakistan Army's unwavering commitment to thwarting the nefarious designs of hostile forces and their facilitators," the military's media wing stated. Additionally, COAS Gen Munir paid heartfelt tribute to the security forces and the LEAs, who have made ultimate sacrifices in the line of duty. The army chief also acknowledged the pivotal role of the people of KP in maintaining peace and advancing

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Swat blast: generating stock of questions and debate

Swat journalists confirmed that the high profile ambassadors visit to Malam Jaba was kept very secret and only a few high-ranking police and security officers were aware

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attack against a police van escorting Ambassadors convoy is now generating a stock of questions when banned Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan has not only disowned its involvement but has also made allegations against its own security forces. Analysts believe it is a repetition of 2004-2005 strategy on the part of militants who are linked with Al Qaeda, declared an international terror group throughout the world. Though District Police Officer Swat Dr. Zahid Ullah soon after the occurrence in chat with media accused banned TTP and the Counter Terrorism Police (CTD) registered a case against unknown militants but almost heads and responsible office holders of law enforcing agencies are yet to establish such claims and charges. For the last two

days, high level police and other security organs officials have engaged in prolonged discussions and consultation to find out the elements or hands responsible for terrorizing Ambassadors from important countries. Whatever might be claims and justifications on the part of police and other law enforcing agencies as well but one cannot ignore the presence of hundreds of banned TTP militants who are scattered in Swat and its surrounding areas. These militants shifted from neighbouring Afghanistan in accordance with a deal made by former ISI Chief and ex-Corps Commander Peshawar Lt. Gen (Retd) Faiz Hameed who is now facing trials in military courts, also called Court Martial. Whereas a couple of days the British media has reported the presence and activating of Hamza Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. Pakistan's permanent Ambassador to the United Nations Mr. Muneer Akram has also hinted at re-activating of what he called internationally declared terror organization Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. A high level figure within the Federal Government when asked for his point of view after Swat bomb attack against police escorting Ambassadors convoy has avoided to say something in this respect, adding, "it is a great game, how it is possible for a common man to comment when forces

Continued on Page 06

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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



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Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....1122 & 16
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



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PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
CAA.....9281092



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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



ISLAMABAD : Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam inaugurating a solar energy project of a beverage company.

Over 1,000 dengue cases reported in twin cities

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: District administrations of Islamabad and Rawalpindi have intensified their anti-dengue operations amid a growing number of cases in the twin cities. In separate raids, 13 people were arrested for failing to comply with anti-dengue standard operating procedures (SOPs). The crackdowns were aimed to prevent the further spread of dengue, which has affected hundreds of people in recent weeks.

In an action, the Assistant Commissioner Sadder arrested seven people at a commercial site in the G-15 area for violating health regulations. Meanwhile, six individuals

were arrested in Nilore under similar charges.

On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, has directed all officials to continue the crackdown without discrimination, emphasizing that every resource must be used to prevent dengue from spreading further.

Meanwhile, during a recent joint meeting between the district administrations of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, officials discussed the next steps in controlling the outbreak. The officials of both administrations have reviewed the ongoing efforts and identified more areas requiring urgent intervention to stop dengue larvae from breeding. As of now, above

600 dengue cases have been reported in Rawalpindi, while Islamabad has recorded above 400 cases. The majority of the cases are in urban areas, with people aged 20 to 39 being the most affected. The ICT administration was not only focusing on enforcement but also on raising public awareness. Officials stressed the need for a comprehensive awareness campaign to inform citizens about dengue prevention measures. Assistant commissioners were directed to engage communities and educate them on how to comply with anti-dengue SOPs. The Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad, Irfan Memon, reiterated that public support was crucial in controlling the spread of dengue.

He urged residents to cooperate with the authorities and follow all guidelines to help protect the community from the outbreak. Meanwhile, Dengue patients recorded in the recent year till date reach to 777 after 58 new cases reported during last 24 hours in Rawalpindi. The latest data released by the District Health Authority on Tuesday shows a total of 141 patients are under treatment in allied hospitals across the district with availability of 300 beds facility. After officially declared 4 fatalities in the district, the health authority has also beefed up the surveillance and monitoring of the affected areas. The recent data

reveals that out of 43 new cases, 33 patients were reported from Pothohar peri-urban areas during last 24 hours. The health officials are focussing on Chak Jalal Din which remains among the most affected parts of the city. On the other side, Rawalpindi Cantonment Board and Municipal Corporation have started spraying and fogging in different areas. The health department is consistently appealing to the citizens to follow dengue SOPs. During the last 24 hours, the health department has raided many commercial outlets and found SOPs violations. A number of shops were sealed and many others were imposed with financial penalties.

Legislative proposals on family laws Experts urge culturally and religiously aligned legal reforms

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Laws must evolve with societal changes, but adopting foreign legal models without adapting them to Pakistan's unique social context risks creating poorly drafted legislation. This increases ambiguity, unintended consequences, and the potential for more crimes. A societal mindset prone to manipulating these laws further compounds the problem. To ensure justice and long-term societal welfare, legal reforms must be thoughtful, reflecting Pakistan's evolving realities without compromising its core Islamic and cultural values. For that, the law-making process must prioritize clarity, enforceability, and contextual relevance, while citizens must also respect and adhere to the law to create a functional legal system. These views were shared by

legal and academic experts during a roundtable discussion on "Ensuring Rights in the Family: Review of Legislative Proposals," held at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad. The session focused on the recently proposed legislative bills in the Parliament concerning matrimonial assets and maintenance, initiated by Senator Syed Ali Zafar and Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri, respectively. The discussion participants included Khalid Rahman, chairman IPS, Imran Shafique, advocate Supreme Court, Syed Muaz Shah, advocate and director Center for Islamic Law & Human Rights, Asma Mushtaq, advocate Supreme Court, Usama bin Salam, advocate High Court, Dr Sameeha Raheel Qazi, former member of parliament, and Taj Muhammad, assistant professor, Bahria University, Islamabad. The evolving nature of family structures in Pakistan, driven

by the transition from agricultural to industrial economies, has significantly reshaped family responsibilities. This shift necessitates legal frameworks that are adaptive and reflective of contemporary realities while remaining sensitive to cultural and religious values. The experts raised concerns about the legal definition issues within the proposed matrimonial asset bills. The panel highlighted that the proposed bills seem to place undue financial burdens on men. Furthermore, poorly drafted legal proposals could destabilize the family system, potentially causing men to hesitate before marrying or refuse to grant divorce out of fear of losing property. Such unintended consequences could lead to even more complex social issues. Highlighting multiple ambiguities in the language of the proposed bills, the speakers warned that vague terms could lead to future legal disputes. They

stressed the importance of clarity and precise legal definitions to prevent confusion and exploitation, along with advocating for a legislative approach that is not influenced by the Western models of matrimonial law without adaptation to Pakistan's social context. They urged lawmakers to consider the broader societal implications, highlighting that poorly designed laws could increase the risk of exploitation and crimes against the weaker party, particularly women. While legal reforms are necessary to address hardships faced by weaker parties in divorce cases, reactive legislation could exacerbate social issues if not carefully constructed. The discussion also stressed the importance of identifying the reasons behind these legislative changes and examining the flaws in current family laws that have prompted the need for reform.

Ahsan Bakhtawari credits ICCI team for his achievements

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has said that under his leadership, ICCI has risen to the top position among country's chambers, thanks to the contributions of various committees formed to promote linkages with key government departments. The hard work of these committees has yielded significant results, earning the Chamber widespread recognition and respect. He said this while addressing 'Best Performance Committee Awards' ceremony held here at S.M.Muneer Auditorium. He commended the awardees for their seamless performance for the pride of the Chamber and the benefit of the community extended heartfelt congratulations to them and expressed the hope that they will continue to work with the same spirit and zeal. Bakhtawari also 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. He reaffirmed his commitment to community services, vowing to support students' educational pursuits by adding that his goal is to provide opportunities and resources, empowering the next generation to achieve excellence and contribute meaningfully to the nation. In his address, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtawari gave the entire credit of Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari's success as President to the awardees and other ICCI executives and members by saying that they all have to continue the mission of business community's service for the economic wellbeing of the country. He added that they have to strengthen this connection by promoting positivity and unity in their ranks for contribution in the prosperity of the motherland.—DNA

Elections cannot replace resolution process for Kashmir dispute

ISLAMABAD: Amidst the ongoing sham elections in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, senior All Parties Hurriyat Conference leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has emphasized the need for meaningful dialogue to resolve the Kashmir dispute. According to Kashmir Media Service, in an interview with an Indian newspaper, The Hindu, Mirwaiz stressed that elections cannot replace the resolution process and that the Hurriyat will always support engagement with the sentiment and deliberations on Kashmir. The APHC leader highlighted the territory's complexities, noting that Kashmir remains a political and human issue, divided between India, Pakistan, and China. He questions whether India can withdraw from previous bilateral agreements with Pakistan on Kashmir and whether China will back out. Mirwaiz also addressed the New Delhi's claim that the Hurriyat no longer exists in Kashmir, stating that the organization represents the sentiment and will of the people. "A severe clampdown was launched in 2017 and all senior Hurriyat leaders were put behind bars and booked under the UAPA despite they being political leaders. In another round of arrests prior to 2019, scores of Hurriyat activists and members were arrested and incarcerated. In August 2019, the crackdown intensified and lower rung members were also arrested and I was put under house detention.—APP

Int'l conference on foundation for endangered languages begins at AIOU

ISLAMABAD: The 28th three-day International Conference on Foundation for Endangered Languages will commence today (Wednesday, September 25) at Allama Iqbal Open University. According to the AIOU, linguistic experts from 22 countries will participate, and 42 scholars will present their research papers on the development and preservation of endangered languages. The conference is organized by the Department of English, AIOU in collaboration with the Forum for Language Initiatives. The closing ceremony will take place on September 27, with Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, and Chairman of the Higher Education Commission, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, attending as chief guests. Chairman Dr. Muhammad Kamal Khan is the chair of the conference while Dr. Rashida Imran is the Secretary of the conference. This conference is part of the university's ongoing Golden Jubilee celebrations.—APP

Sub-Inspector held for alleged abduction, manhandling of two children

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police responded to the complaint in line with their ongoing accountability drive, ensuring that all officers are held responsible for their actions. The police department has reiterated its commitment to maintaining strict accountability within its ranks. The officials emphasized that no one, regardless of position or authority, is above the law. The Islamabad Police Department, under the leadership of IG Rizvi, has adopted zero tolerance policy toward any misuse of power by its officers. In a statement, the police department confirmed that strict legal action will be taken against any officer found violating their duties or abusing their authority. The department has assured that such incidents will be thoroughly investigated, and anyone found guilty will face the full force of the law.—APP

