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Pak condemns Israeli raids, reaffirms support for Palestine, Lebanon

Detailed News On Page-08

Ahsan calls for adopting China model

Detailed News On Page-08



Shakib announces retirement from T20I cricket

Detailed News On Page-06



Friendship bonds

Azerbaijan to buy JF-17 fighter jets from Pakistan

President of Azerbaijan expressed that the support extended by Pakistan would go a long way in consolidating the existing military cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, fostering closer defence collaboration

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

RAWALPINDI: As part of Pakistan's efforts to enhance defence cooperation with friendly countries, a contract for the sale of JF-17 Block-III fighter aircraft to bolster airpower capabilities of Azerbaijan has been recently signed. During his recent visit to Pakistan, H.E Mr Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan was briefed on the combat capabilities and versatile employment options of JF-17 BLOCK-III fighter aircraft. Pursuant to President Aliyev's visit and on request of Government of Azerbaijan, Pakistan deployed PAF contingent at Baku to participate in ADEX-2024 showcasing the aerial prowess and static display of Pride of Pakistan JF-17 Thunder Block-III. During deployment, JF-17 carried out Air to Air Refuelling from PAF Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) aircraft deploying in a single hop to Baku, Azerbaijan, demonstrating long haul capability and reach of the PAF's fighter jet. President Ilham Aliyev visited the static display of JF-17 BLOCK-III and later witnessed an enthralling aerial demonstration of JF-17 Thunder, showcasing the agility and maneuverability of the fighter jet alongside the professional competence of PAF pilots. JF-17 Thunder Block-III is an AESA Radar and Long Range BVR equipped 4.5 generation Multi-Role fighter aircraft which is capable of undertaking wide array of combat missions providing contemporary airpower employment options thus strengthening the National Security Paradigm of Azerbaijan. President of Azerbaijan expressed that the support extended by Pakistan would go a long way in consolidating the existing military cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, fostering closer defence collaboration and strengthening the warm brotherly ties between the two nations.

CPEC Phase-II vital for reviving Pakistan's industry

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb says fundamental reforms in the national economy are utmost necessary to make the recently approved IMF program as the last one. In an interview with a foreign media organization, he said the additional burden placed on the salaried class and manufacturing sector will be reduced, while retailers, wholesalers, agriculture, and property sectors should be brought into the tax net. Muhammad Aurangzeb said the government is now going to abolish the term 'non-filer.' He said restrictions will be imposed on those who do not pay taxes, making it difficult for them to undertake a number of activities. He said the government has data about people's lifestyles, which includes information on how many cars people own, their foreign trips, and other expenses. The Minister said based on this data, the FBR will bring non-taxpayers into the tax net without detaining them. The Finance Minister said friendly countries have assured

Continued on Page 06

INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDONESIA



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Riaz Hussain Pirzda Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Rahmat Hindiarta Charge d Affaires and other cutting cake to celebrate the 79th years of Indonesia Independence Proclamation. - DNA

Forces eliminate 8 terrorists

ISPR says operation was conducted on "reported presence" of terrorists on night between September 25-26

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: At least eight terrorists have been killed after the security forces conducted an intelligence based operation (IBO) in general area Razmak of the North Waziristan District, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Thursday. According to the military's media wing, the operation was conducted on the "reported presence" of terrorists on the night between

Continued on Page 06

Taliban reject UN concerns over women's rights

Australia, Canada, Germany, and Netherlands announced that they filed a case at ICJ for 'contempt' of women's rights

AGENCIES

KABUL: The Afghanistan's Taliban government rejected on Thursday concerns raised at the United Nations General Assembly this week about the treatment of women in Afghanistan. Australia, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands announced at the meeting in New York that they had initiated proceedings at the International Court of Justice in The Hague

Continued on Page 06

PM meets world leaders Shehbaz reaffirms complete solidarity with Palestinians

Commenting on the GSP Plus Scheme, Shehbaz Sharif mentioned that Pakistan has demonstrated consistent political commitment to fully implement the GSP Plus related international conventions

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has reaffirmed Pakistan's complete solidarity with the Palestinian people. Talking to the media after his meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in New York, he said the hearts of people of Pakistan beat with the hearts of Palestinian people. The Prime Minister strongly condemned Israeli atrocities in Gaza over the last one year. He said this kind of barbarism has not been witnessed by mankind for ages. He emphasized that the time has come to collectively demand an immediate

Continued on Page 06

Prudent policies of govt resulted in stability: Tarar

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar has said that stringent measures and prudent policies of the government had resulted in stability in the economy.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Lu praises ties with Shahbaz government

US official Donald Lu, in an interview with a local channel, expresses optimism over Pakistan's economic recovery

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States is enjoying a stronger relationship with Pakistan under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government, according to Donald Lu, US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia. In an interview with a local private media channel, Lu expressed optimism over Pakistan's economic recovery and ongoing reforms. "We are greatly encouraged by the economic recovery Pakistan is undergoing," Lu remarked during the interview, following his recent meeting with Pakistan's Finance Minister, Aurangzeb, at the World Bank headquarters.

One dead, 18 wounded in blast

DNA

PESHAWAR: Rescue and firefighting teams rushed to the scene immediately and started shifting the wounded cops to the Bacha Khan Medical where emergency has been imposed. The power blast affected the building which caught fire, however, it was doused following an immediate response from firefighting teams. According to rescue officials, 15 wounded policemen have been shifted to the hospital. KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur took notice of the incident and ordered the inspector general and chief secretary to immediately reach the Swabi police station. He also ordered them to present a report after ascertaining the genre of the explosion.

Cancels Rawalpindi rally

No use of talks with establishment': Imran Jailed ex-premier says he gave clear message after Islamabad power show that PTI won't hold talks with anyone

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Jailed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has rebuffed the claims of his party's chief spokesperson that the embattled opposition is ready to hold talks with the establishment. The former ruling party's spokesperson Raouf Hasan had claimed that a dialogue between his party and the establishment is inevitable for which PTI is prepared. Speaking to journalists at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail on Thursday, the PTI founder said there is no use in holding talks with the establishment. The cricketer-turned-politician said that Hasan had some misunderstanding, adding that he gave a clear message after the Islamabad power show that his party would not hold talks with anyone. Prior to Khan's statement, the PTI spokesperson had told a private television channel that the Imran-founded party was ready for talks with the establishment

Continued on Page 06

New Toshakhana case

Imran, Bushra to be indicted on Oct 2

Special Judge Shahrugh Arjumand hears post-arrest bail petition at Adiala Jail

COURT REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi will be indicted in the new Toshakhana reference on October 2, it emerged on Thursday. The proceedings of the new Toshakhana reference started last week after the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was barred from pursuing the matter and the case was transferred to

Continued on Page 06

CJP reveals why he removed Justice Akhtar from committee

CJ Isa says legally he can not be asked about why he nominated a judge as the committee's third member

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: In response to senior puisne judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah's letter raising questions on removing Justice Munib Akhtar from the judges committee, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa on Thursday gave 11 reasons to justify his action. CJP Isa on September 20 appointed Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan to the three-member judges' committee, excluding Justice Munib Akhtar hours after the promulgation of the new Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Amendment Ordinance 2024. The ordinance empowers the chief justice to nominate a judge in the committee that constitutes the benches. As per the ordinance, the body will comprise the chief justice, the most senior judge after the CJP and the judge nominated by Justice Isa. In his letter, the CJP said legally he could not be asked about why he nominated a judge as the committee's third member, however, "Since I have always advocated accountability and transparency I shall provide reasons why Justice Akhtar has been replaced. Let it be remembered that this I do because of your insistence, lest someone takes umbrage." He gave 11 reasons for his replacing Justice Akhtar from the body.

Continued on Page 06

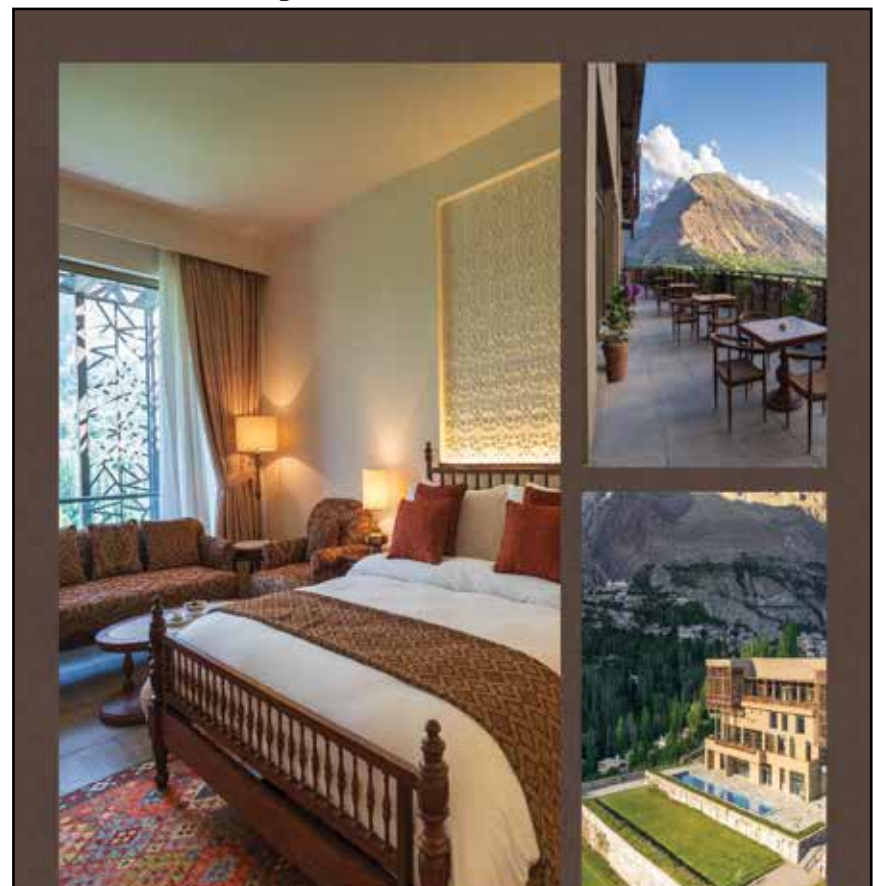
PTI moves SC against ordinance

PTI chairman requests SC to declare "illegal" and "annul" all decisions of Practice Procedure Committee in plea

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Thursday moved the apex court against the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Amendment Ordinance 2024, requesting for it to be declared "unconstitutional". The constitutional petition, filed by PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan, requested that all the decisions of the Practice Procedure Committee - taken after the approval of the ordinance - should be declared "illegal" and "annulled". The newly-constituted practice and procedure committee should be suspended from work for as long as the constitutional

Continued on Page 06



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Cocaine smuggling attempt foiled at Multan Airport

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting an operation at Multan International Airport managed to foil a cocaine smuggling attempt. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, ANF successfully foiled a cocaine smuggling attempt at Multan International Airport and arrested a suspected smuggler carrying 48 cocaine-filled capsules, each capsule weighing 13 grams. The accused is an Angolan African and came at Multan International Airport from Muscat. 48 cocaine-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of the accused, the spokesman said adding, total 624 grams cocaine was recovered. A large number of foreign nationals arrested in drug trafficking in Pakistan this year are from African countries. The drug traffickers continue to adopt innovative and dangerous methods to smuggle drugs, which poses a serious threat to the society. Tactics such as smuggling drugs not only endanger the lives of the traffickers, but also have devastating consequences for the communities around the world. Increasing cases of drug trafficking by foreign nationals is a cause for concern, he said.—APP

Agricultural & chemicals imports grew by 4.28%

ISLAMABAD: The imports of agricultural and other chemicals into the country increased by 4.28 per cent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of the last year. During the period from July-August, 2024 agricultural chemicals valued at \$1.500 billion were imported as compared to the imports of \$1.439 billion of the same period of the last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The imports of fertilizers grew by 621.85 per cent as 262,788 metric tons of fertilizers manufactured costing \$150.578 million were imported as compared to the imports of 78,067 metric tons valued at \$20.860 million of the same period of the last year, it added. However, the imports of insecticides into the country decreased by 31.91 per cent and recorded at 4,102 metric tons worth of \$22.536 million as against the imports of 6,620 metric tons valued at \$33.009 million in the same period of the last year, the data revealed.—APP

Court Notice

بجانب صاحب سول جی
اراپینڈی ڈوی اسیٹرائٹ وراثت نامہ
محمد شمیم خان، باہم موام اس مجھ شمیم خان ولد محمد
عظیم (مردم) سکند مکان نمبر 589-ZA
کلی نمبر 2 مرکز سکندال اوراپینڈی شہیار
باہم موام ایس برہہ مقدمہ نمبر 101 ایس کوام
اناس کی میں عام طریقہ سے سن نہ سے لہذا
موام ایس کو بڑیو اخبار شہیار پڑا مطلع کیا
جاتا ہے کہ اگر کسی طرف اعتراض نسبت
دوئی پڑا ہو تو وہ مورہ 27.09.2024 کو
تج 8 سے اصالتہ کاٹل یا بڑیو اخبار حاضر
عدالت آ سے بصورت دیگر نیکٹر قہر دوائی میں
میں لائی جائے گی اور کوئی طرف قابل قبول نہ ہو
گا۔ منجھ عدالت ہر عدالت

Envoy Emin Čohodarević visits Model School for Girls

He delivered a brief lecture highlighting the unique aspects of Bosnia and Herzegovina and emphasized the critical role of education in fostering peace and promoting humanity

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: As part of the "12 Days of Peace" campaign organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina in collaboration with the UN Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Emin Čohodarević visited the Islamabad Model School for Girls here on Thursday. He was accompanied by Raja Rashid Ali, Secretary of the Ministry of Education, and Faizan Badar, Secretary of the Federal Tax Administration of Pakistan. During the visit, Ambassador Čohodarević toured the school's classrooms and participated in an IT class, engaging warmly with students and teachers. He delivered a brief lecture highlighting the unique aspects of Bosnia and Herzegovina and emphasized the critical role of education in fostering peace and promoting humanity.

