



Islamabad POST

Thursday, September 26, 2024

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Netanyahu a 'war criminal', Columbian President tells UNGA

Detailed News On Page-08

Abbasi urges CJP to retire after tenure

Detailed News On Page-08



Mbappe to miss 3 weeks due to injury

Detailed News On Page-06



Breather for economy

IMF okays \$7bn package for Pakistan

Pakistan and global lender reached an agreement on 37-month loan programme in July

DNA

WASHINGTON: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Wednesday approved a \$7 billion new bailout package after Pakistan promised to overhaul its agriculture income tax, transfer some fiscal responsibilities to provinces and had to take the most expensive loan in the nation's history. The Executive Board of the IMF approved the 37-month Extended Fund Facility totaling \$7 billion. It also authorised to immediately release the first loan tranche of nearly \$1.1 billion. It is the 25th IMF programme that Pakistan has obtained since 1958 and 6th EFF. The IMF board has approved the programme without addressing one of the root causes of taking these loans – the need for restructuring of the external and domestic debt that consumed 81% of Pakistan's tax revenues in the last fiscal year. The new bailout package targets achieving the macroeconomic stability by consolidating public finances, rebuild foreign exchange reserves, reduce fiscal risks from state-owned enterprises, and improving the business environment to encourage growth led by the private sector. To qualify for the programme, the government imposed Rs1.4 trillion to Rs1.8 trillion in additional taxes, increased electricity prices up to 51% and committed to bring transparency in the affairs of the Sovereign Wealth Fund. The government also took Pakistan's

Continued on Page 06

PM meets Guterres, Yunus among others on sidelines of UNGA

Premier discusses Pakistan's potential role in UN Security Council, reaffirming commitment to global peace, stability

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif engaged in a series of high-level meetings with global leaders on the sidelines of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Wednesday. Among them were Bangladesh Chief Executive Dr Muhammad Yunus, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Emir of Kuwait, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. The discussions focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation, addressing regional conflicts, and reaffirming Pakistan's role in global peace and security. At the invitation of Dr Yunus, PM Shehbaz attended a ceremony commemorating Bangladesh's 50th year as a member of the United Nations. Both leaders engaged in a positive discussion about expanding bilateral cooperation across various fields, aiming to strengthen

Continued on Page 06



NEW YORK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets with Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of 79th session of United Nations General Assembly. – DNA

Pakistani citizens urged to leave Lebanon

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has issued an urgent travel advisory for its citizens in light of recent attacks in Lebanon, urging Pakistani nationals to avoid traveling to the country until further notice. For Pakistanis currently residing in Lebanon, the advisory recommends immediate departure via commercial flights, which are still operational. Those unable to leave due to unavoidable circumstances are advised to take precautionary measures, relocate to safer areas, and maintain constant contact with the Embassy of Pakistan in Beirut. The advisory emphasizes the importance of exercising extreme caution and staying updated on the security situation as tensions in the region escalate.

ECP divided over SC verdict

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) remains divided over the implementation of Supreme Court (SC) order regarding reserved seats. According to sources, two ECP members support the SC's decision, citing no alternative but compliance. However, the chief election commissioner and three other members favour a 'wait and see' approach. Despite holding its seventh meeting, the commission has yet to reach a final decision. It has been suggested to delay action until the legal team's review petition is resolved. The matter will be discussed again in a meeting scheduled for Thursday.

Backs Justice Shah as CJP

Govt pressuring judges to cover up rigging: Imran

Purpose of forming constitutional court is to end power of chief justice

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) jailed founder Imran Khan has said his party is completely backing Supreme Court's Justice Mansoor Ali Shah to become the country's next top judge. "The appointment of the next chief justice should be announced soon. [We] completely back Justice Mansoor Ali Shah," the former prime minister said while speaking to journalists informally in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail on Wednesday. Khan, who was removed from power via a parliamentary vote in April 2022, said that the purpose of the "constitutional court is to end the power" of the Supreme Court's chief justice, adding that the "government is bent on destroying the judiciary". "They want their own judges to cover

Continued on Page 06

Court reserves verdict on future of Toshakhana vehicles case

NAB prosecutor requests court to refer Nawaz's case back to watchdog, maintain stay to extent of President Zardari

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court in Islamabad on Wednesday reserved the verdict on whether to refer the Toshakhana reference against President Asif Ali Zardari, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and Senate Chairman

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Justice Shah calls for dialogue

Shah distributes certificates at the workshop's conclusion

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Justice Mansoor Ali Shah of the Supreme Court has emphasized the importance of dialogue in strengthening institutions, urging district and sessions judges to promote a culture of communication, sharing, and care. Speaking at a two-day workshop, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah reiterated that mediation is crucial for resolving disputes. He said that without mediation, the judiciary could not effectively handle the backlog of 2.4 million cases. "Pakistan is a litigation-heavy society, with the number of pending cases growing every day."

US envoy visits Data Darbar

Laid flower bouquet at the shrine

DNA

LAHORE: US Ambassador Donald Blome and Consul General Lahore Kristin Hawkins visited shrine of Data Darbar in Lahore on Wednesday. Director General Religious Affairs Auqaf Khalid Mehmood Sindhu along with Administrator Data Darbar Shahid Virk and Manager Sheikh Jameel welcomed them. They laid flower bouquet at the shrine and showed special interest in the development works of Data Darbar. Director General Religious Affairs briefed the guests on the development works at Darbar Sharif. The Director General of Religious Affairs presented a commemorative shield to the US ambassador and gifted books to the guests.

Amid uproar over amendment

Irfan: Judiciary never opposed martial Law

'Reserved seats verdict has raised many questions, made situation so complex that it seems impossible to resolve'

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Irfan Siddiqui has criticised the judiciary for failing to stand against martial law, while a heated debate surrounds a recent constitutional amendment. Speaking at a press conference in Islamabad on Wednesday, Siddiqui questioned the legal basis of recent court decisions, particularly in relation to reserved seats and party defections. "No member in the case of reserved seats said they wanted to change parties. Under what law can the judiciary tell someone to join another party?" Siddiqui asked, adding, "The judiciary has never stood up against martial law, and now there's an uproar over parliament's constitutional amendment." He expressed concerns over a

Continued on Page 06



IHC questions ISPR's right to approve defence analysts

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court's Justice Babar Sattar has grilled the federal government on how the military's media wing was assuming the "exclusive right" to decide who qualifies as a defence analyst, it emerged on Wednesday. The development came to light on Tuesday when the IHC issued an order about a case that challenged Pemra's directives mandating retired officers to seek permission from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) before appearing on television. In April 2019, Pemra instructed all

Continued on Page 06

Political chaos in Pakistan, Chinese envoy tells Nawaz

PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif along with CM Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif Meets Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan during his meeting with her and Nawaz Sharif said that there is political chaos in Pakistan. She expressed these views while talking to a public rally in Faisalabad. Earlier, Pakistan Muslim League (N) President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif along with Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif met Ambassador of the People's Republic of China H.E. Jiang Zaidong to review possibilities of promoting ties in technology, business and investment. PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said on the occasion that "China is our reliable friend and we are proud of our relationship with this great nation." He shared that Maryam Nawaz Sharif is leading many welfare projects for the people of Punjab and further stated that Punjab will welcome China's cooperation in infrastructure and technology. Madam Chief Minister said, "Together with China, we can create economic miracles." She added, "We are always ready to welcome our Chinese friends in Punjab." The Chief Minister proposed to establish "Special Chinese Economic Zones" committed to provide

Continued on Page 06

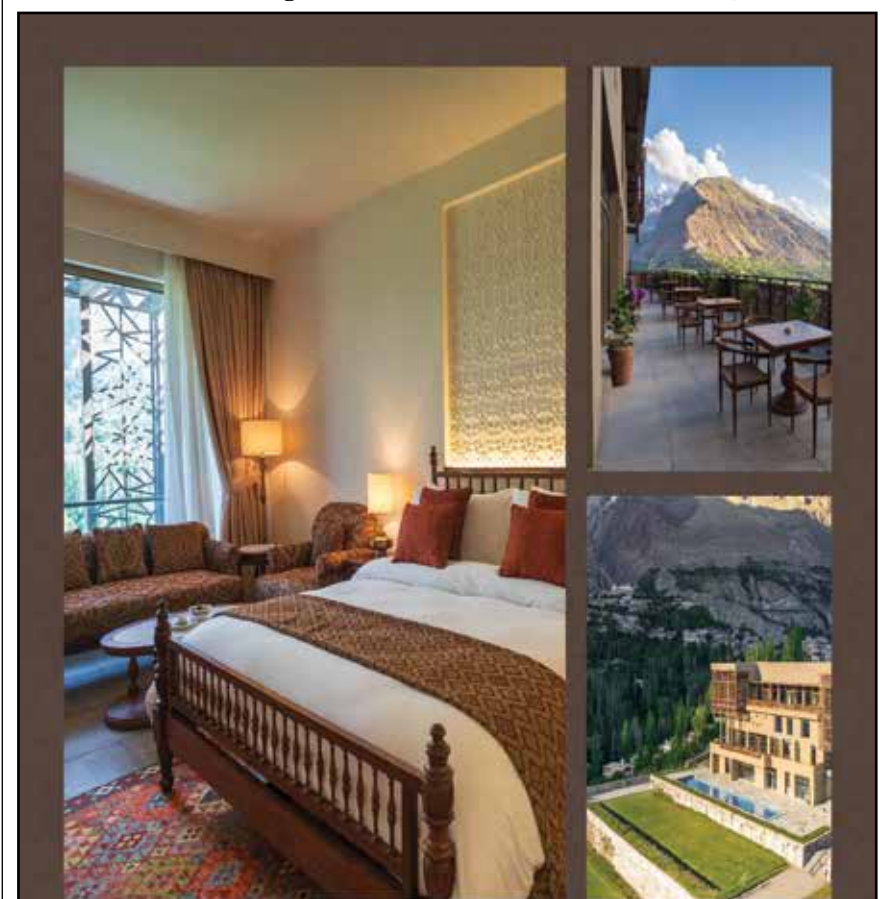
Pakistan desirous of long-term partnership with Russia: Gilani

The Chairman Senate said Pakistan highly values its bilateral relations with Russia

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani says Pakistan is desirous of forging a long-term, multidimensional partnership with Russia particularly in the fields of energy, defence, food and people to people contacts. He was talking to Russian Ambassador Albert Khorev, who called on him in Islamabad on Wednesday. The Chairman Senate said Pakistan

Continued on Page 06



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Romina for youth role in combating climate change

DNA

LAHORE: Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Romina Khursid Alam has stressed the importance of youth engagement in addressing climate change, as it was crucial for survival of the future generations. Addressing a programme at Aiwan-e-Iqbal regarding the Conference of the Parties (COP) simulation here on Wednesday, she also called for active youth involvement to foster a proactive approach to environmental stewardship in Pakistan. She underscored the significance of building a strong narrative around climate preservation to effectively tackle the challenges posed by environmental degradation. "The participation of our youth is not just beneficial; it is crucial," she said, advocating for collective efforts to raise awareness among young people

regarding climate needs. The PM coordinator expressed gratitude to the media for their pivotal role in bringing attention to climate issues, noting the presence of representatives from major TV channels at the event as a testament to the urgency of the matter. Alam pointed out that Pakistan ranks fifth among the countries most vulnerable to climate change, underscoring the necessity for practical and impactful measures to combat environmental challenges. Referring to the students as the "future of Pakistan," she expressed optimism about the nation's potential. She explained that the Conference of the Parties serves as an international platform for discussing and adopting action plans to address climate change, and that COP simulations were being organised nationwide to engage youth. The PM coordinator called for collaborative efforts among all stakeholders to navigate the country through its current

challenges, striving for development and prosperity. In response to a query, she affirmed that the government is actively working to raise awareness among students in various educational institutions about their responsibilities toward climate action. She said coordination was also underway with all provinces for better and effective results. At the conclusion of the event, certificates were awarded to outstanding student participants, including Muhammad Hadid Ali, Minahil Chaudhry, Noshir Bilal, Muhammad Rehan, and Muhammad Numan, recognizing their contributions and achievements. The event also featured participation from notable figures, including Tahir Shehbaz, Focal Person for the Prime Minister's Youth Program, Sabiha Shaheen, Executive Director of Bargat, and Raza Qazi from Save the Children, along with students from various schools.