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Briefs

ANF seizes 16 kg drugs in 11 operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 11 operations across the country managed to recover 16 kg drugs worth Rs 3.2 million and arrested 10 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that in two operations conducted on Lalazar Road in Rawalpindi, 69 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of two accused arrested near a university. 2.4 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of a woman travelling in a passenger van near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad. 50 grams ice was recovered from an accused rounded up near a university in Attock. 600 grams ice was recovered from the possession of an accused netted near a university in Faisalabad. In a raid conducted near a college in Faisalabad, 300 grams hashish and 200 grams ice were recovered from the possession of an accused. 940 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of a drug dealer arrested near Shehbaz Chowk in Quetta. All the arrested accused confessed to supplying drugs to students of educational institutions. APP

Steering Committee decides to finalize NEV policy

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Tuesday chaired the maiden meeting of the Steering Committee on Electric Vehicles that decided to finalize the National Electric Vehicle (NEV) within one month. The policy is aimed at promoting local manufacturing and early adoption of EV including new energy vehicles (NEVs) to ensure a sustainable transport system in the country. Among others, the meeting was attended by Minister for Energy Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Secretary Industries and Production Saif Anjum, and senior officers from relevant ministries and departments, said a news release. Chairing the meeting, the minister stressed that the new policy should promote energy efficiency and transition to clean technologies in the automotive sector. During the meeting, all the stakeholders presented their proposals. —APP

IRSA releases 205,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 205,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 143,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1535.99 feet and was 137.99 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 88,100 cusecs and 120,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1221.25 feet, which was 173.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. —APP

Essex Varsity brings prestigious Int'l degrees to local campuses

Annecy Lax, Dean of Partnerships (Education), and Mr. David Briggs, Deputy Dean of Partnerships, who expressed excitement over the impactful collaboration

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark development for Pakistan's education sector, the University of Essex has officially launched a pioneering transnational education (TNE) partnership with Beaconhouse International College. This collaboration opens new doors for Pakistani students, offering them the opportunity to earn globally recognized University of Essex degrees while studying at local campuses, marking a significant milestone in Pakistan's academic landscape. The launch event, held at Beaconhouse International College's H/11 campus in Islamabad, was graced by Mr. Oliver Christian, His Majesty's Trade Commissioner to the UK, as the chief guest. The event also welcomed an esteemed delegation from the University of Essex, including Dr. Annecy Lax, Dean of Partnerships (Education), and Mr. David Briggs, Deputy Dean of Partnerships, who expressed excitement over the impactful collaboration. Through this partnership, students across Pakistan can now access a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs



in disciplines such as business, law, and technology. The courses will be offered at state-of-the-art campuses located in major cities, including Islamabad, Faisalabad, and Lahore, enabling

students to pursue a top-tier international qualification without the need to travel abroad. This initiative reflects the University of Essex's commitment to expanding access to world-class

education, empowering Pakistani students with the skills and knowledge to excel in today's globalized world. By offering a prestigious international degree locally, this collaboration is set to redefine

higher education opportunities in Pakistan, providing students with the chance to receive the same quality of education as those studying at the Essex campus in the UK.

Launch of book titled 'China Leads' held at ISSI

STAFF REPORTER

The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized the launch of China Leads by Dr. Junaid Ahmad. The book was reviewed by eminent scholars, including Ambassador Masood Khalid, former Ambassador of Pakistan to China, and Dr. Tahir Mumtaz Awan, former Director of the China Study Centre, COMSATS University Islamabad. Ambassador Masood Khalid praised the book for offering a rich historical context on China's rise, from its ancient civilization to its modern achievements under the Communist Party of China. He highlighted the book's insights on socio-economic development, and its pivotal role in global politics. He praised the book's detailed historical account, covering dynastic periods, China's modernization under Mao Zedong, and its current trajectory under

President Xi Jinping. The book offers valuable insights into China's modernization efforts, poverty alleviation, and its strategic foreign relations, making it an essential resource for researchers and policymakers. He also suggested future editions should include discussions on China's Global Development, Security and Civilization Initiatives, further enhancing the book's relevance. Ambassador Khalid also commended the detailed research, making the book a valuable resource for those interested in China's history, foreign policy, and future direction. Dr. Tahir Mumtaz Awan commended the book for its comprehensive account of China's rise as a global leader, not only economically, but also culturally, geopolitically, and ideologically. He highlighted the book's historical insights, China's strategic use of soft power, and its impact on global perceptions, particularly regarding the

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Dr. Junaid Ahmad, the author of the book stated that China Leads emphasizes that the Chinese civilization and language embody wisdom and knowledge accumulated over 5,000 years. Throughout its history, China has never been an aggressor. It has only defended itself against numerous aggressors. Chairman Mao laid the foundation for China's global stature by making it a nuclear power in 1964. His successors, starting with Deng Xiaoping, guided China towards a market economy, with leaders like Xi Jinping continuing this trajectory, positioning China as a global leader in various fields. Earlier in his remarks, Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director of the China Pakistan Study Center at ISSI, welcomed the audience, describing the book as a timely and insightful work on China's journey of leadership, innovation, and peace.

Mehfil-e-Naat organized at female campus of IIUI

ISLAMABAD: The Directorate of Students Affairs (Female Campus), International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) in collaboration with the Faculty of Arabic, organized a Mehfil-e-Naat to celebrate the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in connection with the month of Rabi ul Awwal. The event drew large participation from students, faculty, and staff, who came together to reflect on the life and teachings of the Prophet (PBUH) through Naat recitations and Darood-o-Salam. The Mehfil encouraged the expression of this devotion through a Naat competition, where students showcased their love for the Prophet (PBUH). Gifts were awarded to the best Naat Khawan students. Dr. Summaya Chughtai, Incharge of the Female Campus, honored the occasion as the chief guest and spoke about how the Prophet's (PBUH) message of Rehmat provides guidance in every facet of life. —APP

Pak-South Korea shares common heritage of Buddhism

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a symposium Tuesday said that Pakistan and South Korea were tied in common relations and their ongoing collaboration in cultural heritage conservation, rooted in a shared historical connection, particularly the common heritage of Buddhism. Addressing the "Digital Transformation of Cultural Heritage Conservation and Management in Pakistan" symposium held at a local hotel, they said that since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1983, both nations have actively engaged in archaeological initiatives that celebrated and preserved their rich cultural legacies. They said that scholars and professionals from both countries have exchanged visits, enriching each other's knowledge and expertise. They added that the Pakistan and Korean partnership achieved significant milestones including the exhibitions of Gandhara Art in 2000 and 2017 in Korea, and the archaeological research conducted by the Dongguk Buddhist University in Taxila Valley in 2004. Hasan Nasir Jami, Secretary of National Heritage and Culture, while speaking as Chief Guest said that the symposium was a testament to the enduring partnership between South Korea and Pakistan in cultural heritage preservation. By leveraging digital technologies, we can safeguard our shared legacies for future generations. Currently, to promote the activities of the Research Center a five-year Official Development Assistance (ODA) project from the Republic of Korea is underway, focusing on establishing the Gandhara Archaeological Research Center at the Department of Archaeology and Museums in Islamabad initiated in 2021. The project includes a research centre for the digital documentation of Buddhist heritage sites and a conservation laboratory for the treatment of museum artefacts. The symposium aimed to introduce digitization techniques for the preservation, conservation, and promotion of Pakistan's cultural heritage. —DNA

Pakistan achieves first buffalo calf births via OPU-IVF-ET technique

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan recently achieved a significant milestone in biotechnology with the birth of buffalo calves through OPU-IVF-ET (Ovum Pick-Up, In-Vitro Fertilization, and Embryo Transfer) technique for the first time in the country's history. Royal Cell Biotechnology (Pakistan), a subsidiary of the Royal Group of China, introduced the technology in Pakistan. In trials at Ibrahim Dairy Farm, Faisalabad, embryos from elite buffaloes were successfully implanted into recipient buffaloes, resulting in 6 pregnancies from 8 transfers and ultimately 5 births. Dr. Qaiser Shahzad, a senior official at the Royal Cell Pakistan, told Gwadar Pro. Similarly, two calves were born from 5 transferred embryos at the HAS Dairy Farm, Gujranwala, he said. This development is part of the Royal Group's broader 'Buffalo Breeding Project' under 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)', Dr Shahzad added. —APP

Chairman HEC welcomes appointment of VCs in different universities

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed has appreciated the Federal and Punjab Governments for expediting the process for appointment of permanent vice chancellors in the universities of Punjab as well as Comsats University, Islamabad. In a statement, the Chairman HEC expressed his pleasure over the appointments and appreciated the Federal and Punjab Governments for taking steps to resolve the crucial issue of the absence of leadership in these universities. He asserted that the appointment of vice chancellors will help address different governance challenges and quality issues in the respective universities. "The appointments of vice chancellors will further strengthen HEC's coordination with the universities, leading towards visible improvement in the universities operations," he said. —

inDrive crosses 5 billion deals

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan inDrive, a leading ride hailing company in Pakistan is celebrating a major milestone: the completion of 5 billion deals on its global mobility and urban services platform as of September, 2024. The landmark 5 billionth deal was sealed by a driver and passenger in Peru, marking a significant moment for inDrive since the company launched its innovative bid-based pricing model in 2012 with the

goal of making ridesharing pricing fairer for both drivers and passengers. In the years that followed, inDrive has expanded its mission of challenging injustice and improving people's lives by extending its innovative bid-based model beyond ridesharing. These services now include city-to-city and intercity transportation, courier deliveries, freight services, as well as other urban solutions such as housekeeping and small home repairs. This growth and diversification reflect inDrive's evolution from being the world's

second-most downloaded mobility app to a global multi-service platform operating across 46 countries. Over the past 11 years inDrive has leveraged its strong product-market fit across diverse regions, demonstrating a unique ability to scale rapidly and secure leading positions across markets without disproportionately focusing on any single country. This underscores the global customer demand for greater freedom of choice and a desire to take back control from algorithms — precisely what the inDrive model provides.