The ambassador said that it is truly inspiring to see the level of understanding and passion displayed by the students here their ability to grasp complex theories and apply them in practice is indicative of the high-quality education they are receiving. As a token of goodwill, Ambassador Čohodarević presented an LCD screen to the school's director, Ruqija Parveen. This



equipment, donated by Dr. Hussein Kavazović, Reis-ul-Ulema of the Islamic Community in

Bosnia and Herzegovina, will enhance the school's capacity for sharing educational video

content. The visit reinforced the commitment of both nations to the ideals of peace and education,

celebrating the power of learning in bridging cultures and fostering mutual understanding.

IMF bailout package key to achieving macroeconomic stability

PESHAWAR: The recent much-awaited approval of a \$7 billion bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is being hailed as a pivotal development for Pakistan's economy. Economic and financial experts strongly believed that this huge financial assistance will help play a crucial role in achieving macroeconomic stability, controlling inflation, and mitigating the ongoing price hikes that have burdened the 241 million population. The IMF's Executive Board has approved a 37-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF), which includes the immediate release of the first tranche of less than \$1.1 billion. This marks the 25th IMF program Pakistan has engaged in since 1958, highlighting a long history of economic partnerships aimed at financial and economic recovery

besides fiscal stability in the cash-starved South Asian country. "The new package underscored the Pakistani government's commitment to implementing vital economic and fiscal reforms and take the country out of economic challenges as the IMF has agreed with our Govt economic revival program," said Professor Dr. Zilakat Malik, a former Chairman of the Economics Department, University of Peshawar. Talking to APP, he emphasized that these reforms are essential for consolidating public finances, rebuilding foreign exchange reserves, and enhancing the business environment especially to foster private sector growth in Pakistan. Dr. Malik also acknowledged the positive roles played by brotherly countries of China, UAE, and Saudi Arabia in securing this landmark package, particularly the decision pertaining to deferring of repayment of \$12.7 billion in debts during the program period. Praising the government's swift implementation of bold economic and tax reforms soon after assuming power after February 8 election, he said it was instrumental in convincing the IMF to approve the crucial bailout package for Pakistan. The package was approved after the government's key measures include an increase in tax revenues from Rs1.4 trillion to Rs1.8 trillion and a significant rise in electricity prices of up to 51% in last budget despite opposition criticism. Notably, the new program expands to cover provincial budgets, marking a departure from past agreements where provincial fiscal policies were largely exempt from IMF oversight. According to the agreed conditions,

all provincial governments are expected to sign a new National Fiscal Pact. This pact aims to transfer responsibilities for health, education, social safety nets, and infrastructure projects to provincial authorities, thereby streamlining governance and fiscal responsibility. One of the critical aspects of the agreement involves aligning agricultural income tax rates with federal rates. These rates are expected to increase dramatically from 12-15% to 45%. Such measures are seen as essential for enhancing revenue generation in a sector that has historically been under-taxed. Dr. Zilakat Malik noted that the program stipulates a primary surplus equivalent to 1% of GDP for the current fiscal year, aiming for a target of 3.2% over the next two years.—DNA

Helmet compliance soars, over 80pc adhering to safety regulations

LAHORE: The provincial capital is seeing over 80 per cent of motorcyclists wearing helmets on all major roads, according to a comprehensive survey conducted by Lahore Traffic Police in collaboration with the Statistics Department of the University of the Punjab. The survey monitored helmet compliance at different times on key roads including Mall Road, Jail Road, Canal Road, Ferozpur Road, and Main Boulevard Gulberg and an impressive 91 per cent of citizens were observed wearing helmets on Main Boulevard Gulberg, however, 6 per cent were without helmets, and 3 per cent had their helmets placed on the tank or their arms. On Canal Road bridge, 90 per cent compliance with helmet usage was recorded, while 8 per cent were not wearing helmets, and 2 per cent had their helmets hanging from their arms while on Canal Road

Jail Road Underpass, 77 per cent compliance, with 19 per cent without helmets and 4 per cent placing helmets on the tank. Similarly, 73 per cent compliance noted at Ferozpur Road, with 22 per cent not wearing helmets and 5% placing helmets on the tank and on Jail Road Shadman, only 62 per cent were wearing helmets, while 31 per cent were not wearing helmets and 7 per cent had theirs on the tank or hanging from their arms. Overall, the survey indicates that more than 80 per cent of citizens are adhering to helmet laws, a positive development noted by Ammara Athar, Chief Traffic Officer Lahore. Ammara emphasized, "Citizens should wear helmets not out of fear of fines but for their own safety while travelling." She also highlighted that an artificial intelligence system is being utilized to issue e-challans for those not wearing helmets.—DNA

Surge in dengue cases across Punjab as 126 new infections reported

LAHORE: The Punjab Health Department confirmed on Thursday a sharp rise in dengue virus cases, with 126 new infections recorded across the province in the last 24 hours. Among these, Rawalpindi reported the highest number, with 107 cases, followed by Lahore with six, Gujranwala with three, and two cases each from Faisalabad, Sargodha, and Attock. Single cases were also reported from Jehlum, Kasur, Multan, and Mandi Bahauddin. This surge brings the total number of dengue infections in Punjab to 528 over the past week, raising the province's total cases for 2024 to 1,371. A spokesperson from the Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department assured the public that hospitals are well-prepared with adequate medicines and treatments to combat the virus. In light of the growing number of cases, the Health Department has issued an advisory encouraging the public to maintain clean and dry surroundings to curb the spread of Dengue. Citizens are urged to cooperate with health teams actively working to control the outbreak. A free helpline (1033) has also been provided for individuals seeking treatment, information, or wishing to register complaints.—APP

Open-door policy to address complaints ordered

LAHORE: Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Bilal Siddique Kamryana directed SPs and SDPOs to continue open-door policy for ensuring prompt resolution of public complaints. He was presiding over a meeting on law and order and security matters at his office here on Thursday. While reviewing the overall security situation, the participants emphasised enhancing the Lahore Police's capabilities through modern training to transform it as a professional fighting force. It stressed the best use of IT technology and human intelligence for crime prevention and urged the officers to remain vigilant in protecting citizens' lives and properties. The CCPO ordered for swift resolution of pending road certificates, electricity theft cases and arresting unidentified suspects, calling for improved supervision by divisional SPs.—APP

UN Women Pakistan took steps to incorporate gender indicators in provincial plans

ISLAMABAD: UN Women Pakistan has taken a step to effectively get gender indicators incorporated into the provincial plans by developing a set of Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) Guidelines. According to UN Women Pakistan, the Labour and Human Resource Department, the Government of Punjab and Labour Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have both endorsed, adapted and notified these Guidelines to ensure that the processes for planning (of projects and schemes) and budgeting (of the finalized projects and schemes) are gender-responsive with regard to the Annual Development Programme (ADP). It was no minor achievement that the guidelines were endorsed and notified by government departments. UN Women has been set up in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab to provide psycho-social help, skill-building activities and rehabilitation support services to women and girls, said an official here on Thursday. According to data revealed by UN Women said that Pakistan's partnerships with private sectors aim to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community through facilitating knowledge sharing, adopting best practices, and creating dignified, harassment-free environments for all. Through partnerships, the engagement promotes safer mobility, creates sustainable talent pipelines, influences CSR spending on gender-related initiatives, and encourages businesses to adopt gender-responsive procurement practices to support women-owned businesses, it added.—APP

Pakistan-Kazakhstan to work together to build regional cooperation and connectivity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speaking at the Conference organized by the Institute for Regional Studies (IRS) and the Embassy of Kazakhstan on Pakistan-Kazakhstan economic relations, Federal Minister for Planning & Development emphasized the region's connectivity potential, which would be a key element for a successful regional trade and economic cooperation. He underlined the keen desire of Pakistan and Kazakhstan to further strengthen their cordial ties and build on bilateral cooperation that could catalyze regional trade and connectivity. Minister Ahsan Iqbal underlined the need for greater deliberations on the subject and promised that the recommendations of the moot would be accorded consideration for expeditious implementation. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, in his opening address, stressed the important of building multiple regional linkages for common good of almost half of the



global population living in the adjoining regions in this part of the world. He also highlighted the growing economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and Pakistan, bilaterally as well as through regional organizations such as ECO, SCO and CICA. In this regard he delineated potential for expanding bilateral cooperation across multiple sectors, including trade, industry, tourism, infrastructure, energy, and education. Ambassador of Kazakhstan highlighted the key aspects of the Kazakh Presi-

dent's recent Address, where, while emphasizing the political modernization and economic transformation measures being implemented to ensure sustainable development, he underscored the alignment of Kazakhstan's national agenda with its foreign policy, inter alia in the framework of bilateral cooperation with Pakistan. Ambassador Ahmed Warraich, Additional Foreign Secretary for Afghanistan and Central Asia emphasized the importance of further developing institutional frameworks

to build on Kazakhstan-Pakistan relations. He noted that regular meetings, both within bilateral cooperation framework and at major international platforms, demonstrate the commitment of both nations to enhancing bilateral ties. Renowned economist, Dr. Na-deem Ul-Haqe elaborated upon Kazakhstan's successful steps in diversifying its economy and the importance of applying these practices for the development of Pakistan's economy. He also emphasized the importance of enhanc-

ing trade, noting that states should strive for interdependence and work to bridge the gap between policy formulation and implementation. Professor Shabbir Ahmad Khan emphasized Kazakhstan's role as a leading partner in Central Asia and outlined the strategic importance of Kazakhstan's reforms for the entire region. In his detailed presentation, he discussed the opportunities for developing transport corridors between Kazakhstan, Pakistan.

Advertisement for Ashraf Industries (Pvt) Ltd. featuring martial arts uniforms and belts. Text includes: 'MOST EXPERIENCED MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS OF MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS IN PAKISTAN', 'WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED', 'JUDO KARATE KUNG-FU JU-JITSU TAEKWONDO UNIFORMS AND COLOURED BELTS', and 'ASHRAF INDUSTRIES (PVT) LTD 127 C, Industrial Estate Sukkot-51340, Pakistan'. Includes Ashraf logo.

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
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Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
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WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
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Polyclinic.....9218300-09
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Water Tank

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Envoy urges stronger Egypt-Pak ties for mutual growth

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-Egypt relations are built on a strong foundation of common faith, cultural affinities, and aspirations and would grow further with the passage of time. Egypt has been a cradle of civilizations and world heritage and tourists from around the world visit this country to discover its beautiful places, scenes and sites. This has been stated by the Ambassador of Egypt, Dr. Ihab Mohammad Abdel Hamid Hassan during his meeting with Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry here at the Chamber House which was also attended by ICCI executives and members in large number. He said that fostering economic and business cooperation between the two countries require strategic efforts from both nations. Egypt's location makes it an ideal hub for Pakistani businesses to access African and Middle Eastern markets. Pakistan can leverage Egypt's Free Zones and trade agreements with regional blocs and Western countries to increase mutually beneficial cooperation and dialogue between the two countries. The Ambassador underlined the need for initiating reciprocal exchange visits between the businessmen from both the countries to identify potential areas for mutually beneficial investment and trade adding that Egypt's recent economic reforms, growth initiatives and investment incentives offer lucrative opportunities to Pakistani businessmen. He called on



the business communities of the two countries to exchange delegations to strengthen bilateral economic trade and investment ties. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari while welcoming the honorable guest pointed out similarities between the two countries, especially in tourism saying that both Egypt and Pakistan are popular countries for tourism and the business community of both countries must play its due role in this regard. Bakhtawari also stressed the need to promote people-to-people contacts between the two nations

for the promotion and strengthening of multilateral ties adding that direct air connectivity between the two countries will play a significant role in achieving this cherished goal. Former President ICCI and Secretary General United Business Group (UBG) Zafar Bakhtawari while tracing the history of close relationship between the two countries highlighted its significance, added that hearts of people of both the countries beat together, therefore there is a dire need to enhance the existing strategic partnership. He said

that Egypt can play a key role in brokering a ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinian state because of its significance across the globe. He also presented his book 'Jehan Dost' comprising of his columns dealing with business, trade as well as the diplomacy to the Ambassador. President elected ICCI Nasir Mansoor Qureshi emphasized the need for close liaison between the ICCI and Egyptian Chambers of Commerce and Industries for having more and more understanding regarding the business dynamics of

both the countries by saying that Pakistan enjoys huge business and investment opportunities and the Egyptian investors should come forward and grasp them. Former President ICCI Mian Shaukat Masood by saying that IT is the future of the world stressed close coordination in the area between the two sides for the benefit of the people of two countries. On the occasion, presentations comprehensively showcasing the investment potential of Egypt and Pakistan were also given.