LAHORE: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, took a ride on the Lahore OrangeLine together with local people! A total number of 200 million passengers have rode the Line since its inauguration, a milestone truly reflecting how CPEC benefits Pakistani people.—DNA

82 new cases of dengue reported

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab Health Department confirmed on Wednesday that 82 new cases of Dengue were recorded across the province in the last 24 hours. Among the total cases, 69 cases are just reported in Rawalpindi only. While 04 cases were reported from Lahore and 2 from Chakwal. One each case of dengue was reported from Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Bahawalpur, Mianwali, Mandi Bahauddin, Sargodha and Sahiwal. Over the past week, 459 new cases of dengue virus infections were identified, bringing the total number of cases in Punjab in 2024 to 1245. A spokesperson for the Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department reassured the public that the department has made all necessary arrangements for dengue prevention, with government hospitals well-stocked with necessary medicines, including treatments for Dengue. In response to the rising number of cases, the Health Department has issued an advisory urging the public to maintain clean and dry surroundings to help prevent the spread of the virus. They emphasized the importance of citizen cooperation with health teams actively working to control the outbreak. Additionally, the department has provided a free helpline (1033) for those seeking treatment, information, or wishing to register complaints related to Dengue. Health officials stressed that vigilance and proactive measures were crucial in containing the virus's spread across the province.

PHA starts planting winter flowers

LAHORE: Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) has started planting a variety of decorative flowers for coming winter season, Director General Muhammad Tahir Wattoo said here on Wednesday. According to DG Tahir Wattoo, PHA staff have started planting marigold and French marigold saplings along greenbelts this week. The roads where these flowers had been planted include Gulberg Main Boulevard, Canal Road, Jail Road, Doctor's Hospital, Gulberg Main Market, Ali Zeb Road, and Sabzazar Main Boule-

vard. He said marigolds were prized for their bright blooms, low maintenance, and easy cultivation, adding they were admired for their beauty, cultural value, and use in pest control. Among the three main types, French marigolds were compact, growing 6-12 inches tall, and feature single or double flowers, he added. Marigolds also play a significant role in Hindu rituals, used in various forms to honor deities. Their saffron and orange hues symbolize renunciation and are offered as a mark of respect and

surrender. Garlands made of marigolds are commonly used to show reverence to gods and goddesses. Wattoo further announced that the PHA had also cultivated Indian Dahlia seedlings in its Murree nursery. This week, the seedlings will be transferred to 12- and 14-inch pots. Once fully grown, they will be showcased at PHA's annual floral exhibition, he added. He added that the PHA is committed to transforming Lahore into a true city of gardens and flowers, he added.—APP

Protests erupt in Muzaffarabad against forced elections in IIOJK

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Thousands of people took to the streets in Muzaffarabad today to protest against the second phase of forced elections in occupied Kashmir. According to Kashmir Media Service, the protests, organized by Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir, were attended by a large number of citizens, migrants, and leaders from various political and religious parties. Protesters waved black flags and carried banners reading "We want freedom, not elections" and "No elections, only referendum". They chanted slogans against Indian military occupation, demanding freedom and self-determination. Leaders like Aziz Ahmed Ghazali, Showkat Meer, and Mushatq Islam addressed the protesters, terming the elections a "farce" and a "ploy" by the Indian government to hoodwink the international community. They emphasized that no elections could replace the right to self-determination and freedom. The protesters marched towards the UN observer office, demanding international intervention to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

KP govt forms committee to probe Swat blast on police van

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has set up a high-level investigation committee to find out the facts of the bomb blast incident near a police mobile on Malam Jabba Road in Swat on September 22. The committee comprising of Special Secretary Zubair Khan and Additional IG Alam Shinwari, would submit its report regarding the blast within seven days to the Home department. It is pertinent to mention here that a policeman embraced martyrdom in the blast while three others sustained critical injuries. The police van was leading a convoy of ambassadors of more than 10 countries to Malam Jabba. All the dignitaries remained unhurt in the blast and were safely taken back to Islamabad soon after the blast.—APP

Railways reunite 626 vulnerable children with heirs during eight months

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways Police have rescued and reunited as many as 626 vulnerable children with their legal heirs and different welfare institutions during the last eight months with the help of train staffers. "During the operation, the Railways Police have retrieved and returned around 2,000 lost luggages valued Rs 19.2 million to the passengers," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. Additionally, the official said that around 13,360 handicapped, injured and old passengers were provided with first aid, wheelchairs, and stretcher facilities during their journey in trains.

Giving details of division wise, he said that Rawalpindi division reunited 146, Lahore 149, Karachi 128, Sukkur 67, Peshawar 66, Multan 57 and Quetta division 13 runaway children to their parents and different welfare institutions. The official said that most of the children were found unaccompanied and loitering at stations after they left their house following a fight or getting scolded or in search of better life. Similarly, he said that Rawalpindi division assisted 2,906 passengers, Lahore 2,315, Karachi 6,030, Peshawar 973, Sukkur 386, Multan 421 and Quetta 330 in retrieving lost luggage.

"The valuables that were returned to the passengers included laptops, smartphones, gold and artificial jewelry, ladies and gents' handbags and local or international currencies," he added. He said the Railways Police Help Desks had been established at all the major railway stations across the country, and the performance of the Railways Police has been quite satisfactory during the last year. "Police are performing duties efficiently despite the limited resources while steps would be taken to further improve their performance to the optimum level during the next year," he added.—APP

Training course on 'Leveraging AI

ISLAMABAD: The Inter-Islamic Network on Space Sciences and Technology (ISNET) in collaboration with Inter Islamic Network on Information Technology (INIT) is organizing a distance-training course on "Leveraging AI for Precision Agriculture" from October 28-30. According to an official of ISNET, the course will offer a comprehensive examination of the synergy between Artificial Intelligence, aerial mapping, and agricultural methodologies. Through a blend of theoretical fundamentals and practical applications, participants will delve into the challenges, opportunities, and future directions for agricultural advancement. The topics to be covered during the course include techniques for aerial data acquisition followed by the implementation of AI algorithms for crop's health monitoring, yield estimation, and stress analysis. Through case studies and real-world examples, participants will gain insights into optimizing agricultural systems for enhanced efficiency and sustainability. The intending participants can register through <https://forms.gle/eWuP8KQicgMi4g3u9> till the deadline October 21. The further details of the course are available through www.isnet.org.pk. ISNET and INIT, two key organizations working under the ambit of COMSTECH, have a long history of promoting science, technology, and information dissemination across OIC member states. ISNET has been instrumental in advancing space sciences and technologies, while INIT has focused on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), both working to foster cooperation and development within the Muslim world.—APP

Skilled female workers oriented about digital financial inclusion initiative

PESHAWAR: Kraftrs, a tech based organization working with skilled workers organized an enterprise development need assessment session with qualified females of different courses at Government Technical Teacher Training College (GTTTC), Hayatabad, Center of Excellence. During the session, orientation was given by its CEO, Zahid Ali Shah on enterprise development, product value chain, unique selling point of products and services. Panel discussion was also held on paradigm shift in methodology of business establishment and promotion, Kraftrs app based project initiative and onboarding mechanism and digital financial inclusion. Tips were also imparted on process for establishment of "My Shop" on the app based platform for promoting and selling products and services. A total of 22 females participated in the need assessment session along with the honorable Principal GTTTC, Dr. Hazrat Hussain who gave valuable inputs. Meanwhile, Kraftrs Home Based Workers Development Project team also visited Mardan to engage community based women cluster facilitated by Honey Future Innovative Foundation. The event engaged 30 women community members from different areas of village Chantar in Mardan district. After sharing background of Kraftrs and its working methodology, orientation was given on engagement mechanism with home based skilled workers. Interaction was also held on the launch of App based initiative, sample selection methodology, sample development for future orders and skill evaluation of the master trainer and the trained females. The participants of both the sessions thanked Kraftrs team for imparting such a valuable and latest skills and mechanism for home based business establishment and promotion. Speaking on the occasion, CEO Kraftrs, Syed Zahid Ali Shah informed attendants of the sessions that Kraftrs is an e-commerce platform working since 2017 with the aim of reviving and sustaining craft tradition and to empower artisans to live a life of respect. The beneficiary artisans can use the platform of Kraftrs by displaying their products online for sale, link up with institutions involved in SME sector value chain and connect with business houses engaged with raw material supply. e also apprised them about the micro-financing loans being extended to female home based workers registered for Jazz Cash account by Kraftrs with the collaboration of Jazz Cash.

Kurram clashes claim 21 lives, injure 30 in five days

DNA

PESHAWAR: Clashes between rival tribes in different areas of Kurram district entered its fifth day on Wednesday as according to a police report at least 21 people have died and 30 others injured so far. Heavy and light arms were used by the tribesmen involved in the ongoing conflict that started after construction of trenches by the rival tribes in villages Bosherra and Ahmadzai. Police informed that the firing took place over construction on a disputed land, which intensified in exchange of heavy fire in the Balishkkel area. The clashes resulted in losses from both sides. The rival tribes

engaged in heavy firing and shelling in Balashkkel, Khaar Kali, Trimanal, Baghki, Maqbal and Kanj Alizai. Hospital sources said eight more people succumbed to their injuries the other day while 30 more were under treatment. However, independent sources said the death toll was higher as some of the areas were inaccessible for evaluating life loss. Meanwhile, a bazaar in Sadda market, Kurram that belonged to one of the tribes involved in the conflict was blown up and fortunately, no casualty happened in this incident. Residents of the Bhagan tribe reportedly blocked the main Parachinar-Peshawar artery, creating troubles for commuters. Police said a grand jirga was sched-

uled for 10:00 a.m. today as the Commissioner Kohat and RPO have also reached Parachinar to persuade the rival groups for ceasefire. Elders of Turi-Bangash tribes were also attending the jirga. The clashes over land disputes have been a longstanding issue in the region, often resulting in loss of lives and disruptions to daily life. Local elders and political figures have also urged for a peaceful resolution to the conflicts and stressed the need for restoration of lasting peace in the region. The Home & Tribal Affairs Department, on directive of the chief minister, wrote a letter to the Kohat commissioner and regional police officer, seeking resolution of the crisis. The department

mentioned that it had been about a year since the issues of law and order were taking place and they were not being resolved permanently in the district. "The issues are being settled temporarily through actions of jirgas and institutes," it said, directing a grand jirga to peacefully resolve the strife. The letter said that tribal elders, members of the national and provincial assemblies as well as representatives of the local government should be invited in the jirga. After convening the jirga, the warring parties' demands should be submitted to the government. Proposals should also be made to the provincial government regarding the conflicts' permanent resolution, it added.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

SEPTEMBER

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

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Ahsan vows to eliminate terrorism as PML-N did in past