Agreements signed with provinces to modernise TVET institutes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A major step in the development of employable skills for youth in Pakistan was taken with the signing of agreements to transform selected model Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutes into four Centres of Excellence (CoEs) in Balochistan, Gilgit Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Through provision of modern equipment, improved curricula and trained teachers these centres of excellence will be providing state-of-the-art skills training to youth, in line with requirements in the labour market. Establishment of the Centres of Excellence in Pakistan is a recognised flagship intervention under EU's Global Gateway initiative, in which the EU leverages public and private sector investments across the globe. Co-funded by the European Union and the Federal Republic of Germany, the initiative is implemented by GIZ and the British Coun-

cil in close collaboration with NAVTTC as part of a broader strategy to strengthen the TVET sector and enhance youth employment opportunities. The signing ceremony was attended by the Secretary of Education, Ministry for Federal Education and Professional Training Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, European Union Deputy Ambassador Philipp Oliver Gross, NAVTTC, the TVET Sector Support Programme, and the governments of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Gilgit Baltistan. Executive Director of NAVTTC, Mohammed Amir Jan, and Head of the TVET Sector Support Programme, Dr. Mansoor Zaib Khan, signed the agreements alongside provincial representatives. Each signed the documents signifying their commitment to the transformative initiative. Deputy Head of Mission of the EU Delegation to Pakistan, Philipp Oliver Gross, underscored the importance of upgrading the TVET institutes to empower youth, especially women. "Pakistan's

youth are its greatest asset," he remarked. "To unlock their potential, especially for young women, we need to create an environment where they can thrive. The EU is committed to supporting TVET for inclusive and sustainable growth. We've already seen some incredible progress in this sector." He further highlighted the role of Centres of Excellence in setting a benchmark for modern TVET systems in the regions of KP, GB and Balochistan. Secretary of Education Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, speaking at the occasion, praised the European Union and Germany's support for the TVET sector in Pakistan. "These initiatives will equip our youth with the skills needed for better employment opportunities, contributing to Pakistan's development," he stated. The new CoEs will serve as hubs for teacher training, research, innovation, and business incubation. They will link training with industry needs, providing state-of-the-art technology in key eco-

omic sectors. The COEs in GB, KP, and Balochistan will complement the deficiencies of the TVET institutes and will position as lighthouses for the TVET sector. In his speech, Mohammed Amir Jan, Executive Director of NAVTTC emphasized the importance of this initiative. He said "The transparent and competitive selection process for these Centres of Excellence sets a new benchmark for quality in technical and vocational education in Pakistan." The transformation began with a nationwide call for proposals earlier this year, resulting in a rigorous selection process and regional competitions. Under the Team Europe's initiative, eight institutions will be upgraded to Sector-Specific Centres of Excellence, while selected TVET institutes will be enhanced into Model Institutes, complete with modern labs, workshops, digitised systems, career counselling services, job placement centres, business incubation units.

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Israeli terrorism in Lebanon

THE terrorist actions carried out by the Israeli regime in Lebanon over the past week have inflicted real blows that cannot be denied, however, they must be understood in context and the next moves will perhaps shape the outcome of a now regional conflict. The Zionist Entity's detonation of thousands of wireless communication devices (pagers) across Lebanon on Tuesday, which was followed by the detonation of walkie-talkie devices the very next day, represented a serious blow against not only Hezbollah, but also the people of Lebanon. The terrorist tactic was designed to achieve two goals, to instill fear in the civilian population and also create chaos within Hezbollah itself. Such a tactic is only truly useful militarily if it is immediately followed by a larger armed action, yet the Israelis did not choose to launch a war. So, injuring thousands and killing dozens, both civilians and Hezbollah members, can be interpreted more so as point scoring for the Zionists, rather than a death blow attempt. Although we cannot downplay the severity of what has been done, or undermine the sheer recklessness and criminality at play, these aggressions come out of a place of absolute desperation from the Zionist regime. The big takeaway here is that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has not yet launched a war against Lebanon and instead is wedded to sneaky and rather imaginative attacks that border on the insane. The reason why he wasn't able to launch a comprehensive war is because his forces are incapable of winning such a conflict, especially if it involves any ground component.

If the Zionist Entity wants to launch a ground invasion of Lebanon, it is more than likely that it will choose to invade southern Syria too. Such a war would be the most costly in the regime's history and could even lead to its total collapse. Despite understanding that a war with Hezbollah is unwinnable, it is also clear that the Israeli leadership are actually pushing for such a conflict, but under one of two scenarios: They either seek a limited battle, not a full-scale war, or, they will need to drag the US into a broader conflict that likely involves Iran. In order to receive the backing of the United States and legitimacy from their Western allies, the Israelis need Hezbollah to be the ones to start the war. This is why they are continually provoking the Lebanese Resistance, in an attempt to put them in a corner and force them to respond in a way that would justify the Israeli desired outcome. The Israelis, with the full backing of the United States, have decided that the main front in their war will now be Lebanon. This comes as a result of their failure to achieve any key goals inside Gaza. If we look at the Zionist ground invasion of the Gaza Strip, we will see that they had no idea what they were doing from the get go. They began with a comprehensive bombing campaign while floating the ideas of annexing northern Gaza and ethnically cleansing the population to the Egyptian Sinai. After this, they invaded the North, achieving nothing after raiding al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City.

Nato expansion in Asia

IN politics and war, delusion often sounds like vision. Jens Stoltenberg certainly has "that vision thing", as the late George H.W. Bush once derisively called it. If the retiring Nato chief is anything to go by, and I hope not, the biggest military alliance in history with "North Atlantic" in its title is about to go global. Is this Western alliance about to expand into the East? If so, what do you call that? Western imperialism redux? In his parting gift for world peace or rather world war, Stoltenberg said in an interview with Foreign Policy, which is itself an undeclared information organ of Washington's security and foreign policy elites, that North Korea, China and Iran are all in league with Russia, and Nato must be an ally of its Asian counterparts. Asean nations? I think they pretty much have already said NO, in capital letters. But who's to say? "Our security is global," Stoltenberg declared. "While Nato is a regional alliance, we need a global approach, and that includes also our approach to China. Because again, the war in Ukraine demonstrates that our security is not regional. "That's the reason why ... Nato has stepped up further the cooperation we have with our Asia-Pacific partners, that includes [sic] South Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand." He insists there is a de facto alliance between Moscow and Beijing, even though there is little evidence of it. "That's not because Nato has pushed them together," he claimed. "It's because they align in standing of what they believe in a different world order." Russia under Vladimir Putin is certainly anti-Western, but China under President Xi Jinping is not. What's that charge from Washington and Brussels about China's overproduction and dumping all its cheap stuff on Western markets? It looks like China still wants to sell to the West, despite all those tariffs and sanctions! Well, tell that to Stoltenberg, the guy really has a one-track mind. Or rather he is paid to think that way. But at least he is upfront about it, unlike his also retiring boss in Washington, US President Joe Biden. The press has taken to calling it, politely, the octogenarian president's "hot mic" moment, though it seems more like, forgive me for being rude, a senior moment. Before he had a closed-door meeting with prime ministerial partners of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) – Anthony Albanese of Australia, Narendra Modi of India and Fumio Kishida of Japan – in his home state of Delaware at the weekend, the White House was telling the press that the Quad leaders were having a get-together among allies and did not have any agenda at this time against any specific country. But in the leaders' private meeting, Biden or his minders forgot to turn off the tiny microphone attached to his suit. It appeared as soon as they sat down, Biden started complaining about China. "China continues to behave aggressively, testing us all across the region. It is true in the South China Sea, the East China Sea, South Asia, and the Taiwan Straits [sic]," he was heard saying. "He's [Xi Jinping] also looking to buy himself some diplomatic space, in my view, to aggressively pursue China's interest." Of course, everyone knows the Quad was all about China from day one, so you wonder why the White House even bothered to claim otherwise for the latest meeting. It's unclear, though, what Biden was hoping to achieve with the Quad meeting, considering that both he and Kishida – whose poll ratings are even lower than those of the US president – are lame ducks.



The Supreme Court judgement: A legal storm

Qamar Bashir



The Court made a clear distinction between election petitions and civil cases, emphasizing that an election petition represents the collective will of the constituency and the public interest, unlike a civil suit, which involves only two parties. Citing Morris J. 's 1875 Tipperary Election Case and Grove J. in Aldridge, the Court highlighted that election petitions are fundamentally about ensuring the rights and interests of the electorate and the purity of the election process.

IN its landmark 70-page detailed judgment, the Supreme Court upheld the supremacy of the people's will in the election process, dismissing the government's narrative that PTI received undue relief despite not being a party to the dispute. The Court made a clear distinction between election petitions and civil cases, emphasizing that an election petition represents the collective will of the constituency and the public interest, unlike a civil suit, which involves only two parties. Citing Morris J. 's 1875 Tipperary Election Case and Grove J. in Aldridge, the Court highlighted that election petitions are fundamentally about ensuring the rights and interests of the electorate and the purity of the election process. The Supreme Court's judgment emphasized that an election petition is not just a dispute between candidates but a matter of public interest, where all citizens have a vested stake in ensuring elections are fair, free, and untainted by corrupt practices. The Court underscored its obligation to protect the electorate's right to fair representation, ensuring that only candidates who have genuinely won through legitimate means assume office. It stressed that courts must remain impartial and focus solely on legal and evidential matters to maintain electoral integrity. The judgment rejected the Election Commission and government's attempts to undermine the election process by highlighting procedural errors, instead basing its decision on a correct legal interpretation that reinforced the people's mandate and strengthened democratic governance by ensuring the accurate and fair representation of the electorate's will.

The judgment criticized the legal representatives of all parties involved in the case for failing to highlight the correct legal position regarding the nature of election disputes and for not presenting strong arguments. As a result, the Court took it upon itself to bring out the relevant facts and legal points, granting the eventual relief through a broader and more comprehensive judicial inquiry into the election dispute at hand. While addressing the core issue of depriving PTI of its election symbol and its fundamental right to contest elections as a political party, the judgment criticized the Election Commission's order dated 22 December 2023, which was upheld by the Supreme Court in its order dated 13 January 2024. The Court held both the Election Commission and the Supreme Court responsible for creating confusion regarding the status of PTI candidates and PTI's entitlement to reserved seats. It observed that if the Supreme Court had clearly clarified its intentions in its earlier order,

the question of the allocation of reserved seats would not have arisen. The judgment took the Election Commission to task and charged it by framing the Rule 94 which provides the procedure for the calculation, allocation and notification of the share of proportional representation of political parties in the seats reserved for women and non-Muslims in contravention to the specific provision of the article 51(6)(d) & (e) and 106(3)(c) of the Constitution.