Govt committed to strengthen economy: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday said that the government is committed to bringing economic stability to the country. The Stock exchange is showing progress while the inflation index declining gradually, he said while talking to a private television channel. International rating agencies are acknowledging Pakistan's efforts for the economic sector, he said. Commenting on military courts, he said those elements found involved in attacking security institutions, will have to face the cases in military courts. Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI), had been involved in attacking national institutions, he stated. The PTI had spread negative propaganda against the institutions through social media, he added. The weak policies of the PTI's last regime had badly hit the economic sector, he said.—APP

52 modern CCTV cameras installed on Warsak Road

DNA

PESHAWAR: To counter the terror incidents and crimes, police have installed 52 state-of-the-art HD CCTV cameras on Warsak Road that have been linked with the Command-and-Control System of the Sharqi Police. SSP Operations, Kashif Zulfikar told media persons on Thursday that due to the sensitivity of the area, 52 modern HD cameras have been installed at different points of the Warsak Road that would constantly be monitored through the Command-and-Control System. Giving more details, SSP Operations said these cameras have been installed from Kababyan to Mithra and Shagai areas. These modern monitoring gadgets, he said, have also been installed at other sensitive areas including Babu Garhi, the main road, crossings and populated localities of Warsak Road.

IRSA releases 186,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD:Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 186,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 157,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1535.88 feet and was 137.88 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 96,100 cusecs and 95,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1219.60 feet, which was 171.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 14,200 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively.—APP

Gilani for digital transformation in pharmaceutical sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has called for embracing innovation, forge partnerships, and adopt digital transformation to boost investment in Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector. "The world is rapidly changing, and the pharmaceutical sector is no exception. We must leverage new technologies such as telemedicine and digital health records" he made these remarks while addressing the 3rd Pharma Export Summit & Awards (PESA). He further emphasized the importance of advancing research and development, establishing a robust regulatory framework, and promoting international cooperation through public-private partnerships. Gilani said that the pharmaceutical sector is one of the key pillars of the country's economy and it is highly promising that the sector is expanding its reach into high-value markets such as Europe, the USA, and emerging markets in Asia and Africa. "Despite the smaller scale, Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry is expanding, with local companies increasingly capturing market share

from multinational corporations", he added. He highlighted few key areas where industry can strategically focus to increase exports and compete on a par with regional players in global market. He suggested to focus on expanding research, development capabilities, improve regulatory frameworks, foster international collaborations with renowned peer companies strengthen public-private partnerships to enhance competitive edge and investing in the production of generic drugs and biosimilar that can help Pakistan tap into the growing global demand for affordable medications. "By addressing these areas, Pakistan can bolster its pharmaceutical exports and strengthen its position in the global market" he emphasized. He also cautioned to be mindful of Global inflation and the resulting economic slowdown. He underlined the need to check crippling reliance on imported raw material if we want our Pharma Industry to truly thrive and realize its full potential. He said that such intervention would not only help save precious foreign exchange reserves spent on expensive imports, but also bring down prices and boost exports. "Today, as we honor the top

50 exporters of pharmaceuticals and allied products, we recognize their invaluable contribution to not just the industry but to Pakistan's broader economic landscape, he remarked" he added. He assured that the government is committed to fostering a conducive environment that encourages investment and ensures that our industries remain competitive globally. He said that the future of Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry is bright and strongly urge all stakeholders and authorities to support and encourage our Pharmaceutical in making do contributions to the economy and healthcare system. He called upon the participants to continue setting new standards of quality and innovation. The Chairman Senate extended heartfelt congratulations to all the award winners and called for reaffirming commitment to excellence and to continue working toward a brighter, healthier, and more prosperous Pakistan. He also thanked Mian Khalid Misbah ur Rehman, Chairman of Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association and appreciated the hard work of all the organizers to arrange such an important event to acknowledge the outstanding achievement of industry.

Ombudsman team conducts inspection visit to Islamabad Airport

ISLAMABAD: Responding to a large number of complaints regarding maladministration of the Federal Agencies performing duties at the Islamabad new airport, a Wafaqi Mohtasib's Inspection Team visited the Airport, on the directives of Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, here today. The Inspection Team was headed by Senior Advisor, Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat, Syed Asif Shah. Members of the team interacted with the passengers, listened to their complaints and passed on the spot instructions to the administration for their immediate redressal, said in a Press Release issued here on Thursday. The team included Grievance Commissioner for Overseas Pakistanis, Deputy Advisor (Implementation), WMS and Consultant (Media), WMS. The team visited the national and international lounges, luggage area, the CIP Lounge besides the immigration counter and the counters of other agencies performing duty at the airport and obtained first-hand knowledge of the problems being faced by the passengers. It was found that a large number of complaints by the passengers were related to delays in immigration, unwarranted meddling and high-handed attitude of the FIA, ASF and Custom officials posted there, whereas the incoming passengers complained of loss and late delivery of the luggage.—APP

Promoting tourism pivotal for country socio-economic uplift : Ayaz

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that enhancing tourism sector in Pakistan is pivotal for country's economic development and cultural exchange. "Tourism is not just an economic driver; it fosters understanding and cooperation among diverse cultures. Pakistan is home to a rich tapestry of history, culture, and natural beauty that attracts tourists from around the globe," he said. He expressed these views on the eve of World Tourism Day, celebrated annually throughout the world on September 27. Sadiq also urged to tap into the potential of tourism to flourish the economy, to maintain a positive international image, and to promote socio-cultural and religious exchanges for a better and peaceful future. The Speaker while emphasizing on Pakistan's strategic location said that Pakistan is a vital destination for religious and cultural tourism. He elaborated on the government's commitment to provide better facilities to Sikh, Hindu and Buddhist pilgrims, who seek to fulfill their spiritual obligations at various historic sites across Pakistan. "Significant efforts have been undertaken to streamline visa services and ensure a hassle-free journey for religious devotees, reflecting our dedication to religious harmony and interfaith-respect," he noted. The Speaker also underscored the attraction held by diverse religions and cultures which pulls tourists from all corners of the world to visit Kalash valley, home to the world's most unique religion and culture, along with other historical sites displaying heritage of Gandhara Civilization. He said that the government is committed to enhance tourism to promote inter-faith harmony, to remove socio-cultural barriers & to preserve & cherish the shared heritage of the sub-continent and the region. Ayaz Sadiq acknowledged Pakistan's diverse beautiful landscapes including breathtaking northern areas, mesmerizing meadows, icy tundras and glaciers, crystal clear water bodies, vast deserts, and a beautiful coastal line which make Pakistan a haven for tourists. "With the majestic Mountains including K-2 and several other peaks for mountaineering, World's Highest Polo Ground of Shandor, Vast Deserts for Jeep Rallies including many other unique recreational offerings; Pakistan attracts enthusiasts from across the world," he added. In addition, the Speaker while emphasizing on the commitment of the incumbent government to promote tourism stated, "Government is determined to promote Tourism." The Speaker reiterated the importance of promotion of tourism to boost employment, to create sustainable development opportunities for communities, to promote the rich cultural heritage, to boost exports and to effectively re-strengthen the economy from the tapping into this immense natural potential to improve the socio-economic status of Pakistan.—DNA

British Council unveils 2024 Study UK Alumni Awards to celebrate excellence

ISLAMABAD: The British Council is rolling out the red carpet for exceptional talent as it launches the eleventh edition of its prestigious Study UK Alumni Awards. Designed to spotlight the remarkable achievements of UK alumni around the globe, these awards celebrate leaders who have transformed their education into impactful contributions in their communities, industries, and nations, says the press release. With categories ranging from Business and Innovation to Science and Sustainability, this year's awards promise to honor the diverse ways in which alumni are shaping the future. Applications opened on September 1 and will close on October 21, 2024, offering alumni a chance to compete for both national and global accolades. Notably, this year's global awards

will feature two distinguished Pakistani alumni among the finalists. The excitement doesn't end there! The winners of the global awards will be unveiled in 2025, accompanied by a dynamic digital campaign showcasing their inspiring journeys. Awardees will also enjoy an exclusive trip to the UK, reconnecting with their universities, mentoring current GREAT scholars, and networking with other global winners—an invaluable opportunity for personal and professional growth. In addition to global recognition, select countries will host national award ceremonies, with finalists announced between December 2024 and March 2025. These ceremonies, typically graced by the British Ambassador or High Commissioner, promise to attract media attention and celebrate the achievements.—APP

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Briefs

FOSPAH disposes off 3368 cases out of 3571 cases in 13th year

ISLAMABAD: The Office of the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection from Harassment (FOSPAH) registered about 3571 cases in the last 13 years, out of which 3368 cases were disposed of, and 203 cases are pending. According to the 13th annual report commissioned by FOSPAH, in total complaints, 2,016 were female and 855 were male, indicating a significant gender disparity in reported cases, with women disproportionately affected by workplace harassment. Furthermore, a notable portion of the complaints (982) originated from the government sector, with a higher number of female complainants (743) compared to male complainants (185). Conversely, the private sector accounted for a larger portion of the complaints (2643), with a similar gender disparity, as evidenced by 1973 female complainants and 670 male complainants. These findings highlight the prevalence of workplace harassment across both government and private sectors, with female employees being particularly vulnerable to such incidents. Effective measures are imperative to address this gender-based issue comprehensively and ensure a safe and harassment-free work environment for all employees, irrespective of gender or sector. Throughout the reporting period from July 2022 to June 2023, the FOSPAH Regional Office in Karachi documented a total of 110 cases. —APP

UN Women Pakistan took steps to incorporate gender indicators in provincial plans

ISLAMABAD: UN Women Pakistan has taken a step to effectively get gender indicators incorporated into the provincial plans by developing a set of Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) Guidelines. According to UN Women Pakistan, the Labour and Human Resource Department, the Government of Punjab and Labour Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have both endorsed, adapted and notified these Guidelines to ensure that the processes for planning (of projects and schemes) and budgeting (of the finalized projects and schemes) are gender-responsive with regard to the Annual Development Programme (ADP). It was a minor achievement that the guidelines were endorsed and notified by government departments. UN Women have been set up in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab to provide psycho-social help, skill-building activities and rehabilitation support services to women and girls, said an official here on Thursday. According to data revealed by UN Women said that Pakistan's partnerships with private sectors aim to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community through facilitating knowledge sharing, adopting best practices, and creating dignified, harassment-free environments for all. —APP

Police arrest two bike lifters with six motorcycles

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested two bike lifters and recovered six stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession, said a Police spokesman. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, Pirwadhai Police Station managed to net two bike lifters, Ali Raza and Naveed, and recovered six stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Rawal, Muhammad Haseeb Raja said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars —APP

Genetic testing can reduce incidence of eye cancer

While speaking at a seminar titled "Story of challenges and opportunities," he expressed gratitude to kind donors for helping to defray the exorbitant expense of treating eye disease. He also complimented the medical staff, treating cancer patients with utmost care and dedication

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Over the past three years, the Al-Shifa Eye Cancer Centre has successfully performed 2,500 sessions of chemotherapy procedures for children who have been diagnosed with eye cancer. President Al-Shifa Trust Maj. Gen. (Retd) Rehmat Khan said every stage of the procedure—from evaluation to chemotherapy and rehabilitation—is handled under one roof, making our hospital a unique resource for treating patients suffering from eye cancer. While speaking at a seminar titled "Story of challenges and opportunities," he expressed gratitude to kind donors for helping to defray the exorbitant expense of treating eye disease. He also complimented the medical staff, treating cancer patients with utmost care and dedication. He said, "Our donors are transforming millions of lives and assisting suffering humanity in rewriting their stories while becoming contributing members of society." Maj. Gen. (Retd) Rehmat Khan stated that as protecting and restoring eyesight is a noble objective, we will continue to treat impoverished children with eye cancer at no cost despite all financial difficulties. On that occasion, Prof Dr Tayyab Afghani, HOD Oculoplastics, said that the number of eye cancer patients is increasing. As compared to the regional countries, Pakistan is witnessing an increase in eye cancer cases in children at an alarming pace, he said. Children's eye



cancer in Pakistan is higher than in India and China, and genetic diagnosis can reduce children's eye cancer cases. Dr Afghani said that 2000 children with eye cancer have been registered of whom 500 have fully recovered. The Al-Shifa Eye Cancer Center caters to surgery, chemotherapy, and rehabilitation under one roof,

free of cost. The patients include non-affording men, women, and especially children, and 86 percent of all eye cancer patients are children, he informed. Two sister departments support the eye cancer center; one is ophthalmology genetic, which provides genetic screening of the parents to assess any possibility

of cancer in future races and suggest how it can be prevented. The second department is the aesthetic department, which minimizes the effects of chemotherapy and radiation on the skin and face. The adverse effects of the treatment, like facial scars, rejuvenate the damaged skin so that the patient can live a good quality

of life. Tanzeela Farha, paediatric oncologist; Dr. Maheen Akbar, Ocular Oncologist; Ms. Maryam Ijaz, guest speaker; Prof Dr. Ayesha Babar Kawish, HOD Al-Shifa School of Public Health; Dr. Rubata Gul, Dr. Aneesa Sultan, also spoke on the occasion and shared their experiences.