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday demonstrated great commitment to purging the country of extremist and terrorist elements, as the PML-N government had successfully done in the past. "As a result of a lack of continuity in policies, we saw the reemergence of these networks [of terrorism]. . . The policy [during the PTI tenure] adopted of taking back some elements from Afghanistan has again posed a challenge, but now the PML-N government is determined to fight, defeat and eliminate them like we did before," he said. The minister expressed these views while speaking at the inaugural session of a daylong international conference on 'Countering Terrorism in Pakistan: Progress and the Path Forward,' organized by Bahria University in collaboration with the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) here. Addressing the conference participants, the minister said the fight against terrorism was far from over, as several key challenges continued to impede the national path to peace and stability. "Terrorism is no longer confined to insurgencies or large

militant groups. The rise of lone wolf attacks, along with cyber radicalization and the use of social media for extremist recruitment, have transformed the landscape," he said. Ahsan Iqbal said a recent report showed that 80 percent of terrorist organizations now use digital platforms to recruit, communicate and radicalize individuals. "This presents a new front in the fight against terrorism, requiring us to invest in cybersecurity and digital literacy." In a message to the youth, the minister advised them to become aware of the potential dangers of the present times, specifically 'misinformation.' He mentioned that the World Economic Forum (WEF) had recently declared 'misinformation' the biggest risk the world was confronting in the modern era of digitalization. He described fake news and misinformation as 'a new weapon' for destabilization, creating chaos and fanning extremist ideologies in society, adding, "We have to guard against misinformation." The minister emphasized that not everything that appeared on social media could be taken as truth and that youth must develop the cognitive ability to verify the authenticity of the information they receive. "Now, data analytics with social media have become a very lethal weapon. You can be manip-

ulated without knowing who is manipulating you and in which direction." He said any message that fostered hate must be rejected, as it was the starting point of extremism that could lead to terrorism. "This goes full cycle." Recalling a conference on terrorism he attended in France, the minister shared that a German professor viewed humans as the best forms of creation saying, "If two viruses, i.e., hate and prejudice, are injected into the human computers, the human mind loses its rationality and turns individuals into beasts that see the world through the lens of their own bias." Ahsan Iqbal said if minds become tinted with hate and prejudice, individuals began to see the world colored through the prism of their own biases, emphasizing, "So it is very important that if we are to maintain our rationality and sobriety, we must not let these viruses enter our minds." The minister noted that military and law enforcement actions remained crucial, but alone were insufficient on their own. He stressed the need to go beyond the battlefield to counter terrorism by addressing the root causes of extremism, building societal resilience, and preventing future radicalization. "As outlined in the national internal security policy, the battle against extremism and terrorism must

be fought in the ideological domain. We need to invest in curriculum reforms that promote critical thinking, tolerance, and pluralism," he added. He also emphasized the importance of recognizing community-based counter-terrorism strategies, adding, "Local communities and religious leaders must be empowered to counter radicalization at the grassroots level. The use of mosques, schools and media to promote messages of peace, tolerance and national unity is critical." He mentioned that programs like Paigham-e-Pakistan serve as powerful tools in this regard, providing a platform for Islamic scholars to condemn extremism and terrorism. The minister suggested measures for the rehabilitation and reintegration of 'former extremists,' advocating for their transformation into useful members of society through vocational training after psychological counseling. He also called for strengthening cybersecurity infrastructure and training law enforcement personnel to counter cyber radicalization using modern techniques. "Public-private partnerships with tech companies are essential for monitoring and removing extremist content from digital platforms while ensuring that legal frameworks keep pace with emerging cyber threats," he remarked.

Dengue update, 77 new cases, surveillance continues

RAWALPINDI: Dengue patients reported since January 2024 reach 850, after 77 new cases have been reported during last 24 hours in Rawalpindi. District Health Authority Rawalpindi on Wednesday released the update dengue statistics which shows a total of 144 patients are under treatment in the allied hospitals. According to the report, 34 patients were reported from Pothohar Town, 15 from RCB areas and 10 from Municipal Corporation areas during last 24 hours. Five cases were reported from Pothohar Town (rural) areas, 4 from Gujarkhan and 2 positive cases were reported each from Taxila and Kalar Syedan areas. The health department is focussing on Chak Jalal Din in Pothohar Town (peri urban) where consistent dengue inclination has been observed. Talking to APP, a group of residents from Chak Jalal Din appreciated the efforts being rendered by the health officials deployed in the area. They pointed out the water supply system could be one reason for dengue rise as underground water was not available in most of the parts of Chak Jalal Din. "It is possible that permanently stagnated water inside water bouser carry dengue larva while supplying water to households", said Akram, a resident of the affected area. Another resident expressed concerns over non compliance of the dengue SOPs by the population, and said that people were more interested to consult with physicians available near by in stead of getting examined in allied hospitals, if symptoms appeared in them. Jaffer, another citizen highlighted that Chak Jalal Din, being a high water deficient area was still facing with poor cleanliness and lower hygiene conditions.—APP

FDE holds English speech competition at IMCG G-10/2



Prize winners of English speech competition Organised by Federal Directorate of Education pose for group photo with chief guest Principal Prof Shuguftha Rauf held at Model college for girls G10/2 on Wednesday—DNA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Directorate of Education hold secondary school level English speech competition among boys and girls colleges of Federal capital at Islamabad model college for girls G10-2. The title

was "Be the part of process of change". Students of 22 colleges of federal capital participated in this event. Principal Prof Shuguftha grace the occasion as chief guest while judges were Ifat Nazir and Fatkhanda Mumtaz. All the students spoke related to the assigned topic. They

expressed their views that change is inevitable and said that we can see that every significant advancement in our world was born from the courage to embrace change. We need to take initiative. Change begins with action, no matter how small this could mean volunteering for a project

at work starting a conversation about a social issue in our community or even making a personal commitment to develop new skills. Every step, no matter how modest. Adds momentum to the overall process of change. We should embrace collaboration. Change is rarely a solitary journey. By working together, we harness the diverse strengths and insights of those around us. Being part of the process of change is not just about external actions. It's also about internal transformation. We must be willing to reflect on our own biases and habits. True change starts from within. As we evolve personally, we become more effective agents of change in our communities and the world. They added According to the judges panel Sanabil Almas i9/1 and Wajeeha Mukhtar ICG F6/2 got first prize, Hina noor I10/4 stood second while Maheen Hussain F11/1 secure third position in competition.

Constitutional Courts essential to address existing legal challenges

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Central Information Secretary Shazia Marri Wednesday said that establishing Federal Constitutional Court would effectively address the existing legal and judicial challenges in the country. Addressing a press conference along with Senator Palwasha Khan, she said that formation of Federal Constitutional Court is mandatory and PPP has very clear stance on the issue. Shazia Marri said that Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has been advocating for the establishment of a Federal Constitutional Court for quite some time and recently, the PPP has raised this demand of establishing Constitutional Courts with full force. She urged the government to consult with all the stakeholders on the proposed constitutional package. "The PPP has been presenting its stance with conviction and has come to know about the ongoing constitutional amendments," she said. Shazia Marri said the idea of a Constitutional Court has been mentioned in the Charter of Democracy (CoD) and it has been part of the PPP's manifesto since 2007. She stressed the necessity of a Federal Constitutional Court to ensure swift, speedy and fair justice. "The PPP workers sought justice for Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto after a wait of 45 years." She criticized the current judicial system is often preoccupied with political and constitutional cases, which leaves little room for addressing the grievances of the general public. Shazia Marri said the justice system in the provinces is also crumbling, and proposed that a constitutional court should be established in every province. "Each province should have representation in the Federal Constitutional Court," she added. Criticizing the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying, "There is a party that has 'justice' in its name but is running away from it. They only want justice for one person, whereas the PPP seeks justice for the common man." Shazia Marri called for a collective effort to provide relief to the public and stressed that lawmaking is the prerogative of the Parliament, as enshrined in the Constitution.—DNA

Experts call for active role in countering extremism

ISLAMABAD: In a seminar titled "Peace Begins with Us: Youth as a Real Source of Change," experts emphasized the critical role of young people in promoting peace and countering extremism. The event, held at the female campus of the International Islamic University (IIU) in collaboration with the Department of Psychology and the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), brought together academics and experts to discuss strategies for empowering the younger generation in peacebuilding. The seminar's chief guest, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at IIU, Prof. Dr. Zafar Iqbal, highlighted the need to foster a constructive mindset among youth to combat extremism. "Youth must be nurtured to adopt positive attitudes, and collective efforts are essential to bring about change," Dr. Iqbal stated. He stressed that youth empowerment is crucial to shaping the country's future and called on academia to play a vital role in educating young minds through research and practical peacebuilding activities.—APP

CUI marks Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival

ISLAMABAD: The Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival was celebrated at COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) on late Tuesday through arranging a number of activities, showcasing the vibrant cultural traditions of China. The Mid-Autumn Festival, coinciding with China's 75th anniversary, was aimed at fostering cultural exchange between Pakistan and China, with activities reflecting both countries' rich cultural heritage. The celebration began with the inauguration of the Pak-China Art and Cultural Exhibits, displaying a stunning array of artwork and cultural symbols that highlighted the deep connection

between both nations. Following the inauguration, participants were treated to performances representing the rich cultural traditions of China, including instrumental performances and various presentations on cultural values. The Chief Representative of PowerChina in Pakistan, Mr. Yu Chao, as a chief guest, delivered remarks, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to participate in an event symbolizing harmony and friendship. He also highlighted the immense contribution of PowerChina to strengthen the energy sector of Pakistan. Recalling the cherished memories in Pakistan, he

said that he had spend a long period of his career in this country and received love and respect from its people. He said relationship between Pakistan and China is not only limited to the state level but at the level of common people. Prof. Dr. Sohail Asghar, Incharge of COMSATS Islamabad Campus, emphasized the role of such cultural events in strengthening ties between the two countries. He also highlighted the educational and cultural significance of the Mid-Autumn Festival, a celebration of unity, good fortune, and peace. Rector of COMSATS University Islamabad, Dr. Sajjad Qamar earli-

er presented the welcoming address. He said that the friendship between Pakistan and China is often described as higher than the mountains and deeper than the oceans. Pakistan-China relationship has grown from one of diplomatic cooperation to a multifaceted bond that spans economics, defense, infrastructure, and culture. The workshops were conducted on traditional Chinese arts, including Chinese Calligraphy and Paper Lantern Making, giving participants a hands-on experience with China's artistic heritage. A cultural exchange workshop explored the traditions.

Senate body expresses dissatisfaction over Science Departments' performance

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Science and Technology held here Wednesday expressed dissatisfaction over the performance of National Commission of Science and Technology (NCST) and Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA). The meeting was held at Parliament House under the chairmanship of Senator Kamil Ali Agha. Briefing the committee on the working and role of the NCST, Secretary for Science and Technology, Sajid Baloch stated that the primary role of the NCST is to provide policy directives, and it is headed by the Prime Minister. The NCST

has no human resources of its own and is housed within the Pakistan Commission for Science and Technology. However, in the last seven years, no meeting of the NCST has taken place. The committee expressed concerns over the ineffective presentation on the NCST and directed that a comprehensive presentation be submitted at the next meeting. Senator Kamil Ali Agha raised concerns about vacant positions in several organizations under the Ministry of Science and Technology. Sajid Baloch informed that the Prime Minister has issued directions, and the vacant posts will be filled in the next few months. The committee deliberated on the func-

tions and performance of the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA). Senator Syed Shibli Faraz criticized the PSQCA for its low performance and questioned its financial transparency. He added that the PSQCA is responsible for maintaining standards in the country but unfortunately lacks the basic equipment. The PSQCA has fined the cement industry for compromising standards in previous years, but the fines have not been collected to date. He argued that the headquarters of the PSQCA should be moved from Karachi to Islamabad to allow for better federal oversight. Sajid Baloch explained that the headquarters cannot be changed, as "Karachi" is specified in the PSQCA Act.