The judgment held the Commission responsible for violating the constitution by defining a political party as a party to which a symbol has been allocated by the Commission. 'By defining a political party in this manner, the Explanation excludes a political party that has not been allotted a symbol by the Commission from being allocated a share of proportional representation in the reserved seats. This interpretation according to the judgment was self serving and extra constitutional as termed it infringement of the constitutional right of a political party, conferred by Articles 51(6) (d) & (e) and 106(3)(c) of the Constitution, to have its due share of proportional representation in the seats reserved for women and non-Muslims on the basis of general seats secured by such a political party.

The judgment declared that notwithstanding that a political party has been declared ineligible to obtain an election symbol, its nominated candidates cannot be mentioned as independent candidates in the list of contesting candidates (Form 33), despite allotment of different election symbols to them under Section 67(3) of the Elections Act, nor can they be notified as independent returned candidates in the Section-98 Notification. The judgment emphasized that even if a political party fails to comply with the provisions of Section 209 of the Elections Act, which relates to intra-party elections, it remains an enlisted and fully functional political party. This means it retains its core purpose of 'propagating or influencing political opinion and participating in elections for any elective public office or for membership of a legislative body, including an Assembly, the Senate, or local government.' The judgment declared the Election Commission's order dated 2 February 2024 and the Returning Officers' action of labeling PTI candidates as independent candidates in Form-33 as unconstitutional and unlawful. It also criticized the Commission for its incorrect reliance on the Supreme Court order and for misinterpreting and misapplying observations that pertained to Section 215(5) of the Elections Act, rather than Sections 66 and 67.

The judgment unequivocally declared that PTI and its

voters were deprived of their vested rights granted by the Constitution due to the unlawful actions and omissions of the Returning Officers and the Election Commission. It recognized that PTI, along with its candidates and electorate, suffered the loss of certain constitutional and statutory rights, particularly their right to proportional representation in the reserved seats. The judgment acknowledged the coercion, intimidation, and pressure exerted on PTI, one of the largest political parties, by the combined force of the Commission and the Returning Officers. It highlighted that PTI was compelled, under significant duress and through the use of both kinetic and legal force, to forgo its election symbol and brand name and was forced into a situation where it had to merge with or join other political parties that were either parties in name only or had minimal public support.

The Supreme Court, in its judgment, set aside the High Court's earlier decision where it conflicted with the current ruling and declared the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) order from 01.03.2024 as unconstitutional, without lawful authority, and nullified it. It invalidated the notifications that declared certain individuals as returned candidates for reserved seats for women and minorities, affirming that PTI's constitutional rights as a political party remain intact regardless of the denial of an election symbol. The Court recognized PTI as a party that secured general seats in the National and Provincial Assemblies in the 2024 General Elections. The Court specified procedures for confirming the party affiliation of returned candidates and clarified that PTI's entitlement to reserved seats for women and minorities will be based on the total seats secured. The ECP was instructed to adjust the lists and notify the seats accordingly for both National and Provincial Assemblies, ensuring compliance with this judgment. In the parting para the judgment, took note of the tone and observations made by the two dissenting judges, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, in their judgment dated 3 August 2024 and observed that these two judges went beyond the limits of judicial propriety by warning the returned candidates and suggesting that the Election Commission should not comply with the majority decision of the thirteen-member Full Court Bench.

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

China's African safari and how it managed to outmaneuver US

Amir Zia

Top leaders of more than 50 African countries, or their representatives, attended the summit where Beijing pledged \$50.7 billion worth of financing for development projects to Africa. The scale and messaging of the event proved much bigger and louder than the past FOCAC summits, raising eyebrows in the United States-led Western bloc, which competes with China for influence on the African continent. However, the Chinese appear to have the first-movers' advantage in the game of building relations and expanding trade and investment with the African countries

CHINA is on the march in Africa. Earlier this month, Beijing pulled off its biggest diplomatic event in recent years with the conclusion of the ninth summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Through this mega event, China and its African partners rolled out the message of "a shared future" and "inclusive modernisation". Top leaders of more than 50 African countries, or their representatives, attended the summit where Beijing pledged \$50.7 billion worth of financing for development projects to Africa. The scale and messaging of the event proved much bigger and louder than the past FOCAC summits, raising eyebrows in the United States-led Western bloc, which competes with China for influence on the African continent. However, the Chinese appear to have the first-movers' advantage in the game of building relations and expanding trade and investment with the African countries compared to all the other competing nations. This is reflected in the trade, investment and debt numbers in which China surpasses the US, the world's number one economy. For example, China has remained Africa's biggest trading partner for the past 15 years in a row. In 2023, China-Africa trade hit \$282 billion. China's main exports to Africa include new energy vehicles, lithium batteries and photovoltaic products. China's imports include minerals, vegetables, and fruits and flowers. On the other hand, US-Africa trade hovered around \$68 billion in 2023. US exports to African countries include aircraft, petroleum products, motor vehicles and natural gas, while imports include crude petroleum, precious metals, gemstones, silverware and apparel.

According to a Boston University study, China lent a little over \$182 billion to African countries between 2000-23, underlining the fact that since the inception of FOCAC, Beijing's economic ties with Africa have significantly deepened. However, following the outbreak of the Covid pandemic in 2019, the flow of Chinese money to Africa dropped sharply compared to the initial years of the Chinese global infrastructure project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched in 2013. In the initial years of BRI, Chinese loans to Africa were constantly over \$10 billion annually. But after the loan-squeeze of the past couple of years, in 2023, there has again been a surge in Chinese loans to Africa as they hit \$4.61 billion. On its part, Washington funded 15 project preparation grants through its Trade and Development Agency. These grants were aimed to help leverage around \$3.4 billion in infrastructure finance projects across Africa,

underlining that the Americans have been lagging behind on this front, too, compared to China. The Biden administration also hosted the US-Africa Leaders' Summit in December 2022 – the second-ever such conference after a gap of eight years. This long-awaited conference was attended by leaders from 49 African countries. However, China commands a diplomatic advantage in Africa over the US-led Western bloc for a number of reasons, including the fact that Beijing has a history of supporting the African liberation movements fighting colonial rule since the Chinese communist revolution of 1949. Since the late 1990s, China has steadily increased trade, commercial and investment activities in Africa, culminating in the first FOCAC summit in 2000. With the launch of BRI in 2013, these activities got a further boost despite Western allegations that Beijing uses debt trap to acquire assets of the borrower nations. China is at ease in building relations with democratic countries, as it is with those under autocratic or semi-autocratic rule. Beijing has no problem striking deals with countries seen close to the US as it has no issue partnering with the ones having close ties with Moscow. The Chinese never ask its trade and investment partners to side with Beijing in any conflict on any international forum, including the United Nations. This makes it easier for developing nations to deal with China. On the contrary, the US-led bloc remains committed to exporting its Western-style democracy, governance model and concept of human rights worldwide, especially in developing nations. In the second US-Africa Leaders' Summit, for example, reinforcing commitment to democracy and human rights served as one of the key themes of the meet. For liberals, this US commitment to democracy and human rights remains values that must be celebrated and cherished. However, those standing on the other side of the divide see it as reckless interference in other nations' affairs by the West without considering the objective conditions, including the mode of production and the level of socio-economic development of the developing countries. These critics also point out the dichotomies and contradictions of the US foreign policy, which conveniently ignores these values while dealing with select monarchies of the oil-rich countries or those where Washington has strategic interests. The critics of the Western approach of weaponising the issues of democracy and human rights say that in tribal or semi-tribal and feudal or semi-feudal societies, Western-style democracy and governance create more problems than solutions. And

indeed, the past and present prolonged civil wars and strife in many Asian and African countries remain a testimony of this flawed Western approach. In recent months, many African countries which refuse to condemn Moscow over the war with Ukraine have openly criticised Washington's role in the conflagration.

China's approach in dealing with developing countries is the opposite of that of Washington and its allies, as building relations with Beijing comes without any ideological or political baggage. Beijing, on its part, has also attempted to keep its narrative positive in the latest edition of FOCAC, focusing on inclusive modernisation, future growth, green energy, industrialisation, agricultural advancements, security and BRI that aims to link several continents to China through physical infrastructure. In his keynote address at the summit, President Xi Jinping made a cursory remark on the Western approach to modernisation, saying that "it has inflicted immense suffering on developing countries". While calling to correct the "historical injustices" against Africa, the rest of his speech was largely focused on the shared development goals and setting off "a wave of modernisation in the Global South". This highlights the thoughtfully crafted Beijing's policy of strategic patience and restraint that enables China to focus on expanding its global economic footprint by avoiding conflicts even in the wake of provocations. This approach makes life easy for those African leaders, as well as many others in Asia and Latin America, who want to maintain good relations with both Beijing and Washington. The Cold War era-type power rivalry, when the US and the former Soviet Union fought proxy wars across the world, including in Africa, doesn't suit any of the developing nations. China also leverages its strategy of transferring modern technology to developing nations, which was one of the themes at the FOCAC summit. No wonder many developing countries see China as presenting an alternative development model that signals stability and continuity. This stands in contrast to the US-led Western bloc, where the noisy and chaotic democracy, coupled with its ideological baggage, hampers even timely decision-making. Nevertheless, the best way forward for African countries, as well as many Asian and Latin American countries, is to balance their relations with both the US and China. Both these superpowers can play a vital role in helping the developing countries pull their people out of the poverty trap and fast-track their development, industrialisation and modernisation efforts. The mantra of "either with us or with them" is detrimental to peace and progress.

Briefs

Now 'time to finalise' Gaza deal, says...

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the UN Security Council, signalling Washington's openness to expansion and changes within the body. Meanwhile, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres denounced on Tuesday a growing number of governments and other groups who feel they are "entitled to a get out of jail free card," citing wars in Ukraine, the Gaza Strip and Sudan. "They can trample international law. They can violate the United Nations Charter," Guterres told world leaders at the UN General Assembly. "They can invade another country, lay waste to whole societies, or utterly disregard the welfare of their own people. And nothing will happen." "The level of impunity in the world is politically indefensible and morally intolerable," he said. With the nearly year-long war between Israel and Palestinian group Hamas in besieged Gaza threatening to now engulf Lebanon - where Israel targeted more than a thousand Hezbollah targets on Monday - Guterres made an impassioned plea.

Peace not possible...

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humanitarian aid through ships and C130s. Moreover, Pakistan had offered to give admission to Palestinian medical students in Pakistani institutions, so that they could complete their education without any hindrance. He said the Kashmir issue would figure in the Prime Minister's engagements in the United Nations. Besides, he said climate change was a major issue for Pakistan which contributed only 2 per cent of the gas emissions but had to bear the brunt of adverse effects of the climate change. He said the UN secretary general had himself visited Pakistan and himself saw the impact of climate change in Pakistan due to heavy floods. He further said that Pakistan had also badly suffered in the war against terrorism and it was still suffering in this war launched by the western powers.