Pakistan Navy's crucial role in maritime security

ISLAMABAD: Director of NIMA Karachi Commodore (Retd) Ali Abbas Thursday praised the Pakistan Navy's crucial role in protecting the country's maritime interests on World Maritime Day, highlighting the importance of public awareness for a safe sea environment. Talking to a Private news channel, he explained that the Pakistan Navy's efforts are indeed commendable, with initiatives like Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMSP) and Joint Maritime Information Coordination Center (JMICC) demonstrating their commitment to maritime security and safety. Ali Abbas also elaborated on the theme of World Maritime Day 2024,

"Navigating the Future: Safety First!", highlighting its significance in the contemporary maritime landscape. He said Pakistan is indeed focusing on digitalization to enhance the safety of maritime affairs, adding, that the Ministry of Maritime Affairs is regulating license ports, marine services, and facilities, while also managing vessel traffic in ports to ensure safety and efficiency. This digitalization drive is part of Pakistan's broader efforts to modernize its maritime sector, leveraging technology to improve safety, security, and sustainability, he added. Pakistan is taking significant steps to tap into its vast maritime po-

tential by seeking international collaboration across various sectors, including fisheries, coastal tourism, environmental protection, maritime training and education, ports operations, shipbuilding and repairs, and housing sector development, he said. This strategic move aims to unlock the country's blue economy, which holds immense potential for growth and socio-economic development, he added. Commodore (Retd) Ali Abbas, Director of NIMA also appealed to the public to contribute to maintaining a safe and clean environment in sea-side areas, emphasizing the urgent need to address littering issues. —APP

CTP finalizes arrangements for Milad procession

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi have finalized arrangements for Chur Chowk Eid Milad procession to be taken out on Sept 27, Friday on Peshawar Road. Over 143 traffic officers and officials including four DSPs, 25 senior traffic wardens, 114 traffic wardens and assistants would perform special duties. With the help of district police, vehicles would be parked at a distance of 500 meters from the procession route, said a CTP spokesman. He informed that the traffic police would divert traffic on alternative routes and would keep Darbar Shah Pyara Road, Allahabad Road, Ghazi Road, Ashiana Chowk Mohammadabad to Progressive School Turn closed for vehicular traffic. After Asr prayer, the traffic from Peshawar to Saddar would be diverted to IJP Road towards Mehrabad. The traffic going from Saddar to Peshawar would be able to move to Peshawar using the road in the opposite direction from Rafi Mall U-turn. Misrial Roa, Jaba Pali to Chur Chowk would be closed to traffic while the traffic going from Bhatta Chowk to Chur Chowk would be diverted to Range Chowk towards Qasim Market Manzil via Range Road. In case of heavy traffic, more diversions could also be arranged to regulate traffic, he added. In the second phase, the traffic would be diverted to Range Road towards Qasim Market to Bhatta Chowk Golra via Shaley Valley, Misrial Road, he informed. Chief Traffic Officer, Rawalpindi Beenish Fatima had issued special instructions to the traffic police to make the best traffic arrangements for the convenience of the road users on the occasion of Eid Milad on Nabi procession of Chur Chowk, he added. —DNA

Pakistan strengthens automotive ties with China

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Consul General in Shanghai, Shehzad Ahmad Khan, reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast commitment to enhancing its bilateral relations with China, with a particular focus on the rapidly growing automotive sector. Speaking at the opening ceremony of a four-day 2024 Taizhou International Automobile Industry Expo, he said Taizhou's pivotal role as a trailblazer in China's automobile industry and praised the city's innovative achievements and its substantial contributions to

the global market. Highlighting the importance of technological collaboration, Shehzad emphasized the potential for groundbreaking advancements in automotive technology through joint efforts between Pakistani and Chinese enterprises. "Such collaboration can drive significant strides in knowledge sharing, capacity building, and sustainable practices within the industry," he said, as reported by China Economic Net on Thursday. He further stressed the need for a comprehensive framework of cooperation encompassing research and development, manufacturing, and

market access. "By working together, we can shape a future where clean, efficient, and sustainable mobility solutions are accessible to all," he added. Taizhou, renowned as the 'First City of Private Automobile Manufacturing' in China, is home to five national automobile industry bases and over 6,000 automobile and parts enterprises. The expo, which covers six exhibition halls across 50,000 square meters, features 2,500 booths showcasing the latest products and technologies in the sector. On the sidelines of the expo, Shehzad organized an Electric Vehicle

(EV) investment conference. The event brought together key stakeholders from both countries, including industry leaders, officials, and potential investors, to explore opportunities in Pakistan's EV sector. Discussions focused on investment prospects in manufacturing, infrastructure development, and supply chain management. The 2024 Taizhou International Automobile Industry Expo marks a significant step in further solidifying Pakistan-China relations, particularly in fostering innovation and growth in the automotive industry.

IESCO committed to quality services

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company Director Public Relations, Asim Nazir Raja has said that IESCO was dedicated to providing quality services to its valued customers and utilizing all available resources to ensure an exceptional customer experience. In an interview with a Private news channel, he pledged that the company would continue to provide uninterrupted access to its cutting-edge digital services where its user-friendly 'Smart App' is available on Google to enhance customer experience and solidify its position at the forefront of digital transformation in the power sector. He further elaborated the 'Smart App' features and highlighted its user-friendly interface and array of convenient services. "Our customers can now pay bills, report power outages, and track usage history with just a few taps," he explained. "The app also provides real-time updates on scheduled power shutdowns and maintenance, ensuring minimal disruption to daily life," he added. "By leveraging technology, IESCO aims to reduce paperwork, enhance transparency, and foster a more efficient customer experience," he mentioned. "IESCO's Smart App represents a significant milestone in our digital transformation journey," he stated. "We recognize the importance of adapting to changing customer needs and preferences," he said. —APP

OEC to export skilled workforce to Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD: Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) working under the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) would export the skilled workforce to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. An official source told media here on Thursday, he said that skilled workforce would work under the Saudi Ministry of National Guard - Health Affairs as a Tradesman Assistants who meet the prescribed qualifications and experience as following Tradesman Assistant (Age 25-50), Education should be High School Graduate - Essential, Diploma Degree in Technical College or engineering in the specific area of assignment or recognized apprenticeship program in a specific area of assignment from an accredited institution would be preferred. He said that the responsibilities/duties of the workforce would be carried out general cleaning duties within workshop or plant room areas, and assist tradesmen with duties such as painting, flooring upkeep, electrical repairs, and heating/air conditioning system cleaning, etc. Assist Tradesmen with performing minor fixes such as repairing broken locks, filling gaps on walls, checking control panels, and electrical wiring to identify issues, etc. Assist with ensuring safe and efficient operation of all equipment and plant in disposal. Safeguard and maintain all assigned tools in good working order. —DNA

ANF recovers 42 kg drugs in 11 operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 11 operations across the country managed to recover 42 kg drugs worth over Rs 10 million, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that ANF teams conducting raids during the last 24 hours also arrested 11 accused. In an operation, 9.6 kg hashish hidden in a rickshaw was recovered on Sparco Road in Islamabad. 4.8 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused netted near Kakpul, Islamabad. 17 grams cocaine was recovered from a motorcyclist held near Pirwadhai Mor, Rawalpindi. 170 grams Ice and 5 grams cocaine were recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up in Sector E-11, Islamabad. In a raid, 1000 grams hashish hidden in a motorcycle near a university in Peshawar was recovered. In another raid, 1000 grams hashish was recovered from a rickshaw intercepted near an educational institution in Sialkot and two accused were arrested during the operation. 1.5 kg hashish was recovered from the accused nabbed near a college in Faisalabad. 200 grams heroin and 300 grams hashish were recovered from an accused arrested near an educational institution in Sialkot. —APP

HEC clarifies misleading news

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) on Thursday clarified that Urdu has never been a compulsory subject in the undergraduate level. However, the subject is taught at levels up to secondary higher education i.e., intermediate / equivalent, which is still intact. The clarification was about a misleading news that had been published regarding exclusion of Urdu as a compulsory subject at the undergraduate level. Moreover, it is clarified that while formulation of the HEC Undergraduate Education Policy V 1.1. (2023), all key stakeholders were consulted and the policy was finalized accordingly. It should also be noted that at undergraduate level, a full-fledged specialized degree programme in the discipline of Urdu is offered for which a curriculum has been developed by HEC and is available at HEC website. The minimum requirement for the general education component is 32 credits in all the undergraduate degree programmes including the Associate Degrees. As far as the optional subjects are concerned, the universities may add more courses as. —APP

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A year of protests

SINCE the start of the Israeli assault on Gaza on October 7 of last year, public reactions from both the Arab world and internationally have been overwhelmingly in support of Palestine and against the massacres carried out by the Israeli occupation army against civilians. This contrasts with official responses, which have ranged from unconditional support for Israel, in words and actions, to verbal sympathy for Gaza's victims without any real action, and in some cases, complete silence, with no clear stance on either side. The most notable feature of these protests is that they primarily took place in countries that support Israel and in a few Arab nations like Yemen, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon. However, they were absent in the UAE, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. In Egypt, a few small protests emerged briefly, supported by the ruling regime, but they were quickly halted and faded out before October had even ended. In several Arab countries, protests erupted at the start of the war and continued for months. The most notable were in cities like Amman, Sanaa, and Baghdad, where large-scale events were held calling for the prosecution of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Army Minister Yoav Gallant, the cessation of the aggression on Gaza, condemnation of U.S. and European support for Israel, and demands for aid to enter Gaza. In the Maghreb, numerous protests took place in Mauritania, Morocco, and Algeria, demanding an end to the aggression, the lifting of the siege, the opening of Egypt's Rafah crossing, and the severing of diplomatic relations with Israel. In Mauritania, a march in the capital Nouakchott called for ending the siege on Gaza. In Western countries (which claim to uphold freedom of expression and the right to protest), demonstrations were sometimes met with police repression, and many protesters were arrested. This highlights the sharp divide between governments that support the aggressor and people who support the victim. Over the past year of Israeli aggression on Gaza, global popular movements have recorded thousands of protests and events worldwide, including around 20,000 solidarity demonstrations in 18 European countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, and Austria. These activities ranged from demonstrations, sit-ins, and protests to photo exhibitions and other forms of expression. In the first 30 days alone, 5 million people in the U.S. and Europe demonstrated against the Israeli aggression on Gaza and called for humanitarian aid to be sent to the besieged territory. During the initial phase of the conflict, starting with the "Al-Aqsa Flood" offensive and continuing through the end of October, there were a few pro-Israel demonstrations in parts of Europe and the U.S. However, these diminished over time, especially after international institutions and courts condemned Netanyahu's government for committing war crimes against civilians, weakening the position of Israel's supporters. Another significant development was the shift in public opinion, with increasing opposition to Israel and growing support for Palestinian rights and condemnation of the attacks on Gaza's population. This shift even saw Jewish groups in some countries joining protests against the occupation. For the first time, European cities witnessed a massive wave of pro-Palestinian support.