SEPTEMBER 2024

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Briefs

Transgenders demand dedicated seating space

ISLAMABAD: Transgender community has demanded dedicated seating space in public transport to provide them with a safe environment during their travel. Transgender Rights activist Nayyab Ali talking to APP said that dedicated seating space on public transport vehicles should be allocated for transgenders community, adding that transgender individuals often face challenges related to transportation due to a variety of social, economic, and systemic issues. She claimed that many transgender people experience verbal abuse, harassment, or even physical violence when using public transport. This can make commuting a stressful and unsafe experience. She said that many transportation hubs lack gender-neutral restrooms or spaces that accommodate non-binary or transgender individuals. This can create discomfort and anxiety, particularly for those who are transitioning.—APP

SCO moot to provide opportunities for diaspora

ISLAMABAD: Vice President of Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Ahmed Jawad on Wednesday said that Pakistan needs to promote its trade, investment, and economic ties with Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) nations as the formidable bloc has a cumulative gross domestic product (GDP) of \$20 trillion. Talking to APP, Vice President PBF Ahmed Jawad said that an economic bloc with a GDP of \$20 trillion could uplift Pakistan out of all its economic shortcomings provided serious efforts were taken to tap the opportunities and potential that SCO offers. PBF Vice President Jawad said SCO in the wake of a unipolar world is a blessing in disguise for regional countries in general and Pakistan in particular. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has provided a meaningful opportunity to develop confidence among the member states as well as regional countries for the promotion of peace, security, and stability by addressing the irritants among intra-regional and inter-regional states. He said that it is imperative for SCO to positively engage the world media to project its policies objectives and achievements ever since its evaluation to the present day. Pakistan's admission to SCO as a full member a significant both in regional and global contexts. Pakistan could serve as a hub for the promotion of trade and energy corridor, hence possessing the capability to make a yielding contribution to SCO.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Students and families are protesting against alleged irregularities in the examination process of PIMS Dental Medical College in G-8. They claim that the college administration promoted undeserving students, while those who met the criteria were overlooked. The protesters are urging higher authorities to investigate the matter, as they believe the future of hundreds of students is at risk. —(Photo by Abid Latif, DNA)

Pak committed to promoting sustainable transportation system

The president, addressing the Global Sustainable Transport Forum-2024, through a video message, being held in Beijing from September 25-26, 2024, said that Pakistan would work closely with China to achieve the goals of sustainable development to usher in an era of peace and prosperity

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday reiterated Pakistan's commitment to promoting the development of a safe, sustainable, efficient and environment-friendly transportation system in the country. The president, addressing the Global Sustainable Transport Forum-2024, through a video message, being held in Beijing from September 25-26, 2024, said that Pakistan would work

closely with China to achieve the goals of sustainable development to usher in an era of peace and prosperity. He emphasized that the world needed resilient infrastructure for efficient, environment-friendly and low-carbon transport solutions to fulfill the needs of the people. He appreciated China's lead role in promoting and advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly recognizing the critical importance of the

transport sector. Highlighting the initiatives taken by the government, President Zardari apprised the Forum that Pakistan had introduced pink buses specifically for women to provide a safe, comfortable and accessible mode of public transportation. He underlined that rural accessibility to all-weather roads in Pakistan witnessed significant improvement, reaching 92%. Improved rural accessibility could potentially contribute to promoting sustainable development

as well as providing essential services to the rural population, he added. The president apprised the participants that Pakistan was facing the challenges of sustainable maintenance of its infrastructure and the effects of climate change. He highlighted that over the last five years, devastating floods, heavy rainfall and extreme weather conditions had severely damaged Pakistan's transport infrastructure including roads, rails, bridges and other critical transport

networks that isolated millions of people, particularly in rural areas. President Zardari stated that Pakistan deeply valued China's role in promoting sustainable development and its contribution to regional and global economic prosperity. He said that Pakistan extended its support for the development of sustainable transport cooperation among the transport authorities of the member states and appreciated the initiatives taken by China under the leadership of President Xi Jinping.

Dysfunctional energy sector greater threat than terrorism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Wednesday that mega corruption and incompetence in the energy sector pose a more significant threat to the country than terrorism. He said the energy sector is ruining the economy and the public while bankrupting the country, but meaningful reforms to save Pakistan remain a far cry. He added that a critical factor in our industrial collapse is the element of mega corruption in

the energy sector by the ruling elite and their blue-eyed bureaucrats. In a statement released today, Shahid Rasheed Butt said, "We are blessed with a potential of millions of megawatts of clean electricity because we have many sources, including the fifth largest irrigation network in the world. However, only a small portion of this resource has been tapped." In 1984, hydroelectric power made up about 60% of our energy. Because of corruption at the top, it has dropped to less than 30%. Most of our energy comes from expensive oil and LNG we import. He said the devastat-

ion started in 1994, when a policy let independent power producers (IPPs) bring in old, low-efficiency power plants with the promise of guaranteed government profits in dollar terms, no matter how much they cost. The Rental Power Plants tell an even more shocking story. The prices these thermal power plants charged the government ranged from a ridiculously low Rs25 per unit to as much as Rs50 per unit because the agreements were based on capacity and not actual output. At that time, Shahid Rasheed Butt said

the cost of making hydroelectric power ranged from Rs1.18 to Rs4 per unit, while the cost of producing energy from coal was around Rs7 per unit. However, Wapda was not allowed to build its power plants. Instead, old plants were brought in from other countries. He noted that about 50,000 MW of energy could be produced in the triangle of Kati Bander, Gharo, and Hyderabad in Sindh and along the coast of Baluchistan. This vast potential is still mostly untapped. India and China make their wind turbines, and we should do the same.

Police bust car lifter gang, arrest five

RAWALPINDI :Rawalpindi District Police have busted a car lifting gang and arrested its five members, said a police spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that New Town police netted five accused namely Jahangir, Khurshid, Kamran, Ifkhar and Khandan Khan, allegedly involved in car snatching cases. Police also recovered 10 stolen vehicles including four Toyota Corolla cars, two Mehran, a Cuore, two pickups, a Khyber car and two rickshaws, master key and other items from their possession. The vehicles were stolen from shopping malls and different parking areas with master key and using other methods. The arrested accused are record holders in car lifting cases, the spokesman said.—APP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speaker, National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Wednesday commended the All Pakistan Newspaper Society (APNS) for its pivotal role in promoting the growth and development of the print media industry in the country. On the occasion of National Newspaper Readership Day, he extended his congratulations to the APNS, journalists, and media professionals for their contributions to the country's media landscape. Ayaz Sadiq highlighted the critical role that print media continues to play in the age of digital information. He emphasized that the newspapers are a vital source of reliable and trustworthy news, which not only informs the public but also fosters social stability, peace, and development. Ayaz Sadiq said that in an era where the misinformation can spread rapidly, the role of newspapers in providing fact-based news becomes all the more significant. He reaffirmed the Parliament's commitment to encouraging free and responsible journalism through legislation, stating that accurate and factual news is essential for raising political awareness and ensuring citizens are well-informed about their rights.

Treating "Maritime Numbness" – Tapping the blue potential of Pakistan

SHAH FAISAL

WORLD Maritime Day is being celebrated on 26th September 2024. World Maritime Day was first held in 1978 to mark the 20th anniversary of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Convention's entry into force. Celebrations are held throughout the world to highlight the importance of maritime sector, shipping safety, maritime security and the marine environment, and to emphasize any particular aspect of IMO's work. This year's theme as announced by the IMO is "Navigating the Future: Safety First!". The aim of this theme is to emphasize on maritime safety and security, protection of the marine environment and to anticipate the fast pace of technological change and innovation. This theme focusses on number of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which include; use of modern and clean energy in maritime sector, promoting sustainable economic growth, combating climate change and most importantly using the oceans/ seas for sustainable development. In fact, oceans are vital for life on earth. They provide key natural resources including food, medicines, biofuels and help with the breakdown and removal of waste and pollution. These are the world's largest ecosystem, home to nearly a million known species and containing vast untapped potential for scientific discovery and their coastal ecosystems act as buffers to reduce damage from storms. The Almighty has placed countless bounties for the humankind in the seas. Large part of the world's population resides in immediate vicinity of the seas. Some of

the sectors associated with the seas include shipping, ship building, ship recycling (ship breaking), fishing, extraction of oil/ gas, tourism etc. As it is said in the Quran: He is the One who has subjugated the sea, so that you may eat fresh meat from it, and may take out from it ornaments you wear, and you see the boats cleaving through it, and so that you may seek His bounty, and that you may be grateful (Surah An Nahl Ayat 14) Pakistan has 1000 km long coastline with sandy beaches, marshy lands, creeks and mangroves. At sea, Pakistan has 290,000 sq km of sea area under its jurisdiction with immense resources. However, on the occasion of World Maritime Day, the question arises that how much use of these resources is being made by us? Ironically, the answer is that Pakistan is not doing well in Blue Economy (a term used to represent economic activities related to the seas). Reviewing the shipping first, international shipping transports more than 80 percent of global trade to peoples and communities all over the world. Shipping is the most efficient and cost-effective method of international transportation for most goods; facilitating commerce and helping to create prosperity among nations and peoples. Unfortunately, our national entity, Pakistan National Shipping Corporation, PNSC, owns just a handful of merchant ships out of over 100,000 vessels plying across oceans of the world. Quran emphasizes importance of shipping in these words: In the creations of the heaven and the earth, in the cycle of night and day, in ships that plough the sea, to mankind's benefit, In these are signs for people who reflect (Surah Al Baqarah Ayat 164) Coming to ship building & repair, Pakistan has

only one shipyard i.e Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works (KS & EW) which was established in 1956. One of the regional giants of that time, however, it couldn't keep pace with new trends and technologies and has not upgraded itself to build or repair large vessels. Its capabilities and contracts are limited to constructing ships and submarines for the Navy. Though it is a strategic asset of vital importance, yet lack of modernization and capacity building has considerably reduced its viability. When it comes to ship breaking, Pakistan's record is not that bad. Pakistan is ranked number 3 after Bangladesh and India. Ship breaking yard at Gadani can dismantle around 125 ships per year. However, working conditions are quite hazardous and pose serious risks to the laborers' lives. Pertinent to mention here is the unfortunate fire incident onboard a ship being dismantled which claimed at least 28 precious lives in 2016. Post incident reports revealed poor safety practices and deplorable working conditions. It may be noted that Hong Kong International Convention for the safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships being implemented on 26 June next year may reduce recycling business in case of non-compliance by Pakistan. Talking about fishing industry, fishing is a profitable profession that can bring significant foreign exchange to a country. Seafood industry of Pakistan is worth US\$ 2.8 to 3.5 billion with proper value addition; however, presently fish exports receive around just US\$ 400 million per annum. Despite tremendous potential, fishing industry's contribution to national GDP remains

less than 1%. There are number of issues like overfishing, use of illegal nets, unhygienic conditions in fish handling and storage, use of primitive techniques and equipment and lack of modernization. Pakistan has tremendous potential in the maritime sector and with effective policy making by the government it can thrive in the blue economy. Pakistan Navy, in addition to efficiently performing its core tasks, had been trying her best to raise awareness about this neglected sector. The Pakistan Navy has undertaken a number of initiatives to create maritime awareness at the national level by engaging various segments of civil society, including intelligentsia, chambers of commerce, maritime industry, universities and the media, to bring to fore the importance of the maritime sector and its immense potential into the national discourse. Establishment of National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA) is one of the major steps in this direction which is aimed to act as a think tank of Pakistan in maritime policy research and raising public awareness. While the world celebrates maritime day, we need to critically review our progress in the maritime sector and beware of the tremendous potential that we have, so as to contribute towards betterment of national economy. First step in this regard would be to overcome the Maritime Numbness which we are suffering from as a nation and start sensing the maritime potential that has been gifted to us by the Almighty. —The writer is a commentator on Maritime Affairs