Swat blast: generating...

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didn't forgive its high level general." Swat journalists confirmed that the high profile ambassador's visit to Malam Jaba was kept very secret and only a few high-ranking police and security officers were aware. Former Secretary Home Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and retired Inspector General Police Syed Akhtar Ali Shah says, "attack against ambassadors was not new for him as some dacoits arrested from Matta Swat in 2004 have confirmed links with Al Qaeda and had disclosed plans of targeting foreigners visiting Swat. The dacoits were part of seven who had robbed a bank in Chaparral Matta Swat. Five of them were killed during encounters with police when Syed Akhtar Ali Shah was District Police Officer. The arrested dacoits/terrorists were affiliated with Pakistani group Jesh I Muhammad, linked with Al Qaeda.

COAS pledges...

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various projects under the South Waziristan Integrated Development Plan. He underscored Pakistan Army's dedication towards leveraging its resources for the prosperity and development of the people of KP, as per the ISPR. Furthermore, the military's media wing said that the army chief expressed gratitude for the tribal elders' invaluable support in combating terrorism and their unwavering backing of the Pakistan Army. During the visit, the COAS honoured the martyrs by laying a floral wreath at the Shuhada Monument. He was warmly received at Wana by Commander Peshawar Corps, the ISPR added. Earlier this month, the army chief lauded the contributions of KP police and other LEAs against terrorism, pledging that the military will continue to provide support to the law enforcers in the newly merged districts of the province.

Karate champion Shahzaib honored with special reward

The former minister went on to announce a reward of 25 acres of land for a sports academy and a cash prize of 100,000 PKR for Shahzaib

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Karate Combat World Champion Shahzaib Rind has been honored with a special prize, as former federal minister Sardar Yar Muhammad Rind announced a reward of land and cash for the national hero in recognition of his remarkable achievement in becoming Pakistan's first-ever world champion in Karate Combat. According to details, Shahzaib Rind met with the former minister in Islamabad, where Sardar Yar Muhammad Rind congratulated him for bringing pride to the nation with his victory on the global stage. In a conversation with the media, Sardar Yar Muhammad Rind expressed disappointment over the underwhelming reception Shahzaib received upon his arrival in Islamabad. He questioned the absence of the Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ministry of Pakistan and the Sports Ministry of Balochistan in celebrating such a significant achievement. "It feels as though my own son has won," Rind remarked, adding that he has supported young athletes in the past and will continue to do so in the future. The former minister went on to announce a reward of 25 acres of land for a sports academy and a cash prize of 100,000 PKR for Shahzaib. In response, Shahzaib Rind expressed heartfelt gratitude to Sardar Yar Muhammad Rind for his continued support. He emphasized the significance



of his accomplishment, as this marks the first time a Pakistani has become a world champion in karate. He also shared his dream of promoting talented youth by establishing a sports academy in Balochistan. Shahzaib Rind made history by winning the Karate Combat Championship (KC-49) in Singapore, where he defeated Brazil's Bruno Roberto De Assis in the final.

Ballon d'Or: Winner leaked ahead of official ceremony

The ceremony to crown the best player in the world is scheduled for October 28th

MONITORING DESK

MADRID: The winner of the 2024 Ballon d'Or has reportedly already been informed of his triumph, according to reports from Spain. The ceremony to crown the best player in the world is scheduled for

a season-ending injury. Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham was also considered a front-runner after a record-breaking debut season at the club. However, it is believed that one of his Real Madrid teammates is set to claim the honour. According to a report from Marca, via Football Espana, Brazilian forward

15th European triumph. Not only was it a successful season in terms of trophies for the winger, but his individual performance was equally impressive. Vinicius ended the 2023-24 campaign with 24 goals and 11 assists for his club. Since Lionel Messi's win in 2023, Vinicius has contributed 37 goal in-

clude only European talent, the award was expanded in 1995 to include players born outside Europe, provided they played for European clubs. This change allowed George Weah to become the first non-European to win the trophy. The winner is decided by 100 journalists from FIFA's top



October 28th with the Kopa Trophy and Yashin Trophy also to be presented on the same evening. Among the favourites for the prestigious individual award is Manchester City's Rodri, who was instrumental in leading Spain to their first international tournament win in over a decade last summer, before sustaining

Vinicius Jr has already been informed that he will secure his first Ballon d'Or title at the ceremony next month. The 24-year-old played a crucial role in Real Madrid's success last season, with Carlo Ancelotti guiding the team to a La Liga and Champions League double. Vinicius scoring the decisive goal in Madrid's record-extending

involvements in 38 games. If Vinicius is indeed crowned the best player in the world, he will be the first Brazilian to receive the award since Kaka, who won it in 2007 while playing for Real Madrid and AC Milan. Since its inception in 1956, the Ballon d'Or has recognised the very best in football. Initially intended to cele-

100-ranked nations. Each journalist selects their top five players from the 30-person shortlist, with each ranking earning a different points value. The top pick receives six points, the second earns four, and the remaining nominees receive diminishing points. The player with the highest total of points is declared the winner.

Rodri absence would be an ominous blow for Man City

LONDON: Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola is sweating on the next medical bulletin for midfielder Rodri as speculation mounts that the Spaniard faces a lengthy lay-off with a knee injury. Deep as the quality is within City's squad, some players are simply irreplaceable and silky defensive midfielder Rodri most definitely fits into that category. Since joining from Atletico Madrid in 2019, Rodri has played 174 Premier League games for City and has finished on the losing side only 19 times in that period, winning 129. Tellingly, however, City's chances of losing rise dramatically when he is not anchoring their midfield. City have lost seven of the 21 Premier League games in which he was absent, a 33% loss rate compared to 10.9% when he was playing. Last season, City lost three games in the first half of the season without Rodri - to Wolverhampton Wanderers, Arsenal and Aston Villa - but none after he returned from injury. Few players contribute across all areas of the pitch more than Rodri, according to the statistics. Since arriving in England, Rodri has completed more passes in the opposition's half than any other player with only Declan Rice above him in terms of winning back possession. Put simply, he is the master at winning the ball and then using it quickly to telling effect. It is a skillset that has made City the dominant force in England and helped Spain rule Europe again. Only once have a City or Spain national team including Rodri lost in the past 18 months - City's surprise FA Cup final defeat by Manchester United last season. No wonder the 28-year-old who scored a healthy 12 goals for club and country last season is being tipped for this year's Ballon d'Or and no wonder why Guardiola looked so fearful when his midfield general limped off in distress early in Sunday's 2-2 draw with title rivals Arsenal. APP

Khurram, Aamir declared fit ahead of England series

LAHORE: Fast bowler Khurram Shahzad has been declared fit and is available for selection ahead of Pakistan's upcoming Test series against England. Geo News reported on Tuesday citing sources. It is also reported that Aamir Jamal is being considered for selection after recovering from fitness issues. Jamal has regained full fitness and recently participated in two matches of the Champions One Day Cup. Shahzad, however, was rested during the tournament with the England series in mind, and his medical reports have been cleared. Jamal missed the series against Bangladesh due to fitness problems, having sustained an injury while playing county cricket. Shahzad also suffered an injury during the second Test against Bangladesh, but he has since fully recovered. -DNA

Sabalenka targets top ranking to cap off season

Sabalenka briefly took the number one spot last season but was overtaken by Poland's Swiatek and said she is focused on a strong showing in the Asian swing to give herself the best chance of reaching her goal

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: World number two Aryna Sabalenka will return to action for the first time since her U.S. Open triumph by playing in the China Open and the Belarusian said on Tuesday her sights were set on reclaiming the top ranking in the final weeks of the season. The 26-year-old lifted her third Grand Slam title this month after back-to-back Australian Open triumphs and will be the firm favourite for the Beijing crown in the absence of holder Iga Swiatek, who is missing the event due to personal reasons. Sabalenka briefly took



the number one spot last season but was overtaken by Poland's Swiatek and said she is focused on a strong showing in the Asian swing to give herself the best chance of reaching her goal. "Of course, that's one of my goals, to finish the season at world number one," Sabalenka told reporters. "I'm not trying to focus on that. I'm trying to focus on my game. There are three tournaments left. I'm trying to bring my best tennis on court. After the season, I'll see if it was enough to finish the year at world number one or I have to improve something else... To be called as best player in the

world, that means a lot." Sabalenka has already qualified for the season-ending WTA Finals along with Swiatek and is eager to head to the Nov. 2-9 event with plenty of wins under her belt. "It's important to do well here before the WTA Finals, to have these matches in your pocket before going to the Finals. I think between Wuhan and the Finals is a gap of three weeks," Sabalenka said. "It means if you're not reaching the last stages of the tournaments here, you have a really big gap in between, which isn't so good before the last tournament of the year." The Beijing tournament runs from Sept. 25-Oct. 6.

Constitutional court to be formed...

FROM PAGE 01
the parliament had replaced the judges' appointment procedure with a globally recognised law via 18th amendment. "In the United States, entire parliament decides on the appointment of judges that is why martial law is never imposed in the US," he added. Terming the ex-premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's death sentence a "judicial murder", Bilawal said that it was "necessary and also our compulsion" to establish a constitutional court so no other prime minister could be executed and justice would be served to the people. He came down hard on military rulers and said that her mother Benazir Bhutto had seen the military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq's era in which all political workers went through brutal torture. The politico recalled: "Shaheed Benazir knew that our system was broken. At that time, [former chief justice] Iftikhar Chaudhry was not a revolutionary but a PCO judge." "[...] nor there was any 'dam wala judge,'" Bilawal said while referring to ex-CJP Mian Saqib Nisar without naming him. He said that a decision was taken to form a constitutional court citing the need of the people to get justice "when courts were fixing the prices of pakora and tomatoes at that time".

Imran backs Justice...

FROM PAGE 01
He alleged that Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa has a hidden agenda and accused him of being part of the so-called 'London Plan', asserting that Isa's actions were politically motivated. The PTI chief further highlighted the exclusion of certain justices, including Ejaz ul Ahsan and Mazahir Naqvi, from key roles in the judiciary, claiming it was part of a broader effort to undermine his party. Imran stated that every legal petition filed by PTI has been ignored, and that the judiciary's actions reveal a clear bias. The former prime minister also reiterated his frustration with the lack of coverage on military appointments, pointing out that in other countries, such news would not make headlines. He argued that Pakistan has effectively become a "police state" under a regime harsher than those of past military dictatorships.