Biden and legacy of ashes

US President Joe Biden tried to use his final address at the United Nations General Assembly this week to defend democracy, the value of alliance and collective security as his legacies. In truth, his presidency has weakened every one of them, thus he is leaving office in a world much more dangerous than when he entered it. That's saying a lot when his predecessor was the supposedly much more unreliable and unstable Donald Trump. Biden declared America is back as the world leader, but most people around the UN chamber, and not a few Americans as well, may read that as ironic rather than triumphal. A lame-duck presidency can do very little other than try to convince the world that it has done good. That will be very difficult. Under his leadership, America has committed to supporting two major wars whose outcomes will likely be anything but what US policymakers claim to have been their goals. In the meantime, he has launched the US inexorably into a cold war redux with China – assuming it's not turning into a hot war, yet – that's guaranteed to be a lose-lose for all sides, including bystander nations. He has failed to stop, let alone reverse, a rogue enemy from continuing an invasion and occupation that has upended European security for at least a generation. He has failed to stop a rogue ally from conducting a merciless war on a civilian population under decades-long military occupation and repression, and now threatening to spread the conflict across the whole Middle East. In both cases, only the supply of American weapons has been a constant, which guarantees prolonging the conflicts and the human suffering with no enduring resolution in sight. If some news reports are anything to go by, Biden and his top civilian advisers were prepared to let Ukraine strike deep into Russia and to provide virtually unlimited weapons to Israel. Only the demand for restraint from top Pentagon generals and their boss, the defence secretary, has managed to hold back the insanity, for now. "At my direction, America stepped into the breach [and] ensured the survival of Ukraine," Biden claimed. Or what's left of it. Both ordinary Americans and Europeans have turned decisively against the war and the warmongering of their leaders, who have delivered neither victory nor relief from the disastrous economic spillovers from the conflict. It's even worse for the United States in the Middle East. US-led Western support for Israel and its impunity has discredited any claims about Western values for human lives, dignity and freedom. Should Israel be found guilty of committing war crimes, war against humanity and genocide by the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, the US and a few of its Western allies, noticeably Germany, would be fully complicit, not the least by supplying most of the weapons and virtually unconditional diplomatic support, practically against the entire world. The vast majority of member states in the UN chamber didn't just fault the Biden administration for failing to secure a ceasefire in Gaza, they blamed it for enabling the unprecedented Israeli slaughter of Palestinians. And yet, with complete lack of self-awareness, Biden repeated his call for a ceasefire deal and his support for a two-state solution, affirmations that were as vacuous as they were patently offensive.

Kamala Harris's Achilles' Heel: The faltering economy

Qamar Bashir



In Detroit's automotive sector, uncertainty around the election and future policies—such as EV (Electric Vehicle) incentives versus traditional combustion engines—has led to a slowdown in investment and production. This hesitation affects job markets, with many businesses delaying hiring or even laying off workers until policy directions become clearer.

BEING in the US and experiencing the pre-election excitement and frenzy is an incredible experience. Unlike in our country, where economic and business activities usually see an upward trend during the run-up to elections, the situation in the US is quite the opposite. In Michigan, particularly in Detroit—known as the "Motor City"—industrial and manufacturing activities have come to a standstill. Car manufacturers have paused their assembly lines, awaiting the outcome of the election, as automobile policies could drastically change. If Trump comes to power, combustion engine vehicles may be favored, whereas a Harris administration is more likely to support electric vehicle manufacturing. This period is extremely challenging for the job market. Factories are shutting down, and even regular employees are being laid off, forcing them to look for odd jobs to make ends meet. I visited a Pakistani-owned Pak machine factory that specializes in manufacturing high-precision leads and pins for the high-tech automobile industry, employing around 30 to 50 highly skilled workers. Unfortunately, due to the election-induced slowdown, the factory has ceased operations, and employees have been laid off. The factory plans to resume operations only after the presidential election results are finalized and a clear automobile policy is announced. While this economic slowdown before elections is considered normal, it leaves employees with a bitter experience and uncertainty about their future. Another interesting trend we've observed while living in Macomb County, about 30 miles from Detroit, the capital of Michigan, is that almost all households display placards on their lawns showing their support for either Trump or Harris. In our peaceful locality, every placard we saw during our morning and evening walks bore Trump's name, with the slogan "Take Back America." Though Michigan is a swing state that can lean either way, its residents are primarily concerned about rising commodity prices, property price escalation, interest rate hikes, and mortgage challenges. These issues are symptomatic of increased government spending and excessive currency printing, which exceed the economy's capacity and ultimately erode the value of wages and salaries. This trend seems typical of incumbent governments, whether in Pakistan or the US, as they often resort to spending sprees to expand their vote banks without considering the greater national interest or adopting a long-term vision. These shortsighted and vested interest policies, lofty promises, coupled with a faltering American economy, may become

Harris's Achilles' heel, just as Trump's stance on the alienation of both legal and illegal immigrants could turn out to be his Achilles' heel. Due to imprudent policies and reckless spendings, in the mid-2023, the inflation rates peaked at around 5-6%, the highest in over a decade, leading to increased costs for everyday goods, groceries, and fuel. The interest rate will reach about 5.25% in 2023, up from near-zero levels primarily due to rising inflation leading to increase in borrowing costs for businesses and consumers, slowing down economic activity, particularly in sectors such as housing, where mortgage rates have jumped to over 7% for a 30-year fixed mortgage. The real wages (adjusted for inflation) have not kept up with rising prices, effectively reducing purchasing power. This "wage erosion" means that despite higher paychecks, many workers feel poorer as their earnings fail to cover rising costs of living. According to a report by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, real wages for American workers fell by 2-3% on average in 2023, indicating that salary gains are being outpaced by inflation. During the election year, the Biden-Harris administration has introduced stimulus packages and spending initiatives, such as the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan and the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. While these measures were aimed at boosting recovery, they also contributed to higher national debt and increased money supply, further fueling inflation. In Detroit's automotive sector, uncertainty around the election and future policies—such as EV (Electric Vehicle) incentives versus traditional combustion engines—has led to a slowdown in investment and production. This hesitation affects job markets, with many businesses delaying hiring or even laying off workers until policy directions become clearer. Due to inflation, rising interest rates, and uncertainty, economic growth has slowed down, with GDP growth rates for 2023 projected to be around 1-2%**, compared to the robust 5.7% in 2021. This deceleration reflects a combination of consumer uncertainty, reduced spending power, and a cautious business environment. Despite a challenging economic and financial outlook, Kamala Harris has made several ambitious promises during her 2024 campaign that aim to support middle-class families, workers, and first-time homebuyers. She has emphasized her vision to grow the middle class by reforming permitting processes to accelerate building projects, eliminating college degree

requirements for federal jobs, and increasing union apprenticeships. She planned to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for workers without children, lowering the eligible age to 19. She has proposed providing an average of \$25,000 in down payment assistance to qualified first-time homebuyers over four years. These policy proposals would increase the primary deficit by \$1.2 trillion over a 10-year period from 2025 to 2034, indicating significant fiscal impacts if implemented. Economic experts and media personalities and recently conducted surveys and polls are terming economic policies of Kamala Harris as her achilles heel. Handli Polls suggest that many voters trust Donald Trump over Kamala Harris on economic issues, with an 11-point lead in favor of Trump, reflecting concerns about inflation, slow wage growth, and fears of a potential recession under the Biden-Harris administration. Trump's "America First" policies, including deregulation and tax cuts, are seen by many as having contributed to a stronger pre-pandemic economy, which Harris has struggled to replicate or effectively counter. Economists have criticized Harris's proposals for federal price controls on food companies and landlords, citing failures of similar policies in the past, such as during the Nixon era. Such controls are seen as potentially driving investors away from building rental housing, which could exacerbate the housing crisis rather than solve it. Harris's proposal to expand the child tax credit to \$3,600 per child and \$6,000 for newborns is seen with concerns that such spending, along with other proposed initiatives, could further increase inflation and deepen the national debt without corresponding cuts in federal spending or tax increases. The economy is emerging as a crucial factor in the 2024 election, with Trump's approach focusing on tax cuts and deregulation, which has led to high voter confidence in his ability to handle economic issues. In contrast, Harris has been criticized for not presenting a clear plan to handle inflation, rising interest rates, and overall economic stability. Her perceived lack of effectiveness in addressing inflation, wage growth, and housing costs, as well as concerns about increased government spending without a concrete strategy for economic expansion is going to cost her dearly in the upcoming elections.

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

Why is the US flouting its own laws to continue arming Israel?

Ahmad Ibsais

The news was confirmed by USAID and the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration in late April. However, in a disturbing twist, Secretary of State Antony Blinken testified before Congress in May, claiming the opposite—that Israel had not obstructed US-backed aid. This glaring contradiction seems aimed at sidestepping a critical US law that mandates the cessation of military aid to countries that block humanitarian assistance. At the heart of this issue lies Section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act, which prohibits military support to nations that impede the delivery of US-funded humanitarian aid. This law has rarely been invoked, but should have been activated months ago when USAID and State Department experts documented Israel's obstruction. The head of the State Dept.'s refugees bureau determined that Israel was blocking humanitarian aid and that the government should freeze \$830M earmarked for weapons and bombs to Israel, per emails we obtained. According to USAID's internal memos, Israel has not only turned away convoys of essential goods, such as food, medicine, and sanitation supplies, but has also attacked aid workers, bombed hospitals, and destroyed critical infrastructure in Gaza. Rather than enforce the law, US President Joe Biden's administration has doubled down on its military support for Israel, sending between one to two shipments of weapons daily since the start of the war on Gaza. This includes an arms package worth \$20 billion that was just approved last month, in August 2024. Israel, the largest recipient of US military aid, has used these weapons in an offensive that has killed over 41,000 Palestinians, many of them civilians. The State Department's own experts, as well as officials from USAID, have repeatedly warned that Israel's actions could be construed as illegal under international law and should trigger the US' own provision to halt military support. Yet, Blinken's testimony before Congress downplayed these findings, claiming

that Israel was complying with humanitarian standards. This stark denial of reality not only protects Israel from accountability but also enables the continued bombardment of Gaza and the worsening humanitarian disaster there. As of March 2024, over 930 aid trucks remained stuck in Egypt, unable to enter Gaza and provide life-saving food due to Israel's deliberate delays. Blinken's statement wasn't simply a matter of oversight. It was a strategic move to keep the weapons flowing, while turning a blind eye to the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza. Despite repeated calls from Democratic lawmakers and human rights groups to suspend arms shipments, the Biden administration has ignored the clear violations of both US and international law. This ongoing complicity raises a crucial question: Why has the US allowed this to happen? One reason is the deep-seated political and military alliance between the two countries, which has historically prioritized Israeli security over Palestinian lives. Officials like the US Ambassador to Israel Jack Lew have consistently trusted Tel Aviv's assurances, despite overwhelming evidence of their failure to uphold humanitarian standards. Lew even pushed back against internal State Department concerns about aid blockages, framing Israel as an unparalleled humanitarian actor—a grotesque mischaracterisation in light of the destruction of aid workers and resources in Gaza. Furthermore, Israel's argument that items such as hygiene kits, solar lamps, and desalination equipment could be repurposed by Hamas as "dual-use" materials has been used to justify these restrictions. But these delays are arbitrary and serve only to exacerbate the suffering of Gaza's civilian population. The US government's unwillingness to act on these findings reflects its broader complicity in a system that prioritises military dominance over human rights. BREAKING: White House spokesman says US officials have not seen or confirmed pictures of atrocities in Israel, saying President Biden based his comments regarding beheaded children on Israeli statements and media reports. More than their unwillingness to conform to international humanitarian law, there is an active aiding and abetting in pushing Israeli

lies to create public support for this genocide. For example, Biden said he saw headless babies after October 7 (he didn't), while other US politicians have been circulating (unsubstantiated and debunked) claims of mass rapes. These narratives came from the Israeli government to justify its genocide, but in the end they were all proved to be false. Yet the US continues to back such claims with no proof in an attempt to create public support for Israel. As the situation in Gaza worsens, the US must reckon with its role in this atrocity. The law is clear: when a country blocks humanitarian aid, US military support must stop. But instead of enforcing these legal protections, the US continues to fuel the violence. The administration's manipulation of facts to avoid legal consequences demonstrates a blatant disregard for Palestinian lives and further undermines US credibility as a global humanitarian leader. On Tuesday, Biden spoke at the UN General Assembly, his first address there since the war on Gaza began. In his speech, Biden again reiterated Israeli lies about mass sexual violence on October 7 and continued to justify the ongoing genocide because of the missing Israeli hostages—as if Israel has not killed many of these hostages, and refused multiple ceasefire deals. Biden also alarmingly called out Russian president Vladimir Putin as an obstacle to peace, even though the US president is the one who continues to fund and support the mass extermination of Palestinians. If Biden wants peace, as he proclaims, he must wash his blood-stained hands and call for a complete arms embargo and international law to be enforced upon Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. We will never forget the Biden administration's support for genocide, and Biden will never be able to absolve his legacy of the thousands of innocent civilians murdered in the name of occupation. The US can no longer hide behind diplomatic doublespeak. A legal framework exists to halt this kind of complicity, but remains unused. Until the US government acknowledges and addresses its role in Israel's genocide on Gaza, it will continue to be a co-conspirator in the destruction of an entire population. The world is watching, and history will remember where the US stood in this time of crisis.

Briefs

CPEC Phase-II vital for reviving ...

FROM PAGE 01

to meet the financial needs for obtaining the new IMF program. Answering a question, he appreciated Washington's support for Pakistan's loan program in the Executive Board meeting as the United States is the largest stakeholder in the IMF. He said the United States has invested in Pakistan in the past and it is hoped that this will increase in the future. The Finance Minister said the largest portion of the loan taken from friendly countries is from China. He said CPEC Phase II with China is crucial for the revival of Pakistan's industry. Answering another question, he said the GSP Plus program is a lifeline for Pakistani exports. To a question, he said there has been no delay in the IMF program as it was approved as a result of a phased process. He added that due to non-implementation of past programs, there is a lack of credibility and trust. However, the incumbent government is determined to bring economic reforms in line with the IMF program.