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India's hegemonic mind-set

ANURA Kumara Dissanayake was sworn in as the new president of Sri Lanka on Monday after the National People's Power leader won the presidential election. This marks the first time in the country's history that a Marxist leader has assumed the role. Some Indian and Western media outlets have been quick to nervously analyze Sri Lanka's possible attitude toward India. Media outlets like the Times of India and Deccan Herald have noted that the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), also led by Dissanayake, has an "anti-India record and pro-China leaning." To drive a wedge between China and Sri Lanka, the Indian Express even made an issue of Sri Lanka's debt problem, claiming "India has been a willing partner to Sri Lanka's debt restructuring, unlike China." India's concerns and attempts to undermine China-Sri Lanka relations over so-called debt traps reflect a great power competition mind-set, exposing its regional hegemonic ambitions and worries about the decline of its influence in South Asia. Long Xingchun, a professor from the School of International Relations at Sichuan International Studies University, told the Global Times. India has long viewed South Asia as its sphere of influence, insisting that countries in the region adhere to an "India first" policy. However, such a hegemonic mind-set does not align with the interests and development needs of South Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. What these nations most need is to strengthen themselves and improve their economies, and cooperation with China is undoubtedly a favorable choice. Sri Lanka was one of the first countries to welcome and join the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Port City Colombo and the Hambantota Port, which are flagship projects under the BRI cooperation framework, have significantly promoted Sri Lanka's economic development and improved living standards, facilitating the country's modernization process. Clearly, a win-win approach is the direction in which people are inclined to move. Normal, healthy and sound state-to-state relations can only be built on mutual respect, equality and mutual benefits. Just as Chinese President Xi Jinping said when congratulating Dissanayake on assuming the presidency of Sri Lanka on Monday, China and Sri Lanka have set a good example of friendly coexistence and mutually beneficial cooperation between countries of different sizes. "Attempts to hinder South Asian countries from collaborating with others through smear tactics are unhealthy, impractical and unlikely to succeed," said Long. Since the British Empire's withdrawal from South Asia after World War II, South Asian nations have developed into modern nation-states, with the concept of sovereign equality taking root. No country wishes to accept being in India's sphere of influence, nor do any political elites in neighboring countries willingly subordinate themselves to New Delhi. India's anxiety over Sri Lanka's election results, its various unfounded worries about Sri Lankan diplomacy, and its attempts to undermine China-Sri Lanka relations stem from its perception of itself as the sole regional hegemon, which burdens it excessively.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 05 Issue: 253

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Israeli spy devices in tents

AFEW days ago, Palestinian resistance discovered Israeli spy devices among the tents of displaced persons in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza Strip. This highlights the methods used by the Israeli occupation army to gather information about the Palestinian resistance and the role of Unit 8200 in this. The security platform Al-Hares (The Guard) reported that the resistance's security personnel found camouflaged Israeli spy devices planted among the tents of displaced persons, specifically in one of the shelters in southern Gaza. They noted that several devices of different shapes were seized. A security officer from the resistance told Al-Hares that the spy devices appeared to be part of the surrounding and natural environment. Among the devices that were seized was a camouflaged camera shaped like a rock. It is believed that the Israeli intelligence may have planted these devices using quadcopter drones during times of low activity among the displaced persons. The security officer urged everyone not to tamper with any suspicious devices discovered and to contact security officers immediately. He emphasized the necessity of being vigilant and attentive to any objects or structures present around the tents and houses or on their roofs, with a need for regular patrols between the pathways and rooftops to ensure they are free from any new variables. In April, the security apparatus of Hamas warned Palestinian citizens in the Gaza Strip about spy devices dropped in various neighborhoods by Israeli military drones. At that time, they indicated that some of the devices confiscated were shaped like blocks made of foam, urging citizens to survey the area around their homes and focus on public and abandoned buildings, reporting any suspicious objects to the relevant authorities in Gaza without tampering with them. While sources within the Palestinian resistance confirm that Israel is developing its methods of gathering information based on digital and technological techniques, this does not prevent or limit the recruitment of potential informants. Various methods are used to exploit weak-willed individuals, between moral and material seduction, and taking advantage of the circumstances of the blockade and the war of extermination. Technological espionage is no longer a difficult matter these days, according to a report published by Arabi 21. With electronic devices becoming smaller, listening devices can be placed in many locations without the victims noticing. To carry out espionage, it is sufficient to place a microphone, battery, and SIM card in any object or shape. With the digital boom, these components are now available in very small sizes, aiding in their camouflage. Once these components are embedded within any device, they can be turned on and off from anywhere in the world, in addition to eavesdropping on conversations occurring in the location where they were left. In the past, it was necessary to leave a listening device in a location and then retrieve it later for information. However, today this has changed thanks to wireless communications. For the past three decades, the Aman agency, which is considered the largest Israeli intelligence agency, has established a specialized division in the field of electronic espionage known as Unit 8200. This unit is also referred to as the secret electronic warfare unit in Israel and is sometimes called the Israeli SIGINT unit.

Judiciary-govt clash: A battle at the people's expense

Qamar Bashir



Now, all elements of power within the state are fully determined to maintain the status quo and are fully poised to use every means at their disposal to undermine the purpose, intent, and implementation of the Supreme Court's decision. The earlier capitulation of the Supreme Court occurred in an environment where the judiciary was shackled and lacked the strength to counter the combined assault from all pillars of the state and their affiliated institutions. However, it appears that the judiciary has now regained...

THE recent Supreme Court judgment represents an unprecedented act of defiance against the previously unquestioned power of the establishment, directly challenging all pillars of the state, including the government, parliament, Election Commission, the President and even factions within the judiciary. This situation echoes the Supreme Court's earlier verdict to hold Punjab Assembly elections on May 14, 2023, which was not implemented due to intense pressure from various state elements. The judiciary's inability to enforce its decision back then led to the marginalization of PTI, alleged rigged elections, the formation of an unrepresentative government, and a deepening constitutional crisis, causing immense hardship for the people and undermining the rule of law. Now, all elements of power within the state are fully determined to maintain the status quo and are fully poised to use every means at their disposal to undermine the purpose, intent, and implementation of the Supreme Court's decision. The earlier capitulation of the Supreme Court occurred in an environment where the judiciary was shackled and lacked the strength to counter the combined assault from all pillars of the state and their affiliated institutions. However, it appears that the judiciary has now regained the strength it lost long ago. The subordinate judiciary, high courts, and even the Supreme Court, which had been reduced to mere rubber stamps, seem to have reached a point where they have decided to reclaim their rightful authority, a domain they had surrendered since Pakistan's inception, due to the intense pressures exerted by powerful elements. However, the implementation of the Supreme Court judgment is not going to be as simple and direct as it should be. The vested interests will likely create as much noise and chaos as possible to protect their deeply entrenched interests. Implementing the judgment would mean catapulting the entire current ecosystem. It would mean reversing all illegal actions taken by the Election Commission, annulling the Election Commission Rules that were declared extra-constitutional, and voiding all changes made to the Election Act 2023 that had a retrospective effect. It would also involve restoring PTI as a fully functional political party in parliament, ensuring the independent functioning of election tribunals, and appointing serving judges to preside over these tribunals. This would result in the restoration of all seats that PTI had lost due to the manipulation of Form 47, allowing PTI to gain a majority in both the Punjab Assembly and the National Assembly. Consequently, a vote of no-confidence would be initiated against the current Prime Minister, leading to the election of a new Prime Minister whose first action would be to withdraw all cases against the PTI chairman and activists. Following

this, the next steps for parliament and assemblies would be to impeach President and remove him from power. While this outcome seems a logical consequence of the judgment, it poses a severe threat to the coalition political parties, the government, the Election Commission, the Prime Minister, the President, and all those with vested interests in maintaining the current system. In this high-stakes scenario, these elements are likely to employ a multifaceted approach to obstruct the implementation of the judgment. They may attempt to pass new laws or amend existing ones to dilute or circumvent the Supreme Court's decision, introducing legal ambiguities that alter the jurisdiction or functioning of the judiciary, rendering the judgment ineffective. The Election Commission or law enforcement agencies might deliberately delay the process by citing technical, administrative, or procedural hurdles to buy time, hoping that public and political momentum behind the judgment will diminish. Additionally, multiple review petitions or appeals may be filed to stall the implementation, dragging the matter through lengthy legal battles to delay any practical execution. The establishment and government could use state-controlled media, and sympathetic private outlets, to launch a disinformation campaign against the judgment, portraying it as biased or contrary to national interests, thereby swaying public opinion and reducing pressure for compliance. Efforts may also be made to intimidate judges through threats, blackmail, or exposure of alleged misconduct to weaken their resolve, hoping to force a compromise or soften the judgment. Backdoor negotiations with political parties, including PTI, might be pursued to reach a deal that either delays or waters down the implementation by offering incentives or compromise solutions. The forces defending the status quo may incite street protests, strikes, or civil unrest to create chaos and instability, justifying non-implementation under the guise of maintaining law and order. They might mobilize all elements of power to resist the judgment by refusing to cooperate, creating operational hurdles, or even actively subverting the judiciary's authority. The government might frame the situation as an extraordinary crisis requiring exceptional measures, sidelining the Supreme Court's decision under the pretext of national interest or stability. Finally, intensified legal actions, arrests, and harassment against PTI leadership and supporters could be employed to weaken their organizational strength and create leadership vacuums, diminishing their ability to capitalize on the judgment. Those with vested interests might unite to form a grand alliance, coordinating efforts to resist the judgment and leveraging their collective resources and influence to maintain the status quo. However, this time, the Supreme Court seems de-

termined to dig in its heels and use whatever constitutional power it has to ensure the implementation of its judgment. In the event of non-compliance, the Court can issue comprehensive, binding implementation orders that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of various state institutions, eliminating any ambiguity or delay and making non-compliance easily identifiable. It may also establish a monitoring committee to oversee the implementation process. The Supreme Court could initiate contempt proceedings against any individual or institution that defies its orders, taking swift action against high-ranking officials who deliberately obstruct the implementation process to demonstrate the judiciary's resolve. It may issue direct orders to the executive branch to enforce its judgment, and if these agencies are hesitant or unwilling to act, the Court can take decisive action against their leadership for dereliction of duty. In extreme cases, it may invoke Article 245 of the Constitution, which permits calling upon the military to aid civil power in implementing its orders. The Court might actively engage with the public through media outreach, making the details and significance of the judgment widely known. By mobilizing civil society organizations, legal experts, and bar associations to rally public support, it can create an environment that pressures the government and establishment to implement the decision. It may direct the Election Commission to strictly adhere to timelines for re-elections, reinstating PTI members, and reversing any unconstitutional changes to election laws. Additionally, the Supreme Court could regularly publish the names and details of individuals or institutions obstructing the implementation process, serving as a powerful tool to compel compliance and uphold the rule of law. Non-implementation of the Supreme Court's judgment would have dire consequences for the country and its people. It would undermine the rule of law, erode judicial independence, and set a dangerous precedent that powerful institutions can defy legal authority without consequences. This would weaken democratic processes, leading to political instability, civil unrest, and a breakdown of constitutional order. For the people, it would mean the erosion of their rights, loss of faith in the justice system, and diminished prospects for fair representation and governance. It would also damage Pakistan's international reputation, deter foreign investment, and potentially invite undemocratic forces to exploit the chaos, plunging the nation into deeper economic and social turmoil. Therefore, implementing the judgment is crucial to safeguard democracy, maintain stability, and protect the rights and future of the citizens.

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

Pakistan's integration into the China-Russia axis

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The convergence of interests between Russia Pakistan, particularly regarding ISIS, the recognition of the Taliban as a legitimate actor, the stability of Afghanistan, is bringing the two states closer at a rapid pace. Additionally, the energy sector offers another area for deepening relations between the two countries. Pakistan Russia have already initiated cooperation with the construction of the North-South gas pipeline. Pakistan, which needs alternative energy...