Aurangzeb hopeful of IMF review

FROM PAGE 01
from China, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. The delay was also speculated to be related to the government's failure to arrange for fresh funds to cover the external financing gap of \$2bn for the present fiscal year. "We are very hopeful that the board will approve the 37-month seven billion dollar programme under which we are very committed to doing structural reforms," Aurangzeb said during an interview with a private news channel. The finance minister noted that with the KIBOR and policy rates coming down, the government wanted to send "a very clear message" that it was not "desperate to borrow". "If we were to borrow domestically, we will borrow at our terms," he said, citing examples of the government rejecting bids for T-Bills and Pakistan Investment Bonds (PIBs). "Now, this is all on the back of the Fund programme and we successfully concluded the nine-month SBA," he stated.

Pakistan condemns Israel's... aggression against...

FROM PAGE 01
Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and stands in solidarity with the people of Lebanon and for their right to live in peace and security. We call upon the international community to take urgent steps to hold Israel to account for its alarming adventurism in the region and its acts of aggression and genocide.

Briefs

Putin calls for greater BRICS role in global energy markets

RIYADH: President Vladimir Putin called for a greater role for the BRICS bloc in global energy markets ahead of a significant annual energy forum this week in Russia. "It is obvious that in the new geopolitical realities, cooperation in the energy sector should serve to strengthen national economies, help solve priority social problems, and improve people's quality of life," he said. "It is crucial to agree on common principles for our countries in the just energy transition, and outline ways to strengthen the role of BRICS in the global energy dialogue." Russia is the world's largest oil exporter after Saudi Arabia. From Thursday Moscow is hosting the three-day Energy Week International Forum. Saudi delegates have attended previous forums, but it is not clear if they will do so this year. BRICS was founded in 2009 for Brazil, Russia, India and China to challenge a world order dominated by the US and Western allies. It has expanded into a geopolitical bloc that includes the UAE, Iran, Egypt, South Africa and Ethiopia. Saudi Arabia has an invitation to join, which it is considering.—APP

Diamond necklace valued at up to \$2.8mn heads to auction

LONDON: A rare diamond necklace with possible links to former French queen consort Marie Antoinette is to be auctioned in November with a price estimate of up to \$2.8 million. The 18th century jewel, weighing 300 carats, was made in the decade before the 1789 French Revolution and was last seen in public in 1973 before being sold into a private collection. Made up of three rows of diamonds with diamond tassels at each end, the piece went on public display for the first time in 50 years on Monday at Sotheby's London showrooms. "Diamonds were always repurposed and because the mines of Golconda in India went extinct at the end of the 18th century, most of the 18th century jewels, in order to keep with fashion, were broken up," Andres White Correal, Chairman and Head of the Royal and Noble Sales at Sotheby's for Europe and the Middle East, told Reuters. "So to have an 18th century jewel intact of this magnitude, size and the importance of the diamonds, is exceptionally rare."—APP

IMF says ready for talks with Sri Lanka's new leftist government

COLOMBO: The International Monetary Fund is ready to discuss its controversial \$2.9 billion bailout programme for Sri Lanka with the country's new government, a spokesman said. Anura Kumara Dissanayake, sworn in Monday as the country's first leftist president, has said he wants to renegotiate the deal, which has brought unpopular austerity measures. "We look forward to working together with President Dissanayake... towards building on the hard-won gains that have helped put Sri Lanka on a path to economic recovery," an IMF spokesperson in Washington said Monday, he lender of last resort noted that the South Asian nation, which defaulted on its debt in April 2022, had stabilised since the bailout. "We will discuss the timing of the third review of the IMF-supported programme with the new administration as soon as practicable," the spokesperson said referring to the periodic review of the bailout. A senior aide of the new president told AFP a day after the election that his People's Liberation Front party will "not tear up" the IMF deal.—DNA

Kamal vows for deepening collaborations with Belarus

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Tuesday reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to deepening its collaboration with Belarus across all sectors to further promote bilateral trade and economic relations between the two countries. Addressing the 7th Session of the Pakistan-Belarus Joint Ministerial Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, Kamal stated that Pakistan and Belarus have long shared a bond rooted in mutual respect, trust, and common interests, which has evolved into a more meaningful partnership. The minister emphasized that the Pakistan-Belarus Joint Ministerial Commission serves as a vital platform for reinforcing longstanding ties, adding that since the establishment of the Joint Ministerial Commission, the two countries have made significant progress in strengthening bilateral relations. Jam Kamal Khan further said that the Pakistan-Belarus trade volume during the last financial year (2023-24) was

recorded at \$34.88 million, with Pakistan exporting goods valued at \$0.39 million to Belarus and importing goods worth \$34.49 million from Belarus. He also stressed the need to prioritize expanding trade volumes by exploring new markets and diversifying their export portfolios, noting that the role of forums such as the Joint Business Council is critical. However, he acknowledged that considerable potential remains to be explored for enhancing bilateral investments in various sectors, including agriculture, health, trade, tourism, and cooperation in addressing the impacts of climate change. The minister highlighted the tremendous opportunities for cooperation in the industrial sector, noting that increased interaction between the investors of both countries—particularly through joint ventures in textiles and automotive manufacturing—would further enhance economic cooperation. Jam Kamal Khan announced that the 6th session of the Joint Business Council (JBC) will be organized later this year, which will facilitate the promotion of business-to-business

contacts and the development of bilateral trade and investment relations. "Our countries have a tremendous opportunity to share knowledge, technologies, and best practices to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability," he said, adding that Pakistan is keen to explore opportunities for technology transfer and the establishment of joint ventures in the industrial and agricultural sectors to produce machinery compatible with local needs in terms of size and adaptability. The minister pointed out that agricultural mechanization offers immense opportunities for collaboration, and Belarus's expertise in this field can significantly support Pakistan's efforts to modernize its agriculture sector. He mentioned that forums such as the Joint Working Group on Agriculture can help address these key goals by facilitating cooperation between Pakistan and Belarus in technology exchange, expertise sharing, and best practices. He emphasized that, in light of global challenges related to food security, cooperation in these fields has become

increasingly vital. The minister called upon Minsk Tractor, Minsk Automobile Plant, and other engineering companies to establish joint ventures with their counterparts in Pakistan, while also exploring the potential of small enterprises and joint entrepreneurial ventures through collaboration between the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority of Pakistan and the Belarusian Fund for Financial Support for Entrepreneurs. Jam Kamal Khan also invited Belarusian investors to explore the abundant trade and investment opportunities in Pakistan through the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). He explained that the SIFC has been established as a one-stop forum to streamline and facilitate foreign investment across key sectors, including agriculture, energy, technology, and infrastructure. With investor-friendly policies, incentives, and a commitment to easing the process of doing business, Pakistan offers a promising environment for Belarusian businesses seeking to expand and collaborate in joint ventures, he remarked.

In the meeting, the minister proposed greater collaboration in the fields of environmental sustainability, renewable energy, and clean technologies, stating that Pakistan and Belarus must work together to ensure the early finalization of the draft Memorandum on Cooperation in the field of Environmental Protection and the draft Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Emergency Situations. Addressing the forum, Belarusian Minister of Energy Aleksei Kushnarenko emphasized that the joint ministerial commission represents a potential game changer for the economies of both countries. He expressed his commitment to ensuring Belarus's cooperation with Pakistan across all sectors, highlighting the significance of this partnership. He suggested that the establishment of joint working groups would be a positive step forward, facilitating deeper collaboration and focused efforts on mutual interests. He commended Pakistan for its efforts in organizing the session of the Joint Ministerial Commission, noting that such initiatives are essential for strengthening bilateral ties.

Rupee gains 06 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 06 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.80 against the previous day's closing of Rs 277.86. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279 and Rs 280.7 respectively. The price of Euro increased by 91 paise to close at Rs 309.31 against the last day's closing of Rs 308.40, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.92, whereas an increase of Rs 2.49 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 371.01 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 368.52. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham decreased by 02 paise and closed at Rs 75.63 and the Saudi Riyal remained stagnant at Rs 74.04.—APP

Gold price ups by Rs1,100 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,100 and was sold at Rs.273,000 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs.271,900 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 943 to Rs. 234,053 from Rs.233,110 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 214,550 from Rs. 213,685, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs 2,950 and Rs 2,529.14, respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$11 to \$2,628 from \$2,617, the Association reported.—APP

Google, Volkswagen partner on smartphone AI assistant

SAN FRANCISCO: Alphabet's Google is providing key capabilities for an artificial intelligence assistant for Volkswagen drivers in a smartphone app, part of Google's strategy to win business by offering tools to build enterprise AI applications. Consumers can ask Volkswagen's in-app assistant questions like "How do I change a flat tire?" or point their phone cameras at vehicle dashboards to receive relevant information. The AI assistant draws on Google's Gemini large language models, programs that can understand and generate predictive responses to human language, and cloud computing capacity. The VW tool was designed by adding data such as Volkswagen owner's manuals and YouTube videos on vehicle maintenance to Gemini. Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian told Reuters that the product required overcoming technical hurdles to multimodality, the ability to process different data types such as text, images and videos. "The problem looks superficially simple, but it's technically very complex," Kurian said. "Most people think what we built is a speech-to-text translation system that then looks up a manual. Absolutely not." The AI assistant is free and available to about 120,000 owners of Volkswagen's Atlas and Atlas Cross Sport models. It will roll out by early next year to other cars from model year 2020 and later. Corporate adoption of generative AI could alter the lucrative cloud computing market, where Google places third in terms of market share behind Amazon and Microsoft. Most companies are still searching for applications that users will find practical. Cloud computing is a growing business segment for Google, accounting for \$33 billion of the firm's \$307 billion in overall revenue in 2023. AI solutions have driven billions in revenue this year, the company has said, though it declined to disclose more precise figures. Volkswagen declined to give details about usage for its AI assistant so far.—APP