CJP reveals why he removed...

FROM PAGE 01

The chief justice said Justice Akhtar ardently opposed the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, which had removed the dominance of the chief justice over the Supreme Court as well. "He was one of two judges who availed the full summer vacations; indifferent to the piling backlog cases," he said. The letter mentioned that while on vacation and not available to do court work, Justice Akhtar insisted on participating in the committee meetings, suggesting his lack of trust in the next senior judge, Justice Yahya Afridi. "The Act [also] stipulates that urgent cases are to be fixed within 14 days but this statutory provision and the constitutional right to seek review was negated by his [Munib Akhtar's] refusal to hear urgent constitutional cases while he was vacationing.

PTI moves SC against ordinance

FROM PAGE 01

petition is pending, read the plea. It added that the old committee should be allowed to function during the petition against the ordinance. The PTI petition has been filed a week after the president and federal government approved the much-debated ordinance. The federal cabinet adopted the ordinance "through a circulation" after the Ministry of Law had sent it to the prime minister and cabinet on the night of September 19. The ordinance said the court bench would look at the cases keeping in view the fundamental human rights and public importance. As per the ordinance, each case will be heard on its turn otherwise reason will be furnished for its taking out of turn.

No use of talks with...

FROM PAGE 01

yesterday and was prepared even today for this exercise. "It has been PTI's policy that we want to engage with the establishment and I will go a step ahead to say that dialogue between my party and the establishment is inevitable for this state and we must not delay this," Hasan contended. He advocated the initiation of dialogue so that solutions to the country's problems and challenges could be found and Pakistan taken forward. He disagreed with the questioner that, currently, the policy of establishment was not to engage with PTI and added they have engaged with his party and why he should not be hopeful that they would again engage. Hasan, however, maintained that a conducive environment would have to be created for which both sides would have to make efforts.

Ministry, PSB officials involved in politics will be dismissed

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC), Rana Sanaullah, stated that any officials from the ministry or the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) found involved in sports politics will be dismissed without hesitation. He also pledged full support for the revival of the national sport, hockey. Speaking alongside Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) President Tariq Bugti and Secretary General Rana Mujahid at the opening ceremony of the 37th National Junior Hockey Championship at the Naseer Banda Hockey Ground in Islamabad, Sanaullah emphasized the government's commitment to enhancing national sports. Rana Sanaullah underscored that it is the duty of the government and the PSB to provide sports federations and athletes with the necessary facilities. He noted that any deficiencies would be addressed promptly. Referring to past issues, he highlighted the unrest within the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) that led to a FIFA ban, but stressed the government's intention to resolve such matters and implement policies to help top athletes excel internationally. When asked about pending dues of PHF, Rana Sanaullah assured



that any outstanding payments to the Pakistan Hockey Federation would be settled, reaffirming the importance of hockey as the national sport and the collective desire for its improvement. Sanaullah acknowledged the lack of recent success in hockey but expressed optimism for its future.

He called on all departments to establish their own sports teams and announced plans to create a high-performance center in Islamabad. He also mentioned that the government, under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision, is focused on promoting sports nationwide. Match Results of the 37th

National Junior Hockey Championship: Customs dominated Sindh A with a resounding 15-0 victory. Abdul Qayyum scored five goals, Ali Hamza added four, and Samiullah netted two. Police triumphed over Punjab Whites with a 6-2 win. Muhammad Hamad scored a hat trick, while Muhammad Umar

contributed two goals. Punjab Blues defeated Balochistan 7-0. WAPDA overwhelmed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa A with a 7-0 score line. Sixteen teams are competing in the tournament, which will run until October 5. The quarter-finals, semi-finals, and final will also take place on the same day.

Gillespie wants fresh talent to replace Sarfaraz Ahmed

Pakistan's red-ball coach spoke during commentary at Champions Cup match between Lions, Stallions

DNA

FAISALABAD: Pakistan's red-ball cricket team head coach, Jason Gillespie, has emphasised on importance of giving confidence and showing faith in existing group of cricketers. Speaking during commentary at the Champions One-Day Cup match between Lions and Stallions on Wednesday, Gillespie discussed a range of topics, from player development to fitness challenges and the lessons he has learned so far. Reflecting on his tenure, Gillespie, who also toured to Australia with the Pakistan Shaheens, shared his experience of getting acquainted with the players and support staff. "Yeah, look, the team's been great," he said. "I was fortunate enough to be in Darwin with the Pakistan Shaheens, which was a great experience to get to know some of the guys playing

underneath the test side. Obviously, the test series didn't go the way we would have liked against Bangladesh, but to start getting to know the players, the support staff, and everyone within Pakistan cricket has been fantastic." Gillespie, himself a renowned fast bowler, acknowledged the importance of fitness in Test cricket. "Fitness has been well-documented in the press. That's certainly something, as far as I'm concerned, and having spoken to Gary Kirsten, it's a controllable. It's something that we can control. We can continue to develop and work on that because, as we know, test cricket is a challenge," Gillespie remarked. When asked about the current squad announced for the series against England, Gillespie emphasised the importance of showing faith in the players. "We picked a squad which is not too dissimilar to what we had against Bangladesh. I'm really keen to

show our faith and belief in our players. We don't want to have knee-jerk reactions after every bad game or a result that hasn't gone our way. We want to show the faith and belief in these players because they're very good players, and we showed glimpses of good cricket in both the first and second Test against Bangladesh in Pindi," Gillespie said. However, Gillespie recognised the need for greater consistency. "We just need to do it a little bit more consistently," he added, stressing that maintaining trust in the players could help them achieve the desired results. One player who has caught the eye of the cricketing community is Kamran Ghulam, who has been in outstanding form in the Champions Cup, scoring two centuries. While acknowledging Ghulam's form, Gillespie remained focused on rewarding the current squad. "Kamran has been communicated that his form

has been acknowledged. He's had, in particular, recent excellent performances. There are guys in the test squad who have been excellent over time, and we want to reward that," he explained. Gillespie reiterated the importance of patience, noting, "We firmly believe if we show faith and belief in our players, it gives them the best chance to go out and play with the freedom that we want them to play." One of the more pressing challenges for Gillespie and the Pakistan management has been managing the workload of players who compete in all three formats, especially fast bowlers like Naseem Shah and Shaheen Afridi. Gillespie underscored the importance of a "squad mentality" rather than over-relying on a few players. "There's a lot of cricket in all formats that we need to just be really aware of and make sure we're managing our players as best we can," he said.

Shakib Al Hasan announces retirement from T20I cricket

FOREIGN DESK

Dhaka: Shakib Al Hasan has announced that the Dhaka Test against South Africa in October will be his last, also confirming that he has played his final T20I for Bangladesh. He made this statement to the media ahead of the Kanpur Test against India, indicating that his future international appearances will be limited to ODIs. The series against South Africa remains uncertain, as Cricket South Africa has yet to grant security clearance following inspections of the venue earlier this week. This comes in the wake of unrest in Bangladesh during July and August, which resulted in the deaths of several hundred people. Shakib was a member of parliament for the Awami League-led government, the target of the protests. Since the fall of the Awami League-led government on 5th August, Shakib has encountered complications and has not been in the country. "I am available for the South Africa series but since there's a lot happening back home, naturally not everything depends on me," Shakib said. "I have discussed my plans about Test cricket with the BCB. Especially this series and the home series. I was thinking that it could be my last Test series. "I have told [BCB president] Faruque bhai and the selectors. If there's a chance and if I can play, my last Test will be in Mirpur. The board is trying to ensure that I can play and feel safe, at the same time that I can leave the country without a hitch." "I am a citizen of Bangladesh, so I shouldn't have any problem going back to Bangladesh," he said. "My concern is my safety and security in Bangladesh. My close friends and family members are concerned. I hope things are getting better. There should be a solution to it." Shakib has participated in every edition of the T20 World Cup since its inception in 2007 and concluded the 2024 edition as the tournament's all-time leading wicket-taker, having taken 50 wickets. Shakib featured in 129 T20Is for Bangladesh and scored 2551 runs and took 149 wickets.

PAK vs ENG: Zahid included in Pak squad

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has provided an update on the Test squad ahead of the first Test of the three-match series against England. Leg-spinner Zahid Mahmood will join the pre-test camp in Multan as the 16th player, but the final squad will be trimmed to 15 players for the first Test, set to begin on October 7. "Kamran Ghulam and Mohammad Ali will remain on reserve but will continue playing domestic matches to stay match-ready," the PCB said in a statement. "All three players are part of the Pakistan Test team setup, but 15 players are sufficient for the home Test series due to cricketers and logistical reasons," he added. The PCB highlighted that it would be more beneficial for Ghulam and Ali to gain playing time in domestic matches rather than sitting in the dugout during the series. The move allows them to keep sharp and in form for potential call-ups during future matches. Remember, PCB confirmed the squad for the first Test on Tuesday. The squad will assemble in Multan on Monday, September 30, with the training camp commencing on October 1. The selected players were withdrawn from the Champions One-Day Cup playoffs to allow them some rest ahead of the series.—APP

Utd held by Twente as Lazio claims win

MANCHESTER: Manchester United began their Europa League campaign with a 1-1 draw after they were held by FC Twente at a rainy Old Trafford on Wednesday, with a goal from Christian Eriksen being cancelled out by Dutch striker Sam Lammers. The first half was a lively affair, with Twente's Lammers making an early attempt that trickled past the post. Eriksen put United ahead 10 minutes before the break, delivering a power-

ful curling shot into the top corner from inside the box. Twente equalised in the 68th minute when Lammers produced a powerful finish past United keeper Andre Onana at the near post. Joshua Zirkzee tried to get United in front again minutes later with a shot from an acute angle but were denied by a save from Twente keeper Lars Unnerstall. Bruno Fernandes came close to scoring for United in the final minutes with a curling shot to-

ward the top corner, but the hosts struggled to break through Twente's deep-lying defence, which seemed content to secure the away draw. Boulaye Dia scored a double and Fisayo Dele-Bashi added another in the first half to hand Lazio a comprehensive 3-0 win against Dynamo Kyiv in Hamburg. Nice and Real Sociedad played out a 1-1 draw. Ander Barrenetxea put the Basque side ahead before Pablo Rosario scored the

equaliser for Nice. Elsewhere, Turkish champions Galatasaray claimed a 3-1 home win over Greece's PAOK thanks to Abdul Rahman Baba's own goal and strikes from Yunus Akgun and Mauro Icardi. Giannis Konstanteliass scored for the visitors. In an early match, Norwegian side Bodo/Glimt secured a 3-2 home victory against FC Porto thanks to a brace from Jens Petter Hauge, despite going down to 10 men in the 51st minute.—Agencies

Barcelona maintain perfect LaLiga start

The hosts dominated proceedings with almost 80% of possession and 16 goal attempts, but wasted numerous opportunities to win by a wider margin

SPORTS DESK

BARCELONA: A first-half strike by top-scorer Robert Lewandowski earned a below-strength Barcelona a 1-0 LaLiga win over lowly Getafe on Wednesday to maintain their 100% record after seven games. Barcelona, who rested Pedri and were without the injured Marc-Andre ter Stegen, Dani Olmo, Gavi, Frenkie de Jong, Ronald Araujo, Fermin Lopez and Andreas Christensen, went ahead through Lewandowski's close-range strike in the 19th minute after a poor mistake by Getafe goalkeeper David Soria. Soria failed to hold on to a Jules Koukoude cross and Lewandowski, who was lurking inside the box, pounced on the ball to fire home for his seventh goal of the season. The hosts dominated proceedings with almost 80% of possession and 16 goal attempts, but wasted



numerous opportunities to win by a wider margin. Soria made fine saves to deny efforts by Lamine Yamal, Lewandowski and three from Raphinha, who also missed a sitter in the 82nd minute, badly misfiring a header from a Koukoude cross. Barca almost paid a heavy price for their missed chances as the visitors could have scored an equaliser in the dying moments. Getafe fullback Juan Iglesias found Borja Mayoral unmarked inside the box from a quick counter attack, but the striker sliced his first-time effort in the 95th minute. Barca are top of the standings on 21 points, four ahead second-placed Real Madrid. Getafe are second from bottom on four points. "When you dominate a game but go only one goal ahead, the opponent sees a possibility of making a run for a better result and often that leads them to push you harder in the last minutes," Koukoude told Movistar Plus.

Imran, Bushra to be...