THE involvement of the United States in Ukraine the South China Sea exemplifies its longstanding rivalry with China Russia. This rivalry has led to the formation of new alliances that could potentially support territorial disputes, with these groups pitted against one another while simultaneously coordinating economic security cooperation. Consequently, the Pakistan-China-Russia alignment is largely shaped by their shared interests. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) plays a significant role in this alignment as it has the potential to bring Pakistan closer to Pan-Eurasian integration. As the flagship project of the Belt Road Initiative (BRI), CPEC could link Pakistan with the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Iran, SAARC, China. Although CPEC does not directly run through Russia, there is a possibility of branch routes connecting through Xinjiang to the Central Asian Republics (CARs) potentially extending to Russia. The Altai Republic, which borders Xinjiang, could also be linked to CPEC through a northern branch route. This could give Russia access to energy-rich regions global markets, which it could leverage to develop its Siberian region. Russia's grand strategic vision of becoming a dominant force in the Eurasian supercontinent has inspired its leadership to revisit relations with Pakistan. This has led to a game-changing inclusive partnership with Pakistan to address common challenges, such as the threat posed by ISIS in Afghanistan, to collaborate on the CPEC initiative. The emerging defense relationship between Russia Pakistan serves as the backbone of their evolving rapprochement reflects new strategic thinking by both countries toward South Asia. Furthermore, defense exports from Russia could enhance Pakistan's capacity to counter terrorism lay the foundation for expanded military cooperation, potentially including the acquisition of jets, tanks, other munitions if conditions are favorable. In recent years, India has diversified its defense partnerships with countries like the United States, Japan, Israel, France, which have eroded Russia's dominance in India's defense market. As a result, Russia is seeking new arms markets in the region to expand its defense relationships. The joint military drill between Russia Pakistan, known as Druzhba, in 2016 marked a fast-track trajectory in developing these ties amid the changing geopolitics of South Asia. The most promising area of cooperation between Rus-

sia Pakistan in the near future is Afghanistan. Moscow has hosted several peace conferences in recent years, Pakistan's participation in these talks demonstrates the growing alignment between Russia Pakistan regarding the future role of the Taliban as an anti-terrorist force. This shift in Russia's strategic calculus, away from its Cold War stance, is driven by concerns about ISIS infiltrating the CARs, which could destabilize the region. Instead of relying on military might, Russia has turned to diplomatic solutions, using regional actors like Pakistan to achieve results in the fight against terrorism. Given Pakistan's long border with Afghanistan its historical relations with both Kabul the Taliban, strategic coordination between Islamabad Moscow could open new avenues of cooperation in the future. The convergence of interests between Russia Pakistan, particularly regarding ISIS, the recognition of the Taliban as a legitimate actor, the stability of Afghanistan, is bringing the two states closer at a rapid pace. Additionally, the energy sector offers another area for deepening relations between the two countries. Pakistan Russia have already initiated cooperation with the construction of the North-South gas pipeline. Pakistan, which needs alternative energy resources to meet its growing demand, can benefit from Russia's expertise in this field. The evolving cooperation between Islamabad Moscow signals to the world that both states are working within a traditional framework of cooperation. Pakistan could potentially benefit from Siberian resources by utilizing the Xinjiang-CPEC route for energy imports. If the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline project faces political obstacles, the Altai-Xinjiang pipeline could be an ideal alternative for Pakistan. The strong leg of the China-Russia-Pakistan triangle is the China-Pakistan link. Pakistan China have been traditional allies, supporting each other historically in areas such as military equipment diplomacy. China has assisted Pakistan in building nuclear reactors, Pakistan, in collaboration with China, has developed the JF-17 fighter jet. Pakistan is one of the largest importers of Chinese defense equipment is set to acquire eight Chinese S20 or Yuan-class submarines. China has also invested in the Karakoram Corridor Gwadar Port. The growing strategic partnership between India the United States in areas of shared defense interests is a source of concern for Pakistan. The relationship be-

tween Pakistan the United States has been turbulent, it reached a low point with the Trump administration's policy on Afghanistan. The alignment of interests between Russia, China, Pakistan largely stems from their shared opposition to the United States. For Russia China, the United States is seen as a hegemonic force that threatens their security. Pakistan, due to its longstanding conflict with India, is willing to be part of an Asian security architecture designed by China. Russia, meanwhile, sees an opportunity to establish a strategic relationship with Pakistan as India diversifies its list of military suppliers to include the United States Israel. Regarding technology energy supplies, Russia offers an alternative source for the region. Russia could gain access to new markets for its defense equipment may continue to supply arms to both India Pakistan. Russia's decision to arm Pakistan is significant because it indicates that Moscow is no longer giving preferential treatment to its old strategic partner, India. While India remains an important economic partner for Russia, the divergence of interests between Moscow New Delhi is becoming more apparent as Russia grows closer to China. China, with its strong economy substantial foreign reserves, is looking to invest secure energy supplies. Pakistan, with its large youthful population, needs energy resources defense equipment. The new alignment will give Pakistan access to Russian technology, which is often the source of many Chinese products. The mutual interests driving the Moscow-Islamabad partnership are contributing to a shift in international relations. In Europe, Russia is involved in a confrontation with the West over Ukraine is under Western sanctions due to its actions in Crimea. In the Asia-Pacific, tensions have escalated between China neighboring countries due to China's actions in the South China Sea. These developments have pushed China Russia to seek new allies, which explains the growing rapport between the two powers. However, the question remains whether this partnership can evolve into a formal alliance given the historical distrust between the countries. The old adage "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" seems to apply here, as the shared perception of the United States as a common adversary is the most important factor driving this alignment, superseding other considerations. China needs new allies to reshape the global order, this process begins in Asia.

Briefs

Political chaos in Pakistan, Chinese...

FROM PAGE 01 incentives and facilities for the Chinese investors. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "We consider the success of China as our own success..."

Irfan: Judiciary never...

FROM PAGE 01 recent court ruling that, according to him, created unnecessary complications. "The decision regarding reserved seats has raised many questions..."

Pakistan desirous of long-term...

FROM PAGE 01 highly values its bilateral relations with Russia and is keen to further deepen the mutual collaboration in diverse sectors, including trade and economy...

Mbappe strikes again as Madrid hold off Alaves

Real Madrid, second, cut the gap on Barcelona to one point

SPORTS DESK

MADRID: Kylian Mbappe struck for the fourth consecutive game as Real Madrid survived a late scare to beat Alaves 3-2 in La Liga on Tuesday. Real Madrid, second, cut the gap on Barcelona to one point before the leaders host Getafe on Wednesday...



Rodrygo expanded Madrid's lead soon after the interval, roaming in with freedom from the right and firing through Alaves goalkeeper Antonio Sivera's legs. Teenage Brazilian striker Endrick hit the post with a deflected effort...

Harry Brook's century sets up first win as captain

Brook came in to bat with England struggling at 11-2 in run chase

LONDON: Chester-le-Street: Harry Brook said he felt a sense of relief after his maiden one-day international hundred paved the way for his first win as England captain. Following heavy defeats by world champions Australia at Trent Bridge and Headingley, England had to bat at Chester-le-Street on Tuesday to keep alive...

came under fire for his post-match comments following England's defeat in the series opener in Nottingham when he tried to explain some loose dismissals by saying: "If you get caught somewhere on the boundary or in the field then who cares?" But Brook was adamant he had been misunderstood...



IMF okays \$ 7 bn package for Pakistan

FROM PAGE 01

history's most expensive loan of \$600 million to win a board meeting date from the IMF. Unlike in the past, when the provincial budgets were out of the purview of the IMF, the new programme is also expanded to the provincial budgets and their revenues. There are nearly one-dozen IMF conditions that directly impact the provinces under the new programme...

PM meets Guterres...

FROM PAGE 01

relations between the two nations. The premier was welcomed by Dr Yunus with key Pakistani officials in attendance, including Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, and Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi. The meeting reflected a mutual commitment to fostering friendly ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh...

Army, Navy, Punjab Reds dominate in Junior Hockey Championship

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army, Navy and Punjab Reds kicked off their Championship campaigns with convincing wins in the 37th National Junior Hockey Championship started on Wednesday at the NaseerBunda Hockey Ground, Islamabad. Sixteen teams and over 300 young athletes, all eager to showcase their talent in the competition organized by the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF)...

The quarter-finals of the championship will take place on October 2, with the semi-finals on October 4 and the final set for Oct 5

Board (PEB) 12-2. Muhammad Usman was the star, scoring four goals, while Muhammad Atif added three, playing a crucial role in Navy's impressive win. The final match of the day between Islamabad and Punjab Yellow ended in a 1-1 draw. Punjab's Ali Azam scored via a penalty corner in the first quarter to give his side the lead...

Pakistan advance to SAFF U17 c'ship semi-finals

Pakistan are yet to lose a game in the competition

WEB DESK

KATMANDU: Pakistan's U17 football team advanced to the semi-finals of the 2024 SAFF U17 Championship in Bhutan after a commanding 5-1 victory over Sri Lanka in their final group match. Subhan Kareem opened the scoring for Pakistan in the 20th minute, giving his team a 1-0 lead. Ten minutes later, Mohammad Talha doubled the advantage, making it 2-0. Subhan struck again in the 36th minute, netting his second goal of the match and putting Pakistan ahead 3-0 at halftime...

Abdul Samad smashing the third goal in the 67th minute, which was countered by Bhutan ending the match in a draw. Earlier, Pakistan secured a 1-0 victory over Nepal in their first game.



IHC questions ISPR's right to...

FROM PAGE 01 television channels to seek prior clearance from the ISPR before inviting retired military officers on news and current affairs programmes "to solicit their views on matters of national security". The directives were challenged by the Ex-Servicemen Legal Forum in the IHC while the Pakistan Ex-Servicemen Society supported them. The IHC order, said Assistant Attorney General Adeel Akhtar Raja had relied on the response filed by the defence ministry and ISPR during the hearing...

Govt pressuring judges to cover up...

FROM PAGE 01 the [2024] election fraud," the PTI founder insisted, stressing that the government "does not want the PTI to rise at any cost". The ousted premier made these comments in light of the ongoing saga surrounding the constitutional package chalked out by the ruling coalition which allegedly provisions regarding extension in the retirement ages of the high court and supreme court judges. The government pushed the proposed constitutional package amid speculation about a potential extension in the tenure of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, who is set to retire in October this year, following the PTI's request last month for the early issuance of a notification regarding the appointment of the next top judge. However, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), despite having the support of its allies such as the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and others, had postponed introducing the constitutional amendments in the parliament despite claiming to have secured the "magic number" earlier.

Court reserves verdict on...

FROM PAGE 01 Yusuf Raza Gilani back to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). Accountability court Judge Abida Sajjad held the plea, filed by the anti-graft body, involving the former prime ministers and the incumbent head of state, and reserved the verdict set to be announced on October 14. The case relates to the 2020 reference filed by NAB against the trio alleging that President Zardari and ex-PM Nawaz obtained vehicles from the Toshakana by paying 15% of the price of the cars - and all of this was facilitated by Gilani. During today's hearing, President Zardari's lawyer Farooq H Naek said the said court lacks the authority to hear the case following the NAB amendments and, therefore, it should be referred back to the anti-graft body.

Court Notice

اعلانت جناب عمران اصغر صاحب سول جج راولپنڈی درخواست عقیقت جانچیں اورین صدری نام عام الناس اورین صدری بیوہ صاحبہ سید سکان نمبر 1017-BV جج سوحان کالونی، مسلم ٹاؤن، راولپنڈی کینٹ اشتہار نام عام الناس برکادہ مقدمہ نمبر بالا میں عام الناس کی قبل عام طریقے سے ممکن نہ سے لہذا عام الناس کو بذریعہ اخبار اشتہار ہذا مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اگر کسی کو کوئی خدرا اعتراض نسبت دہنی ہذا ہو تو وہ مورخہ 27.09.2024 کو بجے 8 بجے اسلام آباد یا بذریعہ مختار حاضر عدالت آدے بصورت دیگر بختر ذرا کاروائی میں لائی جائے گی اور کوئی بختر قابل قبول نہ ہوگا۔ جج عدالت ہر عدالت

Briefs

SCO moot to provide ample opportunities for our economic diaspora

ISLAMABAD: Vice President of Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Ahmed Jawad on Wednesday said that Pakistan needs to promote its trade, investment, and economic ties with Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) nations as the formidable bloc has a cumulative gross domestic product (GDP) of \$20 trillion. Talking to APP, Vice President PBF Ahmed Jawad said that an economic bloc with a GDP of \$20 trillion could uplift Pakistan out of all its economic shortcomings provided serious efforts were taken to tap the opportunities and potential that SCO offers. PBF Vice President Jawad said SCO in the wake of a unipolar world is a blessing in disguise for regional countries in general and Pakistan in particular. —APP