Experts urge strategic investments in aerospace innovations

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, successfully concluded a seminar on the 'Air and Space Technologies: Harnessing the Innovation Economy.' This event convened distinguished experts from the defence, technology, and academic sectors to discuss strategies for leveraging space and technological advancements to prosper in an innovation-driven economic landscape in Pakistan. Air Vice Marshal Nasser Wyne (Retd), Director (Aerospace Warfare) at CASS, set the stage for the seminar sharing how the rise of air power in the Twentieth Century transitioned into aerospace power, incorporating space exploration, satellite technology, and autonomous systems. This shift, he stressed, presents strategic opportunities for nations to bypass traditional developmental barriers and

capitalise on cutting-edge innovations for both defence and economic growth. AVN Wyne further asserted that the innovation economy, fueled by the commercialisation of new technologies, was playing a crucial role in this transformation. In his Keynote Address on 'Future of Air and Space in National Defence and the Global Innovation Economy,' Air Marshal Zahid Mehmood (Retd), Former Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, highlighted the evolution of aerospace from a defence-centric industry to a key driver of economic growth and technological innovation. He pointed out that while the sector originated in military needs, it has since expanded to foster commercial aviation, space exploration, and private sector involvement. He asserted that technological advancements in areas like satellite deployment, AI, and space exploration are creating new markets and opportunities globally. To capitalise on these, he emphasised the need for

strategic investments and the development of skilled human capital, warning that countries that fail to adapt may fall behind. The Air Marshal also stressed the need for developing countries, like Pakistan, to harness aerospace innovations through strategic investments, technology transfer, and human capital development. He urged policymakers to foster public-private partnerships (PPPs) and invest in building capacity to secure their position in the rapidly evolving aerospace landscape. In his presentation on 'Space and Technology Nexus: Boosting National Security & Economic Prosperity,' Dr Najam Abbas Naqvi, Chairman National Centre for GIS and Space Applications, outlined how advancements in satellite technology, earth observation, and global navigation systems are providing innovative solutions for sectors like agriculture, urban planning, and disaster management. Dr Naqvi acknowledged the importance of building a skilled workforce

and fostering collaborative research between academia and industry to further leverage these technologies. He urged policymakers to incentivise private sector involvement through funding and tax benefits while advocating for the establishment of aerospace innovation clusters to drive research and commercialisation. Dr Naqvi stressed that leveraging PPPs would be essential in sharing risks and advancing large-scale space projects. He forecasted that with the right strategies in place, Pakistan could position itself to benefit from the growing global space economy, projected to be worth USD 1.8 trillion by 2035. In his address on 'Aerospace Evolution in Pakistan: Initiatives and Impacts,' Air Vice Marshal Dr Liaquat Ullah Iqbal, Director General Public Relations & Publications at the National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP), outlined the strategic vision behind PAF's flagship initiative.

Diamond necklace valued at up to \$2.8mn heads to auction

LONDON: A rare diamond necklace with possible links to former French queen consort Marie Antoinette is to be auctioned in November with a price estimate of up to \$2.8 million. The 18th century jewel, weighing 300 carats, was made in the decade before the 1789 French Revolution and was last seen in public in 1973 before being sold into a private collection. Made up of three rows of diamonds with diamond tassels at each end, the piece went on public display for the first time in 50 years on Monday at Sotheby's London showrooms. "Diamonds were always repurposed and because the mines of Golconda in India went extinct at the end of the 18th century, most of the 18th century jewels, in order to keep with fashion, were broken up," Andres White Correal, Chairman and Head of the Royal and Noble Sales at Sotheby's for Europe and the Middle East, told Reuters. "So to have an 18th century jewel intact of this magnitude, size and the importance of the diamonds, is exceptionally rare." It is thought some of its diamonds may have come from the infamous "Affair of the Diamond Necklace" piece that tarnished the reputation of Marie Antoinette, the unpopular last queen consort of France before the French Revolution. The necklace did belong to the Marquesses of Anglesey, an Anglo-Welsh aristocratic family, with members wearing it to the coronations of King George VI in 1937 and Queen Elizabeth in 1953. The necklace will be offered for sale at Sotheby's 'Royal & Noble Jewels' sale in Geneva on Nov. 11.—APP

KSE-100 sees selling pressure

MONITORING REPORT

Broad-based selling pressure was seen at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), as the benchmark KSE-100 Index was down over 650 points during the intra-day trading on Tuesday. However, by 1:15pm, the benchmark index had recovered slightly to hover around 81,422, still a decrease of 428.81 points or 0.53%. Across-the-board selling was witnessed in key sectors including automobile assemblers, cement, chemical, commercial banks, oil and gas exploration companies and OMCs. Index-heavy stocks including OGDC, PPL, SNGPL, PSO, MCB, NBP and MEBL traded in the red. Experts said investors have resorted to profit-taking after days of a bullish trend. Investors are also awaiting the release of funds from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as the IMF Executive Board is scheduled to take Pakistan's 37-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF) of about \$7 billion on its agenda on September 25. On Monday, PSX's benchmark KSE-100 Index witnessed some profit-taking and closed the day below 82,000 after losing 224 points to settle at 81,850.50. Globally, Asian stocks rose on Tuesday to their highest in more than two and half years, boosted by a slew of Chinese stimulus measures while expectations for more U.S. rate cuts kept risk sentiment aloft and the dollar under pressure. In an eagerly awaited press conference, China's top financial regulators unveiled a slate of measures, saying it would cut bank reserves by 50 basis points while reducing mortgage rates to try to spur sluggish economic growth. The moves sent Chinese stocks higher, with the blue-chip CSI300 Index opening 1% higher, while the broader Shanghai Composite index was also up 1% at the open.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy in road construction with the help of heavy machinery during development work near Faizabad.—APP

Bangladesh army chief pledges support for Yunus' interim government 'come what may'

DHAKA: Bangladesh's army chief vowed to back the country's interim government "come what may" to help it complete key reforms after the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, so that elections could be held within the next 18 months. General Wakeruz-Zaman and his troops stood aside in early August amid raging student-led protests against Hasina, sealing the fate of the veteran politician who resigned after 15 years in power and fled to neighboring India. In a rare media interview, Zaman told Reuters at his office in the capital Dhaka on Monday that the interim administration led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus had his full support and outlined a pathway to rid the military of political influence. "I will stand beside him. Come what may. So that he can accomplish his mission," Zaman, bespectacled and

dressed in military fatigues, said of Yunus. The pioneer of the global microcredit movement, Yunus has promised to carry out essential reforms to the judiciary, police and financial institutions, paving the way to hold a free and fair election in the country of 170 million people. Following the reforms, Zaman — who took over as the army chief only weeks before Hasina's ouster — said a transition to democracy should be made between a year and a year-and-a-half, but underlined the need for patience. "If you ask me, then I will say that should be the time frame by which we should enter into a democratic process," he said. Bangladesh's main two political parties, Hasina's Awami League and its bitter rival Bangladesh Nationalist Party, had both previously called for elections to be held within three months of the interim government taking of

office in August. Yunus, the interim administration's chief adviser, and the army chief meet every week and have "very good relations," with the military supporting the government's efforts to stabilize the country after a period of turmoil, said Zaman. "I'm sure that if we work together, there is no reason why we should fail," he said. More than 1,000 people were killed in violent clashes that began as a movement against public sector job quotas in July but escalated into a wider anti-government uprising — the bloodiest period in the country's independent history. Calm has returned to the teeming streets of Dhaka, a densely packed metropolis that was at the heart of the rebellion, but some parts of the civil service are not yet properly functional after the dramatic fall of Hasina's administration. With much of Bangladesh's police, num-

bering around 190,000 personnel, still in disarray, the army has stepped up to carry out law and order duties nationwide. Born out of erstwhile East Pakistan in 1971 after a bloody independence war, Bangladesh came under military rule in 1975, following the assassination of its first prime minister, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Hasina's father. In 1990, the country's military ruler Hossain Mohammad Ershad was toppled in a popular uprising, leading to the restoration of democracy. The military again staged a coup in 2007, backing a caretaker government that ruled until Hasina took power two years later. A career infantry officer who served through these periods of turmoil, Zaman said that the Bangladesh Army that he leads would not intervene politically. "I will not do anything which is detrimental to my organization," he said. "I am

a professional soldier. I would like to keep my army professional." In line with sweeping government reforms proposed since Hasina was ousted from power, the army, too, is looking into allegations of wrongdoing by its personnel and has already punished some soldiers, Zaman said, without providing further details. "If there is any serving member who is found guilty, of course I will take action," he said, adding that some military officials may have acted out of line while working at agencies directly controlled by the former prime minister or interior minister. The interim government has formed a five-member commission, headed by a former high court judge, to investigate reports of up to 600 people who may have been forcibly "disappeared" by Bangladesh's security forces since 2009. — Agencies

Briefs

War with Russia closer to end: Zelensky

NEW YORK: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said the war with Russia could end sooner than some people think. "I think that we are closer to peace than we think. We just have to be very strong, very strong," he said. Speaking to US broadcaster ABC News, Zelensky also said that the victory plan he would present to US President Joe Biden this week would require Ukraine's allies to "strengthen" the Ukrainian army. Zelensky said the plan was not about negotiating with Russia, but rather it was "a bridge to a diplomatic way out, to stop the war". He added that Ukraine could only push Russian President Vladimir Putin to end the conflict if Kyiv was coming from a "strong position". On Tuesday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia was being cautious about media reports of a Ukrainian plan and added that the conflict would only end when Russia's aims were achieved. Zelensky has long asked Western countries to allow Ukraine to ease restrictions on the use of long-range missiles which could be used to strike deep into Russia and he is expected to do so again this week as he visits the US. On Sunday, Biden said he had not yet decided whether to give Ukraine the green light. Zelensky said the US would need to lead the decision: "Everybody's looking up to [Biden], and we need this to defend ourselves," he told ABC. Zelensky will speak at the UN General Assembly on Wednesday and is also due to meet US presidential candidates Donald Trump and Kamala Harris. - Agencies

PTI plans to show strength in big cities

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) decided to hold rallies in the main cities of the country. According to sources, an important meeting of PTI leaders was held in which it was decided to hold meetings in major cities of the country. It is said that after Rawalpindi, rallies would be held in Mianwali, Karachi, Quetta, and Lahore. Sources in the party said that Imran Khan instructed the party officials to mobilise people for the protests, along with the rallies, there will be protests in various cities of the country to show solidarity with the judiciary. Also, the PTI formally submitted a request to hold a rally in Rawalpindi on September 28. The application was filed by PTI District President Chaudhry Ameer Afzal and District General Secretary, accompanied by a team of lawyers, at the Deputy Commissioner's office. The request stated that PTI is the largest political party in the country and that holding a peaceful rally was a constitutional and legal right of every political party. They assured that all regulations of the Deputy Commissioner would be followed and requested the issuance of a No Objection Certificate (NOC).