FROM PAGE 01
the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in line with the Supreme Court's verdict restoring amendments to the anti-corruption laws. The deposed prime minister has been imprisoned for almost a year upon his conviction in four cases — two Toshakhana references, the cipher case, and the Iddat case, in which his wife is also incarcerated. The new Toshakhana reference against the couple came to the fore after NAB arrested them shortly after a district and sessions court in Islamabad acquitted Khan and Bushra in the iddat case — also known as the un-Islamic nikah case — which was the last hurdle in the couple's release from jail. On Thursday (today), Special Judge Central Shahrukh Arjumand heard the post-arrest bail applications of the party founder and his spouse, who were brought to a makeshift court in Adiala prison.

Shehbaz reaffirms complete...

FROM PAGE 01
ceasefire in Gaza and the creation of a State of Palestine, without which peace cannot be restored in the region. Shehbaz Sharif asserted that the sacrifices of the Palestinian people will not go in vain, and will ultimately lead to an independent State of Palestine. In his remarks, Mahmoud Abbas acknowledged that Pakistan has consistently supported the Palestinian cause. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has reiterated Pakistan's unwavering commitment to ensure complete eradication of polio from the country. He highlighted this resolve of the country during his meeting with Bill Gates, the founder and co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) on the sidelines of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Prudent policies of govt...

FROM PAGE 01
Addressing a press conference here he said that due to steps of the present regime, inflation and prices of daily use commodities had fallen considerably. "A certain political party wanted the economy to default," the information minister said, adding, but the government took steps to avert such a situation." He said that the inflation ratio had decreased significantly compared to the same period last year and now it had come down single digit which was a good sign. Tarar said that the smuggling of dollars has been stopped by taking stringent measures and Information technology sector-related exports have increased significantly.

Forces eliminate...

FROM PAGE 01
September 25 and 26. "During conduct of the operation, intense fire exchange took place between our troops and Khawarij, as a result of which, eight Khawarij were sent to hell," read the statement. The ISPR added that the security forces also recovered weapons and ammunition from the killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces as well as target killing of innocent civilians. "Sanitisation of the area is being carried out to eliminate any other Khawarij found in the area as security forces are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country," the media wing added.

Taliban reject UN...

FROM PAGE 01
against the Taliban for their "contempt" for women. "The accusations made by some countries and parties on Afghanistan violating human rights and gender discrimination are unfounded," Hamdullah Fitrat, a government spokesman, told AFP. "Human rights are protected in Afghanistan and no one is treated with discrimination. Unfortunately, an attempt is being made to spread propaganda against Afghanistan based on the say of few escaped women."

Briefs

FBR to unveil 3-month tax education drive, warns of no mercy for evaders

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Spokesperson Bakhtiar Muhammad on Thursday announced a nationwide initiative to boost tax compliance where the department will conduct seminars to educate taxpayers and after this campaign, the FBR will impose strict penalties on those who fail to comply with tax regulations. Talking to PTV news channel, he said through seminars, workshops, and media outreach, the FBR aims to educate the public on tax laws, benefits, and procedures. Following the education drive, the FBR will adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards tax evasion, imposing strict penalties and legal action on non-compliant individuals and businesses, he added. This move aims to encourage taxpayers to file returns promptly and accurately, he added. The initiative will utilize multiple channels, including digital platforms, print and electronic media, and public seminars to ensure maximum outreach, he explained. To a question, he said that the improvement of tax compliance culture is the prime objective of the government and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is actively trying to achieve it with the cooperation of taxpayers. The decision of non-extension in the due date for filing of return last year saw an overwhelming response from taxpayers, he said.

Gold price hits new record of Rs 277,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD: Gold prices in Pakistan maintained their upward trajectory on Thursday in line with their increase in international rates. In the local market, the price of gold per tola surged by Rs1,500, clocking in at Rs277,000, which is the latest record high in Pakistan. Similarly, 10-gram gold was sold at Rs237,482 after it recorded an increase of Rs1,285, according to rates shared by the All-Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Sarafa Association (APGJSA). On Wednesday, gold price had increased by Rs2,500 to settle at Rs275,500. Meanwhile, the international rate of gold increased on Thursday. As per APGJSA, the rate was at \$2,665 per ounce (with a premium of \$20), and was up by \$12 during the day. Silver prices remained stable at Rs3,050 per tola.—APP

46 people drown during Hindu festival in India

At least 4 dead as heavy rains paralyse Mumbai

BIHAR, MUMBAI: At least 46 people, including 37 children, have drowned while celebrating a Hindu festival in eastern India, a local government official told AFP on Thursday. The victims drowned in separate incidents in Bihar state while ritually bathing in rivers and ponds swollen by recent flooding, an official from the Bihar Disaster Management Department told AFP. "People ignored dangerous water levels in rivers as well as ponds while bathing to celebrate this festival," said the official, who requested anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media. The drownings occurred from Tuesday across 15 districts of Bihar state as devotees marked the Jitija Parv Hindu festival, observed by mothers for the wellbeing of their children. Authorities were still working to recover three other bodies, the official said. Jitija Parv runs over several days and is also observed in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh

and Jharkhand states, and in parts of Nepal's southern plains. The Bihar state government has announced compensation for each of the victims' families, the government official said. Last year local media reported 22 people drowned during a 24-hour period in Bihar, most while marking the same festival. Deadly incidents are common at places of worship during major religious festivals in India, the biggest of which prompt millions of devotees to make pilgrimages to holy sites. At least 116 people were crushed to death in July at an overcrowded Hindu religious gathering in Uttar Pradesh state, the worst such tragedy in more than a decade. India is hit by torrential rains and flash floods each year during the June-September monsoon season. The monsoon is vital for agriculture, and therefore for the livelihoods of millions of farmers. But it is also responsible

for widespread destruction each year in the form of landslides and floods that kill hundreds of people across South Asia. More than 200 people were killed in the southern Indian state of Kerala in July when torrential monsoon downpours caused landslides that buried tea plantations under tonnes of rock and soil. Experts say climate change is increasing the number of extreme weather events around the world, with damming, deforestation and development projects in India exacerbating the human toll. A 2021 study by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research tracking monsoon shifts from the mid-20th century suggested that it was becoming stronger and more erratic. Torrential rain lashed India's financial capital Mumbai, triggering floods and killing at least four people as well as paralyzing the city and forcing schools to close on Thursday.

Some parts of Mumbai recorded around 275 mm (11 inches) of rain on Wednesday evening, which crippled road traffic and delayed the trains millions of city residents use every day. Four people died from rain-related incidents, officials said. With more rain expected, authorities issued a citywide red alert, and urged residents to stay home. Schools and colleges were shut and fishermen were asked to stay away onshore until Friday. Drone footage posted on social media showed snarled highways clogged with cars — some with their drivers still inside, others abandoned by frustrated drivers. Hundreds of thousands of commuters spent hours on the road. India's monsoon rains started retreating from the northwest of the country earlier this week, nearly a week later than normal, the state-run India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in a statement. The monsoon gener-

ally begins in June and starts to retreat by September 17 but the rains continued this year, which has helped to replenish reservoirs but damaged the crop harvest in some states. Heavy rain was also forecast for some parts of the southern state of Telangana on Thursday, the weather office said. Indian officials reported earlier this month that more than 60 people died across three states due to severe flooding caused by heavy rains over the past several days. Rivers had burst their banks and more than 30,000 people fled their homes. The state government had said that 13 people had died from drowning and the rest from houses or trees collapsing on them. In August, emergency workers rescued nearly 1,000 people who were stranded in different parts of the Himalayas following torrential rainfall in northern India, which caused widespread damage and left at least 12 people dead.—Agencies

Rupee gains 16 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Thursday appreciated by 16 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.68 against the previous day's closing of 277.84. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 278.75 and Rs 280.25 respectively. The price of Euro decreased by Rs1.93 to close at Rs 309.02 against the last day's closing of Rs 310.95, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 02 paise and closed at Rs1.91, whereas a decline of Rs1.72 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs370.32 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs372.04. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 04 paise and 03 paise to close at Rs 75.60 and Rs 74.02, respectively.—APP

PSX shed more than 500 points to close at 82,247

KARACHI: Shares at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday witnessed selling pressure, shedding more than 500 points. The benchmark KSE-100 index declined by 589.95 points, 0.72 per cent, to close at 81,657.96 points from the previous close of .91 points. However, it is important to note that the index hit a lifetime high in opening trade, rising to a record high of 82,905.73 points before reversing those gains, hours after the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) board approved a long-awaited \$7 billion bailout deal. Yousuf M Farooq, director research at Chase Securities, said, "Foreign selling from FTSE rebalancing has soaked up local liquidity." "IMF deal was expected and built into prices," he added. Yesterday, the Fund's Executive Board agreed to loan Pakistan \$7 billion to bolster its faltering economy, approving a relief package that the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led government has pledged would be the last from the Fund. Mohammed Sohail, chief executive of Topline Securities, also attributed today's reversal to "FTSE rebalancing related selling" impacting share prices. Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) conducts an annual review which classifies country markets as "Developed, Advanced, Emerging, Secondary Emerging or Frontier" within its global equity indices. On July 3rd, the FTSE reclassified Pakistan from Secondary Emerging to the Frontier market, stating that the country "fails to meet the Minimum Securities Count requirement for retaining Secondary Emerging market status" —with the decision being effective from September.—APP

Sky Gardens project to be completed by 2026: Pirzada assures

iaz Pirzada said that addressing delays in housing projects was the government's priority, adding that Sky Gardens was a high-quality residential scheme, likening it to a "paradise



DNA

ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Thursday said that the Commoners Sky Gardens housing project would be completed till 2026. He said this during his

visit to the Sky Gardens housing project, located on the outskirts of Islamabad, to review its progress and inaugurate the Commoners Bridge at the site.

Riaz Pirzada said that the Commoners Sky Gardens was a major residential develop-

ment project under the housing ministry facing years of delays and stagnant construction. The minister assured the swift completion of the project with the handover of plots to owners beginning in December this year. Riaz Pirzada said that addressing delays in

housing projects was the government's priority, adding that Sky Gardens was a high-quality residential scheme, likening it to a "paradise." He also promised that significant improvements in the service delivery of his ministry.

PTCL, IFC-led syndicate come together to celebrate historic financing deal for acquisition of Telenor

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) led consortium came together to formalize and celebrate the historic financing deal for PTCL's acquisition of Telenor Pakistan and Orion Towers (Private) Limited.

PTCL signed a share purchase agreement with Telenor (ASA) in December 2023 for the acquisition of 100% shares in Telenor Pakistan and Orion Towers (Pvt.) Ltd at the acquisition price of Rs 108 billion (on debt free cash free basis), said a news release issued here on Thursday.

PTCL approached IFC for financing of the project, which was subsequently approved in April 2024, and endorsed by the IFC Board of Directors. The IFC-led consortium includes the Silk Road Fund (SRF), a Chinese state-owned medium-to-long-term investment fund, and British International Investment (BII), the UK's development finance institution and impact investor. The event was attended by Governor, State Bank of Pakistan, Jameel Ahmad, President & Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone 4G, Hatem Bamatraf, IFC's Regional Director for the Middle East, Pakistan & Afghanistan, Khawaja Aftab Ahmed; UAE Ambassador; British High Commissioner; representatives of the consortium; senior and top executives from the PTCL Group. The event marked the most significant milestone in the realization of PTCL's upcoming acquisition of Telenor Pakistan and Orion Towers, following the signing of the financing deal in June 2024 to secure up to USD \$400 million. Hatem Bamatraf, President and Group CEO, PTCL & PTML (Ufone 4G), commented, "We are deeply appreciative of the IFC-led consortium for their pivotal role in financing this transformative deal, which marks a defining moment for Pakistan's telecom sector. This is the largest single financing ever secured in the industry, and it not only strengthens PTCL Group but also supports the long-term financial stability and sustainability of the entire telecom sector by enabling greater economies of scale." "As a result, the industry will be better positioned to contribute to the national economy and societal progress. Through this strategic move, PTCL Group remains fully committed to delivering high-quality cellular and data services to an even wider customer base across Pakistan in the near future." "Pakistan's telecommunication market offers significant opportunities for growth and investment," said Khawaja Aftab Ahmed, IFC's Regional Director for the Middle East, Pakistan and Afghanistan. "This investment reflects IFC's commitment to bolstering inclusive, high-quality digital connectivity and infrastructure in the country by working together with our partners, including the PTCL Group, Government of Pakistan, as well as co-investors BII and SRF," he added.—DNA

Murtaza Wahab's impact as Mayor of Karachi: An analysis of performance, strategy, and development

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



KARACHI, the largest city of Pakistan and a major economic hub, has long grappled with significant urban challenges, ranging from inadequate infrastructure to poor governance, mismanagement of public services, and ineffective disaster management, especially during the monsoon season. The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), the primary municipal body responsible for the city's management, has faced continuous scrutiny from citizens who have repeatedly questioned the quality of services and development initiatives. In this context, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), nominated Murtaza Wahab as the Mayor of Karachi to bring transformative changes to the city and address its myriad of problems. Since taking office, Wahab's tenure has been characterized by his dedication to tackling the city's most pressing issues, particularly during the

rainy season when flooding becomes a recurrent crisis. Wahab's performance as mayor has drawn both criticism and praise. The mayor's tenure coincided with a period marked by severe weather patterns, resulting in heavy rains that exacerbated Karachi's flooding issues. Wahab's approach, centered on proactive disaster management, strategic planning, and efforts to improve the quality of development projects under KMC's purview, has garnered attention from political supporters and critics alike. Karachi is a sprawling metropolis with over 16 million inhabitants. As Pakistan's economic engine, the city's management presents an enormous task, requiring effective governance, sound infrastructure, and a well-equipped municipal system. Yet for years, Karachi has struggled with a host of problems, including inadequate drainage systems, poor road networks, inefficient waste management, and frequent power outages. These issues are compounded by political instability and institutional dysfunction within KMC, leading to an erosion of public trust in the institution's ability to serve the needs of the city. One of the most pressing concerns in Karachi is the city's inability to manage its urban flood risk. Due to its geographical location and outdated infrastructure, Karachi faces recurrent flooding during the monsoon season. The city's drainage systems are not equipped to handle the volume of rainwater that accumulates, leading to waterlogging and inundation in several parts of the city.