PSX turns around to bullish trend, gains 764 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 764.28 points, a positive change of 0.94 percent, closing at 82,247.92 points against 81,483.64 points on the last working day. A total of 422,163,158 shares were traded during the day as compared to 369,620,812 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 18.380 billion against Rs. 17.062 billion on the last trading day. As many as 437 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 248 of them recorded gains and 126 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 63 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Kohinoor Spinning with 51,886,989 shares at Rs8.92 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 29,716,479 shares at Rs 1.25 per share and Pace (Pak) Limited with 25,434,647 shares at Rs 5.91 per share. PIA Holding Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 89.75 per share price, closing at Rs 987.29, whereas the runner-up was Hallmark Company Limited with Rs 84.90 rise in its per share price to Rs 933.90. Ismail Industry Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 83.28 per share closing at Rs 1,813.39 followed by Mehmood Textile Mills Limited with Rs 60.40 decline to close at Rs 554.07.—APP

16 sectoral council to be reactivated for industrial promotion

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, here on Wednesday, said that the Ministry of Commerce is reactivating 16 sectoral councils to prepare comprehensive plans and policies for industrial development and trade promotion in the country. Addressing the 7th Pharma Export Summit and Award 2024, the minister mentioned that the suggestions from the sectoral councils would be presented to the export development board, headed by the Prime Minister, for their swift implementation. He added that each sectoral council would have its own secretariat to determine ways and means and take measures to enhance trade and industrial activities in the country, noting that such initiatives would also help promote the local pharmaceutical sector. He emphasized that the pharmaceutical industry plays a pivotal role in the country's economic growth and development, and the government is fully committed to supporting the sector's development, adding that sufficient resources were available for economic progress and social prosperity in the country. The government is formulating comprehensive policies to address the issues faced by the local pharmaceutical sector. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Female visitors show interest in a pharmaceutical stall during World Pharmacists Day, organized by the Young Pharmacists Community Pakistan.—DNA

Pak, Belarus discuss JVs to set up tractor plant

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Belarus agreed on Wednesday to extensively discuss different options for a joint venture (JV) to establish a joint tractor plant in the country to uplift the local agriculture sector and enhance productivity. Consensus on this initiative

was reached during a meeting between Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain and Belarusian Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Vadim Shagoiko, said a news release. The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister of Industry Andrei Kuznetsov, Secretary of Food Security Ali Tahir, and Secretary of Industries Saif Anjum. Both

sides agreed to collaborate on a foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) project to protect cattle, as well as on the capacity building of agricultural engineers in machinery design. The minister shared a detailed plan on cooperation in the livestock sector, the seed sector, the mechanization of agriculture, and increasing market access for agricultural and livestock prod-

ucts. He emphasized that Pakistan greatly appreciates the active engagement from the Belarusian side, aimed at fostering and enhancing bilateral cooperation and collaboration in agriculture and livestock. Pakistan has carefully considered the requests made by the Belarusian side and has made corresponding suggestions to ensure that this partner-

ship is mutually beneficial. The minister also stated that Pakistani fruits should be granted access to the Belarusian market. Vadim Shagoiko expressed his country's interest in establishing a veterinary medicine plant in Pakistan. The minister responded that Pakistan is ready to facilitate investment in veterinary medicine.

Pak, Chinese companies for shale, tight gas potential

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Oil and Gas Development Company has signed a MoU with Chinese company CCDC for exploration of shale and tight gas potential in Pakistan. Both sides reached the agreement at 8th Silk Road International Exposition held here from September 20-24, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday. Pakistan was the guest country at this year's Expo. Minister of Pe-

troleum, along with leading petroleum companies attended the event and introduced investment opportunities in Pakistan, seeking partnership. At the 8th Silk Road International Exposition, China has witnessed record-number participation from the international community, demonstrating the magnetism of China's opportunities. Country- and sector-specific pavilions and booths had been set up by 73 international business associations and enterprises from 41 countries on five continents as well as overseas Chinese

businessmen, registering new highs in the number of participating countries and the variety of products on display. Apart from expanding market opportunities, international enterprises also come for investment and joint ventures. It is learned that a total of 62 international exhibitors from 28 countries and international organizations, including the United Kingdom, Italy, Pakistan, Russia, and South Korea, went to the sector-specific exhibition areas in batches in search of opportunities of

cooperation. Navruz Zaripov, Head of Investment and Trade for the Government of Samarkand, Uzbekistan, emphasized that China's industrial upgrades serve as a key attraction for international businesses. During the Exposition period, a new trans-Caspian route of the China-Europe Railway Express was launched, connecting Xi'an with countries around the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea, opening new avenues for regional countries to share the dividend of China's development.

Atif lauds govt action against non-filers

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD : President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industries Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that the government's decision to take action against non-filers is correct while tax burden should be reduced on taxpayers. Action against non-payers of taxable income should have been decided earlier. Action should be taken against taxpayers and facilitating officers involved in tax evasion, he expressed these

views while talking to Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik, Vice President Tariq Jadoon, Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail and others. President Federation Atif Ikram said that tax collection must be increased to improve the economy of Pakistan, to increase the tax revenue it is necessary to increase the number of taxpayers, tax net does not increase by imposing more taxes on taxpayers rather people start evading taxes, so instead of increasing the tax rate on those.

China signs agreements with Pakistani universities to boost disaster prevention

NANJING : China and Pakistan signed five new agreements aimed at advancing joint efforts in disaster prevention. The objective to be achieved through the China-Pakistan Belt and Road Joint Laboratory on Smart Disaster Prevention of Major Infrastructures. The agreements inked on September 19 between Southeast University, China, and prominent Pakistani institutions, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday. It marks a new chapter in the collaborative research and development between the two nations in disaster risk management and infrastructure resilience. The agreements were established between Southeast University and the following 5 Pakistani institutions respectively, namely, Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIEMS), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), NED University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi, University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Peshawar. These agreements focus on expanding research in areas such as earthquake engineering, structural health monitoring, and disaster risk reduction technologies. This collaboration is expected to provide a solid framework for future projects, including the establishment of new research and development facilities in Pakistan. On the occasion, both sides emphasized the necessity of policy support from the respective governments and disaster management authorities to ensure the success of the joint laboratory. The agreements also laid out plans for talent exchange programs and the joint development of international standards for disaster prevention technology.—DNA

Annual report and accounts presented at RCCI's 64th meeting



DNA

RAWALPINDI: The 64th Annual General Meeting of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) was held at chamber premises here on Wednesday. In the meeting, the annual report

and accounts presented by the outgoing committee were approved. The annual report covered important events and activities. The house officially announced and approved the election of newly elected Office Bearers, President Usman Shaukat, Senior

Vice President Qazi Farooq Khalid, and Fahad Barlas as Vice President. The new officials will officially assume charge from October 1. The meeting was presided over by President Saqib Rafiq, while Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh,

Vice President Faisal Shehzad, Group Leader Sohail Altaf were also present in the meeting, outgoing Executive Committee members, newly elected Executive Body, former Presidents and a large number of Chamber members were also present on the occasion.

China test-fires ICBM for first time in decades

DNA

BEIJING: China has announced the successful test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) carrying a dummy warhead, marking the first such test into international waters since 1980. The missile was launched by the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force at 8:44 am local time (04:44 GMT) and fell into a designated area of the Pacific Ocean. Chinese defense officials characterised the launch as a routine part of annual military training and stated that relevant coun-

tries were informed beforehand. Analysts noted the unusual nature of this test, given that ICBM launches typically occur within Chinese territory. Ankit Panda, a nuclear weapons expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, remarked that the designation of the test as "routine" and "annual" is misleading, as such tests have not occurred regularly or frequently in recent decades. The missile's specifics, including its type and flight path, remain unclear. However, China's defense ministry emphasized that the launch was compliant with international laws and not directed

against any particular country. This launch comes amid heightened tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly with Japan and Taiwan, and follows China's suspension of nuclear arms talks with the US in July, protesting US arms sales to Taiwan. Japan's government confirmed that no damage was reported from the missile's flight, and it appeared that the missile did not traverse Japanese airspace. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi expressed concerns over China's rapid military expansion and lack of transparency, noting increased Chinese military activi-

ties around Japan. The ICBM test is perceived as a powerful signal of China's military capabilities, especially in light of ongoing regional tensions. In recent months, relations between China and its neighbors have strained due to incidents such as collisions between Chinese and Philippine ships in disputed waters and incursions into Japanese airspace by Chinese aircraft. Furthermore, deterioration of regional ties also comes amidst scrutiny over statements made by Beijing's national security ministry alleging that the Taiwanese military was behind a series of cyber intrusions aimed at spreading

"anti-propaganda" material within China which Taiwan's Defence Minister Wellington Koo denied. China's nuclear arsenal is estimated to have surpassed 500 operational warheads, with projections indicating it could reach 1,500 by 2035. This places China's nuclear capabilities significantly below those of the United States and Russia, which possess over 3,700 and 4,380 active nuclear warheads, respectively. Tensions with the West are also expected to flare given sanctions were imposed by Britain, the European Union and the United States on Chinese companies related to Russia.

Pakistan's exports to US increase by 1.62% in 2 months

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's export of goods and services to the United States (US) witnessed an increase of 1.62 percent during the first two months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the exports of the corresponding months of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to the US were recorded at US \$949.855 million during July-August (2024-25) against exports of US \$934.666 billion during July-August (2023-24), SBP data revealed.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to the US decreased to \$473.838 million in August 2024 against the export of \$494.774 million in August 2023. Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to the US witnessed a nominal decrease of 0.45 percent during August 2024 as compared to the exports of \$476.017 million in July 2024, the SBP data revealed. Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 7.18 percent in the first two months, from US \$4536.015 million to US \$4862.017 million, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from the US into the country during the months under review were recorded at US \$370.661 million against US \$350.977 million last year, showing an increase of 5.60 percent in July-August (2024-25). On a year-on-year basis, the imports for the US also increased to US \$185.606 million in August 2024, against the export of US \$176.497 million in August 2023. On a month-on-month basis, the imports from the US into the country witnessed a nominal decrease of 0.29 percent during August 2024, as compared to the imports of US \$185.055 million during July 2024, according to the data. The overall imports into the country witnessed an increase of 13.82 per cent, from \$8376.052 billion to US \$9533.997 billion, according to the data.—APP

Rupee sheds 04 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Wednesday depreciated by 04 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.84 against the previous day's closing of Rs 277.80.

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 280.50 respectively. The price of Euro increased by Rs 1.64 to close at Rs 310.95 against the last day's closing of Rs 309.31, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.93, whereas an increase of Rs 1.03 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 372.04 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 371.01. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 01 paise each to close Rs 75.64 and Rs 74.05 respectively.—APP

Gold prices up by Rs.2,500 Rs 275,500 per tola

ISLAMABAD :The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.2,500 and was sold at Rs.275,500 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs.273,000 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 2,144 to Rs. 236,197 from Rs. 234,053 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 216,514 from Rs. 214,550, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola silver increased by Rs.100 and was traded at Rs.3,050 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs.85.74 to Rs.2,614.88. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$25 to \$2,653 from \$2,628, the Association reported.—APP

Briefs

China pledges 'support' for Iran says FM Wang

BEIJING: China's top diplomat Wang Yi pledged to support Iran in safeguarding its security against "external forces" in a meeting with the country's new president in New York, Beijing's foreign ministry said Wednesday. Wang met President Masoud Pezeshkian on the sidelines of the annual UN General Assembly, Beijing said, as Israel launched more strikes against Tehran's ally Hezbollah in Lebanon. The top diplomat promised China would "always be a trustworthy partner." "China will continue to support Iran in safeguarding its sovereignty, security, territorial integrity, and national dignity," Wang said on Tuesday, according to a foreign ministry statement. Beijing also opposed "external forces interfering in Iran's internal affairs and imposing sanctions or pressure," he added. Conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite militant movement backed by Iran, has intensified in recent weeks. Lebanon said Israeli strikes killed at least 558 people on Monday — the deadliest day of violence in the country since its 1975-90 civil war. Iran, regarded by Israel as its archenemy, is an influential player in the Middle East, supporting armed groups in the region including Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. China is a close partner of Iran, its largest trade partner, and a top buyer of its sanctioned oil. — Agencies

Netanyahu a 'war criminal', Petro tells UNGA

NEW YORK: Colombian President Gustavo Petro has called for an end to the ongoing Israeli genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip, labeling the regime's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a "war criminal." Petro made the remarks during his speech at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, as he criticized Netanyahu for continuing the bombardment of Gaza. "It is in this inequality [...] that we find the logic of the mass destruction unleashed by the climate crisis and the logic of the bombs dropped by a criminal like Netanyahu on Gaza," Petro said. "When Gaza dies, all of humanity will die. Today we have 20,000 dead children," he added. Petro hit out at the current world order which allows Israel to bomb Gaza and Lebanon and imposes unilateral sanctions on others. "The powerful global oligarchy allows bombs to be dropped on Gaza, Lebanon and Sudan, or allows the economic blockade of rebellious countries that do not fit into its domain, such as Cuba and Venezuela," he said.