Karachi belongs to all communities: Aimal

NAZIR SYAL

KARACHI: Awami National Party (ANP) President and Senator Aimal Wali Khan has said Karachi holds central importance for Pakistan for both economically and culturally. Speaking to the media in the city, he said all communities in Karachi had equal rights. He criticised attempts to sideline any ethnic group, asserting that Karachi belonged equally to Muhajirs, Shindhis and Pashtuns. He also raised concerns over the transparency of elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding that manipulation occurred not only in Punjab and Sindh but across the country.

Japan Foundation's exhibition opens at Lahore Arts Council

In his opening remarks, Ambassador WADA expressed his great pleasure to be in Lahore, the cultural capital of Pakistan, to share the spiritual world of the Japanese people through the exhibition of Yokai

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: To introduce the fascinating and rich cultural heritage of Japan, the Japan Foundation's travelling exhibition "Yokai Parade: Supernatural Monsters from Japan" opens at the Lahore Arts Council Art Museum from September 23rd to October 3rd to unveil a unique glimpse into the rich and vibrant ancient Japanese folklore culture to the viewers in Pakistan. Yokai are Japanese folkloric imaginary monsters such as demons, ghosts that have captivated people's imaginations for centuries and has long been a part of Japanese folklore tales, embodying supernatural powers that invoke senses of mystery, surprise and fear. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, inaugurated the exhibition on Tuesday, September 24 in the presence of distinguished guests as well as the art and culture enthusiasts. The Japan Foundation and the Embassy of Japan in Pakistan has organized this exhibition in collaboration with the Lahore Arts Foundation Trust and the Lahore Arts Council. This remarkable exhibition, curated by Yumoto Koichi, (Director Emeritus of the Yumoto Koichi Memorial, JAPAN YOKAI MUSEUM), features 84 Yokai artworks and focuses on the "popularization" of these Yokai and invites the viewers to venture into and explore their profound world of mystery. The exhibition introduces the diverse and imaginative depictions of Yokai (Japanese folkloric imaginary monsters) throughout Japanese history, from traditional woodblock prints to contemporary interpretations through picture scrolls, multi-coloured Japanese woodblock print, books as well as a diverse range of media, including toys and films. In the past, Yokai invoked a sense of mystery, surprise and fear but



as technology developed, Yokai gradually evolved from objects of fear to charming and friendly beings and are found in present-day manga comics, movies, anime and character based games such as "Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba", Pokémon (pocket monster). In his opening remarks, Ambassador WADA expressed his great pleasure to be in Lahore, the cultural capital of Pakistan, to share the spiritual world of the Japanese people through the exhibition of Yokai. "In Pakistan, when people think of Japan, they often imagine automo-

biles, electrical products, and animation. Our objective in presenting this exhibition is to give visitors a glimpse of the distinctive sensibilities of the Japanese people through the unique exhibits" Said the Ambassador. While mentioning the cultural similarities between the two peoples, Ambassador WADA said that the existence of fairies and ghosts is also mentioned in Pakistani folklore as it is prevalent in Japanese society. He invited the Pakistani viewers to compare such supernatural beings in Pakistan and Japan through this

exhibition. The Ambassador expressed his belief that understanding the cultures which flow through each other's folklore will enhance mutual understanding between Pakistan and Japan. Ambassador WADA expressed his appreciation to Ms. Sara Rashid, Executive Director Lahore Arts Council and Ms. Saba Hussain, Chairwoman Lahore Arts Foundation Trust, for extending their collaboration in arranging this exhibition at the Lahore Arts Council, Alhambra. The exhibition is open till October 3rd, 2024 for public viewing.

Jl announces nationwide protests on Sept 29

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman announced a nationwide protest on Sept 29 against rising electricity costs and the Independent Power Producers (IPPs). Speaking at a press conference in Lahore on Tuesday, the JI leader highlighted that since 2000, IPPs have received Rs 2,000 to 2,400 billion annually, while salaried individuals are burdened with fuel price adjustments and TV taxes in electricity bills. In contrast, landlords and IPPs enjoy tax exemptions. He said that the current system cannot be overlooked, calling it a battle for 250 million people, not a personal gain. He also recalled the 13-day sit-in held in Rawalpindi, where the government agreed to demands in front of the nation but has since failed to fulfill its promise of conducting a forensic audit of IPPs. "Today is the 46th day," he said, reiterating the plan for mass protests on Sept 29. The Jamaat-e-Islami leader further mentioned that their membership campaign continues to gain momentum, and sit-ins are planned on major highways. He urged the government to refrain from actions that might disrupt democratic processes and vowed to escalate the "Give Rights to the People" movement into a new phase of resistance. He also noted support from traders and stated that a referendum will be held from October 23 to 27 to decide whether people should continue paying electricity bills.

Global condemnations pour in against Israeli aggression on Lebanon

China's Foreign Minister during a meeting with his Lebanese counterpart in New York on Tuesday voiced strong support for Lebanon

BEIRUT: Condemnations continue to pour in over the Israeli aggression against Lebanon that has claimed at least 558 lives so far, including 50 children, with many countries warning of its potential repercussions. Monday marked the deadliest day of violence over the past several decades in Lebanon and attacks continued on Tuesday as well, mostly targeting civilian areas in southern Lebanon. Russia issued a stern warning on Tuesday, stating that Israeli airstrikes in Lebanon could lead to significant destabilization in West Asia and escalate the ongoing conflict. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on a conference call that "this is an event that is potentially extremely dangerous when it comes to the expansion of the conflict, to the complete destabilization of the region." In a separate statement, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Russia calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities, adding that "It is urgent to stop the spiral of violence before the situation spirals completely out of control." "We must do everything possible to prevent West Asia from plunging into a full-scale armed conflict, the devastating consequences of which will inevitably affect everyone in the region and beyond," she said. "We are ready to coordinate with international and regional partners to prevent such a catastrophic scenario." China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, during a meeting with his Lebanese counterpart in New York on Tuesday voiced strong support for Lebanon and denounced what he described as "indiscriminate attacks against civilians." "No matter how the situation changes, we will always stand on the side of justice, on the side of our Arab brothers, including Lebanon," Wang told Abdallah Bou Habib. He emphasized the importance of monitoring regional developments, particularly the recent explosions of communications equipment in Lebanon, and reiterated China's firm opposition to attacks targeting civilians. "Armed force does not represent truth, and might only undermine peace," Wang added. Arab foreign ministers also issued a robust condemnation of Israel's increasing aggression against Lebanon, reaffirming their steadfast support for the Lebanese government and its citizens, during the annual Arab League Council meeting held on Monday alongside the 79th United Nations General Assembly. "We strongly condemn the Israeli regime's escalating aggression against Lebanon, particularly the recent assaults that commenced on Monday morning. We express our readiness to support Lebanon in the face of these attacks, while holding the Israeli regime accountable for this alarming escalation," the statement said. The Turkish Foreign Ministry in a statement warned that Israel's attacks on Lebanon threatened to push the West Asia region deeper into "chaos." "Israel's attacks on Lebanon mark a new phase in its efforts to drag the entire region into chaos," the statement said. - Agencies

Rift deepens between governor, CM Punjab over VC's appointments

Governor rejected thirteen summaries, Punjab government notified seven

STAFF REPORT



LAHORE: Tensions escalated between Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan and the provincial government over the issue of appointing vice-chancellors (VCs) of the universities in Punjab. Sources revealed that Governor Haider rejected all 13 summaries forwarded for the appointment of VCs, citing reasons for each rejection in a detailed response to the provincial government. This move follows the provincial government's recent appointment

of VCs at seven universities. The Punjab government justified that the mandatory 14-day review period was over. Governor House sources asserted that while the provincial government can propose three candidates for each vice-chancellor position, the final appointment authority lies with the governor, who is also chancellor of the varsities. They also pointed out that the 14-day period for six universities' summaries had not yet expired. The governor's office highlighted that no appointments would be made beyond merit. On the other hand, sources in the Chief Minister's office argued that the governor's role is merely ceremonial. The appointments made were legal. The discord comes just a day after the provincial government appointed vice-chancellors for prominent institutions, including Punjab University, University of Gujrat, and Bahauddin Zakariya University and some others.

No decision yet on Imran's military trial, AAG tells IHC

Khan's petition had come in the wake of statements by government high-ups including Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar that fuelled rumours of his military trial, over his alleged involvement in the May 9 riots

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: On the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) seeking clarification from the government over Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's possible military trial, Additional Attorney General (AAG) Munawar Iqbal Duggal on Tuesday apprised the court that no decision had so far been taken in this regard. Hearing the former prime minister's plea, the high court on September 16 ordered the Ministry of Defence to give a clear stance about his military court trial on the next hearing on September 24 (today), upon which the ministry had sought time. The PTI founder had petitioned against the military trials in the May 9 case that witnessed military installations being vandalised following his arrest in a graft case in 2023. Khan's petition had come in the wake of statements by government high-ups including Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar that fuelled rumours of his military trial, over his alleged involvement in the May 9 riots. It is pertinent to know that in July 2023, an anti-terrorism court in Lahore - in a four-page written verdict - had said that reasonable grounds existed to connect the PTI founder with the May 9 incidents. Meanwhile, the additional attorney general said if any decision about Khan's military trial was taken then legal procedure would be adopted for it. "If a decision about military trial is taken, the plea will be submitted to the civil magistrate first," he said. At this, IHC Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb disposed of the PTI founder's petition. Apart from the AAG, a representative of the Ministry of Defence was also present during the hearing. It is to be

noted that the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) led government had initiated military trials of those involved in targeting state and military installations in 2023's riots. The matter ended up in the Supreme Court which declared civilians' trials in military courts null and void in its October 23, 2023, verdict which was later suspended by the apex court in a 5:1 majority ruling in December. The majority order was announced on the intra-court appeals filed by the federal and provincial governments and the defence ministry against the top court's verdict. The December 13, 2023, verdict stated that military court trials would be conditioned on the apex court's final verdict on the intra-court pleas. During the hearing on September 16, Justice Aurangzeb had asked about the procedure of handing someone in military custody. "The Ministry of Defence has no information of military detention and trial till date," he had remarked, adding that nothing regarding the matter had been brought before the ministry. The additional attorney general had said: "If any request is made, action will still be taken according to the law." At this, Justice Aurangzeb had said he had nothing to proceed with in this case. The court had then sought the procedure of civilians' trial in military court from the defence ministry. The defence ministry's representative had said they have a "very clean procedure". "If a notice is issued to the PTI founder before the military trial, then the case will be wrapped up," Justice Aurangzeb had said, adding that the civil court would first frame the charge, according to the procedure. If the trial court said that the case was to be sent to the military court, then the notice should be issued first, he had added.

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