Trump claims 'big threats' to his life

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump said Wednesday there were "big threats" on his life posed by Iran after the Republican presidential candidate's campaign team said US intelligence warned him of "real and specific" threats from Tehran. "Big threats on my life by Iran. The entire US Military is watching and waiting," Trump said on his Truth Social platform. "Moves were already made by Iran that didn't work out, but they will try again. ... I am surrounded by more men, guns, and weapons than I have ever seen before," he said, following increased scrutiny of the US Secret Service since two attempts on Trump's life this year. Trump's campaign team said in a statement Tuesday that US intelligence had warned the former president of "real and specific" threats from Iran to assassinate him. It was not immediately clear if the threats referred to by the campaign and Trump himself were new or threats that have previously been reported. — Agencies

I was brainwashed, says arrested suicide bomber

"I survived because of Balochistan government," says Adeela Baloch who was "rescued" by security agencies

DNA

QUETTA: A suspected female suicide bomber, who was arrested in Balochistan's Turbat, has revealed that she was rescued by security agencies after a Baloch separatist organisation tried to lead her astray to use her for their own vested interests. "I was brainwashed for terrorism. The youth are being lured into terrorism," Adeela Baloch said while addressing a press conference on Wednesday, flanked by Farah Azeem Shah and Shahid Rind, the Balochistan government's spokespersons. The suspected suicide bomber's parents were also seated on her right during the presser. Baloch said she was walking on the "wrong path" and was "deceived". "I survived because of the Balochistan government." She revealed that, apart from her, there was another girl in the mountains who was beguiled towards terrorism. The woman, who received her primary education from Turbat and pursued a nursing course from Quetta, said terrorists use people for their purposes. "Some people lured me towards suicide bombing. I did not think that inno-

Two cops, 10 others injured in Quetta explosion

QUETTA: At least 12 people, including two cops, were injured after an explosion near a police mobile on the eastern bypass in Quetta, according to police. The rescue officials found a wrecked motorcycle near the site of the blast and the police claim that explosive material was planted in the motorcycle. According to the law enforcers, a bomb disposal squad was called at the spot, while the nature of the blast was being determined. The injured, meanwhile, were shifted to the Civil Sandeman Hospital, said the police. Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti has condemned the attack, directing concerned authorities to provide medical facilities to those injured in the explosion. "Terrorists will be brought to justice," he said, adding that action against them will continue. The blast comes just two days after a "remote-controlled bomb explosion" targeted a police van guarding a convoy of foreign envoys heading to Malam Jabba from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Swat district on Sunday. According to the police, the attack targeted a group of 11 foreign diplomats, resulting in one officer losing his life and four others being injured. All the envoys were safe after the explosion and had been shifted to Islamabad, said the police. The nation has been reeling under rising violent attacks since the Taliban rulers returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021, particularly in the bordering provinces of KP and Balochistan. The two most vulnerable provinces saw a sharp rise in deadly attacks last month, according to data from the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS). The digital database of security incidents managed by the Islamabad-based think-tank suggested an alarming situation as the number of attacks jumped from 38 in July to 59 in August. These incidents included 29 attacks in KP, 28 in Balochistan, and two in Punjab. — DNA

cent people would die because of that." Speaking during the press conference, Baloch advised the people not to get lured by terrorists. The woman's father, who was present at the session, spoke about his daughter's kidnapping. "I knew that those who are taken to the mountains do not return," her father said, adding that he contacted the government of Balochistan about his daughter's disappearance. He said that his daughter was brought back after the provincial administration's timely action. "Parents of missing persons should go to the government. They should monitor their children's activities." Meanwhile, Shah urged those in the mountains to return to the land. "The government will provide whatever assistance is requested," she said, addressing the presser, adding that terrorists must stop the fight that is causing loss to Balochistan. Commenting on rescuing Baloch, the spokesperson maintained that the state and government proved to be a mother. "The state has accepted Adeela and her family," she said. However, the spokesperson added that no compromise would be made on the interests of the state.

'Culture of depriving women must end'

Apex court imposes Rs 500,000 fine on false litigants and grants inheritance to widow after 26 years of legal battles

COURT REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has ordered the immediate transfer of a widow's inherited property after 26 years of false litigation. The court imposed a fine of Rs 500,000 on the opposing parties for submitting false testimonies and filing bogus claims in an attempt to deprive the widow of her rightful inheritance. A three-member bench, led by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, ruled on a 456-kanal land dispute in Chakwal. The case had dragged on for years due to false claims and fake witnesses produced by the opposing parties. The court ruled that the fine must be paid within three months, failing which the revenue department will recover the amount from the property. During the proceedings, Chief Justice Isa remarked that a simple inheritance case was made unnecessarily complex, stating, "The culture of depriving women of their inheritance must end."

Mossad HQ near Tel Aviv targeted by Hezbollah

BEIRUT: Lebanon's resistance movement Hezbollah says it has targeted the headquarters of the Israeli spy agency Mossad with an advanced ballistic missile in response to the recent pager explosions and the assassination of top commanders of the popular group. Hezbollah announced in a statement on Wednesday that it has struck a Mossad headquarters in the suburbs of Tel Aviv with a Qader 1 ballistic missile. "In support of our defiant Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and as part of backing its daring and honorable Resistance, and in defense of Lebanon and its people, the Islamic Resistance fighters targeted on Wednesday, September 25, 2024 at 6:30 a.m. the Mossad headquarters in the suburbs of Tel Aviv with a 'Qader 1' ballistic missile," the statement said. "This headquarters is responsible for assassinating leaders and blowing up pagers as well as the wireless devices," it added. — Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Russian Ambassador Albert Khorev calls on Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani. Both sides discussed multidimensional partnership particularly in the fields of energy, defence, food and people to people contacts. — DNA

Afghanistan wants to join BRICS, says Taliban govt

"Countries with major resources and the world's biggest economies are associated with the BRICS forum, especially Russia, India, and China," said Hamdullah Fitrat, a government deputy spokesman.

FOREIGN DESK

KABUL: Afghanistan's Taliban government is keen to join the BRICS economic forum, a spokesman said on Tuesday ahead of the group's summit in Russia. The summit of emerging economies that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa will meet on October 22-24 in the southwestern Russian city of Kazan. "Countries with major resources and the world's biggest economies are associated with the BRICS forum, especially Russia, India, and China," said Hamdullah Fitrat, a government deputy spokesman. "Currently, we have good economic ties and commercial exchanges with them. We are keen to expand our relations and participate in the economic forums of the BRICS," he said. The Taliban authorities have not been officially recognised by any country but have growing relations with founding BRICS nations, including China and Russia. The group, which has recently expanded by including Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Ethiopia, has not publicly reacted to the Taliban government's comments.

Naeem proposes to mediate Pakistan-Afghan talks

JJ head criticised role of United States in promoting terrorism in tribal areas

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Jamaat-e-Islami emir Hafiz Naeem Rehman expressed his willingness to mediate between Pakistan and Afghanistan, underscoring the importance of dialogue over military action. Speaking at the Tribal Peace Jirga in Peshawar, the JJ head criticised the role of the United States in promoting terrorism in the tribal areas. He stressed that Afghan territory should not be used against Pakistan. He said that constitutional limits should guide governance in every institution to ensure peaceful resolutions to tribal conflicts. Rehman underscored the need for the government to prioritise education, healthcare, and employment opportunities in the tribal areas, warning that the nation cannot be controlled through force alone. He stressed the Pakistani government to engage in dialogue with the Afghan Taliban, stating that negotiations are the only practicable solution for both nations.

ADB expects Pakistan GDP to accelerate at 2.8% in FY25

Asian lender calls for strict financial regulation as country still faces tense economic and political environment

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday said that the economic reform agenda supported by the three-year International Monetary Fund (IMF) Extended Fund Facility (EFF) was projected to accelerate growth and ease inflation in Pakistan. In its Asian Development Outlook report for September, the Manila-based lending agency noted that growth in Pakistan had rebounded to 2.4 per cent in the fiscal year 2023-24, adding that the Fund's previous short-term \$3bn loan, which concluded in April, helped with economic stability in the country. Pakistan and the IMF reached a three-year, \$7 billion aid package deal in July, with the new programme, as stated by the report, to catalyse "significant international financial support" for the underlying economic stabilisation and reform programme. The Fund's Executive Board is due to meet today for the formal approval of the loan, which Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb remain hopeful for. "Once approved by the IMF Executive Board, the arrangement should enhance macroeconomic stability," the ADB report stated, adding that the deal aimed to "consolidate public finances, expand social spending and protection, rebuild foreign exchange reserves, reduce fiscal risks from state-owned enterprise, and improve the business environment to encourage growth led by the private sector". However, the report warned that the country's economic outlook was still

susceptible to high downside risks. "With Pakistan's sizeable external financing requirements, its economic outlook is vulnerable to any shortfall in external inflows, making timely disbursements from multilateral and bilateral partners crucial," the report read. Furthermore, it cautioned that "lapses in policy implementation" could jeopardise the inflows, putting the exchange rate under pressure. On the other hand, the report did acknowledge that the new government had committed to structural reforms, however, it faced challenges due to "elevated political and institutional tensions and the prospects of social unrest from a steep drop in real incomes". "Devastating floods in 2022 demonstrated Pakistan's vulnerability to climate-induced natural disasters, further complicating the economic outlook," it stated. On the external side, it noted geopolitical developments such as higher food and oil prices to be the main risks to the country's economic stability. It added that the Fund's programme aimed to "put the debt-to-GDP ratio on a sustainable declining path", highlighting that the budget deficit for the year was expected at 6.9pc of the GDP. Regarding interest payments, it highlighted that they were expected to "remain elevated" for the year — comprising about 57pc of the current expenditure and absorbing 75pc of the federal taxes. "Nevertheless, a disciplined fiscal stance is anticipated to significantly reduce these payments in the medium term," it added, meanwhile, stating that revenue measures and some reductions in interest outlay will be able to create the necessary fiscal space for "much-needed social and development spending". In its outlook report, the agency noted the country had made progress "in reestablishing a market-determined exchange rate." "General elections in February 2024 brought in a new coalition government in March 2024, alleviating political uncertainty that had prevailed since the start of the fiscal year," it added.

Abbasi urges CJP Isa to retire upon completing his term

KHAYAM ABBASI

MURREE: Former prime minister and Awam Pakistan Party leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has called for Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa to retire after completing his tenure, amidst what he described as political instability and chaos in the country. Speaking to the media at the Murree Press Club on Wednesday, Abbasi stressed that Pakistan is facing severe political turmoil. "The country is in a state of political instability and unrest. There is no option but to run the country according to the Constitution," he said. Abbasi criticised the lack of transparency in recent constitutional amendments. "Parliament is unaware of the constitutional amendments being made. Attempts have been made to undermine the Constitution in the dead of night," he remarked, reiterating that Justice Isa should retire after completing his term. Reflecting on Pakistan's political history, the former premier said, "Every election in Pakistan has been rigged, yet no one has learned any lessons. The people's mandate has also been stolen." Abbasi went on to comment on the political leadership of both Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan. "Nawaz Sharif abandoned his 'respect the vote' narrative. Imran Khan came to end corruption, but today, corruption has increased tenfold," he stated. He further criticised the current government's performance, saying it has failed to gain public support. "The present government has completely failed in securing the backing of the people," Abbasi concluded.



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