These floods damage public and private property, disrupt daily life, and create significant health hazards due to the spread of waterborne diseases. The responsibility for addressing these challenges falls on the KMC, which is often criticized for its failure to respond effectively. Murtaza Wahab, a seasoned politician and legal expert, was nominated by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to take up the mantle of mayor and to spearhead a turnaround in Karachi's governance. His appointment was strategic; as a member of the PPP, Wahab represented a fresh face for the party's urban strategy in Karachi, a city traditionally associated with the rival political faction, the Mutahida Qaumi Movement (MQM).

By selecting Wahab, the PPP signaled its intent to strengthen its foothold in Karachi and resolve the long-standing issues that had plagued the city for decades. Wahab's political experience, coupled with his expertise in legal and administrative matters, made him a suitable candidate to address Karachi's complex issues. Upon assuming office, Wahab inherited a city struggling with infrastructural decay, a lack of efficient services, and heightened citizen dissatisfaction. From the outset, Wahab committed to bringing about substantial change in the KMC's functioning, particularly in its ability to manage urban crises like floods and to improve the quality of development work

carried out across the city. One of the most challenging aspects of Wahab's tenure has been managing Karachi's frequent flooding. With climate change exacerbating weather conditions globally, Karachi has faced increasingly erratic and heavy rainfall in recent years. Cities in Europe, the USA, and even the UAE, which have far more resources at their disposal, have also experienced difficulties in managing such intense weather events. Yet, despite these challenges, Wahab's leadership has been marked by a proactive approach to flood management in Karachi. During a particularly heavy monsoon season, Wahab took steps to ensure immediate drainage of rainwater in the city's low-lying areas, which are typically the worst affected by floods. Under his leadership, KMC executed better planning and implemented strategies to expedite water removal. Even with limited resources, Wahab focused on deploying available resources efficiently, ensuring that rainwater was cleared in record time compared to previous years. In contrast to previous administrations, Wahab's approach involved extensive preparation well before the onset of the monsoon. Recognizing the need for long-term solutions, Wahab directed the KMC to begin drainage preparations months in advance of the expected rains. His team worked to clear storm drains and channels, removing debris that typically blocked water flow during floods. This proactive strategy, combined with real-time monitoring of rainfall and strategic deployment of resources, helped

mitigate the impact of the rains to a certain extent. His efforts have drawn praise from Karachi's residents and political opponents, who have historically criticized the KMC for its handling of the city's flood management. Another major concern that Murtaza Wahab has tackled head-on is the quality of development projects undertaken by the KMC. For years, Karachi's residents have raised concerns about the poor quality of roads, bridges, and public infrastructure, much of which is in a constant state of disrepair. Corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of oversight had resulted in substandard construction work, leading to potholes, crumbling structures, and infrastructure that could not withstand the city's heavy traffic or harsh weather conditions. Wahab has taken these concerns seriously, focusing on improving the standards of development work under the KMC's jurisdiction. One of his first actions as mayor was to tighten the monitoring and evaluation of public works projects, ensuring that contractors adhered to higher quality standards. He also implemented transparency measures, aiming to reduce corruption and ensure that public funds allocated for development were being used efficiently. While Wahab's efforts have led to visible improvements in some areas, the scale of Karachi's infrastructural problems remains daunting. Years of mismanagement and underfunding have left the city with an enormous backlog of projects that need attention. Bureaucratic hurdles and political resistance have slowed the pace

of some of Wahab's reform initiatives. Nevertheless, the mayor's emphasis on quality control and accountability has set the stage for a longer-term improvement in the city's development standards. Murtaza Wahab's tenure as mayor has not only drawn attention for his administrative efforts but also for the political discourse surrounding his work. Traditionally, Karachi's politics have been highly polarized, with rival factions vying for control of the city. Despite this contentious environment, Wahab has managed to gain praise even from political opponents, a testament to the effectiveness of his strategies in managing Karachi's pressing issues. One of the key factors contributing to this positive reception is Wahab's focus on results rather than rhetoric. By addressing tangible issues, such as flood management and infrastructure development, Wahab has been able to sidestep much of the political infighting that has often paralyzed the city's governance. His dedication to the job, coupled with a pragmatic approach to problem-solving, has earned him the respect of not only PPP loyalists but also members of opposition parties who have historically been critical of the KMC's performance. The question remains: Can Murtaza Wahab, through his hard work and dedication, truly solve Karachi's myriad problems? While his tenure as mayor has been marked by a series of important achievements, the scale of the issues facing Karachi is immense. Years of neglect, combined with the rapid expansion of the city's population, have left the urban infrastructure strained and unable to cope with the demands placed upon it.



Briefs

PTM using Afghan refugees against Pakistan

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The Pash-tun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) has allegedly been using Afghan refugees to organise protests against Pakistan. According to reports, PTM's leadership abroad, including Afghan demonstrators, has been coordinating anti-Pakistan protests. Some Afghan individuals with clear pro-Indian leanings are said to be promoting PTM's propaganda in Western countries. Abdul Rehman Hanif, recently appointed as PTM's Nebraska State Coordinator in the USA, is a former member of the Afghan military and has openly expressed admiration for India and Hinduism. This suggests PTM's connections with both Afghanistan and India. Similarly, Sharifullah Sharafat, an Afghan national based in Virginia, USA, has been appointed as PTM's State Coordinator for Maryland-Virginia. Recently, Afghan individuals, allegedly incited by hostile forces, participated in an attack on Pakistan's embassy in Germany. These Afghan nationals are believed to be following PTM's agenda, which is viewed as a foreign-backed proxy aimed at creating division rather than addressing legitimate concerns.

Ahsan calls for adoption of China model

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal has called for rejecting the narrative of elements involved in fanning anarchy and chaos in the country. He was addressing a ceremony in connection with the National Day of China in Islamabad on Thursday. The Minister further said peace, consistency of policies and implementing reforms in all sectors are prerequisites for progress and development of any country and we can learn this from China. He stressed the need to vigorously follow the model of China in order to make profound progress in Pakistan. Acknowledging China's role in Pakistan's national development, the Minister said China brought investment in Pakistan when no country was willing to make investment in the country. He said a number of projects were started in the country under the banner of China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Fawad acquitted in ECP contempt case

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The District and Sessions Court in Islamabad has acquitted former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry, in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) contempt case. As per details, the case was filed against Fawad Chaudhry for allegedly using derogatory language against the ECP during a press conference in Lahore. The counsel told the court that the press conference was held in Lahore however the case was registered in Islamabad. The court ruled in favor of Fawad Chaudhry, acquitting him of the contempt charges. It is important to note here that PTI founder and former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry were indicted in the ECP contempt case on Jan 3, 2024. During the hearing, the accused in the case were formally charged through a read-aloud indictment. In August 2022, the ECP issued notices to the founder of PTI and others for allegedly using "intemperate" language against the Chief Election Commissioner and the electoral watchdog. Its worth mentioning here that on July 25, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) declared jail trial of Fawad Chaudhry in the ECP contempt case as null and void.

Speakers for bold climate action to ensure resilience

Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, emphasized the urgent need for global unity in tackling climate change during his keynote address



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspective (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), convened a highly anticipated international conference today, titled "Navigating Pakistan's Climate Action Path: Adaptation, Finance, and Technology." The conference, organized ahead of the COP29 summit, brought together leading experts from Pakistan and abroad to deliberate on the country's climate strategy, focusing on key areas like adaptation, climate finance, and technological advancements. At the Inaugural Session, Senator Sherry Rehman was the Chief Guest. Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, emphasized the urgent need for global

unity in tackling climate change during his keynote address. He highlighted Azerbaijan's commitment to promoting peace, climate finance, and adaptation efforts at COP29, stressing that international cooperation is essential for achieving a sustainable and prosperous future for all. Senator Sherry Rehman, speaking as the Chief Guest, emphasized the urgency of bold climate action at the upcoming COP, referencing the encouraging statements made by the Ambassador of Azerbaijan on renewable energy and financing. She highlighted Pakistan's unique climate challenges, which are both local and global, emphasizing that no country can face these crises in isolation. As a developing country on the frontlines of climate change, Pakistan is experiencing increasingly extreme weather events, including successive record-breaking sum-

mers over the last four years. Senator Rehman stressed that Pakistan's economy, natural resources, and people are all at risk, yet the country remains underprepared for an unpredictable future. Senator Rehman pointed out that while global discussions, such as the Summit of the Future, aimed to set ambitious climate goals, they often fell short of the necessary commitments. Pakistan, having led the G77 during COP27, continues to advocate for developing countries to unite on a common agenda. However, she warned that the clock is ticking faster for vulnerable nations like Pakistan, with this decade being crucial for achieving climate targets—not the distant 2050. Senator Sherry Rehman also called for improved climate reporting, noting that many developing countries lack the capacity to measure emissions accurately. She criticized the slow pace of climate finance and under-

scored the vital importance of accelerated operationalization and increased capitalization of the Loss and Damage Fund. She also stressed that global north-south financial transfers must accelerate, underlining the need for focusing on 'Internationally Determined Contributions' as well. Lastly, Senator Rehman underscored the need for enhanced citizen involvement and local climate action, urging Pakistan to strengthen its environmental protection agencies. Climate justice, she emphasized, must be at the forefront of global discussions, ensuring no country or community is left behind. She stressed that Pakistan should play a leadership role in this regard. In his remarks on the occasion, DG ISSI, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, welcomed the participants and highlighted the critical importance of these dialogues in shaping Pakistan's climate strategies. He expressed gratitude to HSF for its partnership and acknowledged the distinguished speakers, including government officials, civil society representatives, and international experts, for their contributions. He recognized Senator Sherry Rehman for her relentless advocacy for climate justice and her leadership role in securing a global outcome on the creation of the Loss and Damage Fund at COP27 at Sharm-el-Sheikh in 2022. He emphasized Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change, despite contributing less than 1% to global emissions, referencing the devastating 2022 floods and the urgent need for adaptation measures. Pakistan's leadership at COP27, particularly in the creation of the Loss and Damage Fund, was a pivotal moment for climate-vulnerable nations.

Saudi envoy calls on DPM Dar

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy called on the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister today. A wide range of bilateral, regional, and global issues of mutual interest were discussed. The DPM/FM underlined the importance of deep-rooted and brotherly ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He extended warm wishes and heartfelt on the occasion of the 94th National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The DPM/FM appreciated the Kingdom's unwavering support to Pakistan on various international platforms. The Ambassador of Saudi Arabia reiterated the Kingdom's commitment to further strengthening the strategic partnership between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

FBR to unveil 3-month tax education drive

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Spokesperson Bakhtiar Muhammad on Thursday announced a nationwide initiative to boost tax compliance where the department will conduct seminars to educate taxpayers and after this campaign, the FBR will impose strict penalties on those who fail to comply with tax regulations. Talking to PTV news channel, he said through seminars, workshops, and media outreach, the FBR aims to educate the public on tax laws, benefits, and procedures. Following the education drive, the FBR will adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards tax evasion, imposing strict penalties and legal action on non-compliant individuals and businesses, he added. This move aims to encourage taxpayers to file returns promptly and accurately, he added. The initiative will utilize multiple channels, including digital platforms, print and electronic media, and public seminars to ensure maximum outreach, he explained. To a question, he said that the improvement of tax compliance culture is the prime objective of the government and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is actively trying to achieve it with the cooperation of taxpayers. The decision of non-extension in the due date for filing of return last year saw an overwhelming response from taxpayers, he said. - Agencies



NEW YORK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meeting with the President of the State of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas on the sidelines of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly. **DNA**

Umerkot blasphemy suspect killed in 'fake' police encounter

Investigation report finds police encounter "staged"; DIG, SSP Mirpurkhas suspended

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar on Thursday revealed that an investigation committee concluded that DrShahnawazKunbhar, the blasphemy suspect in Umerkot, was killed in staged police encounter as he pledged stern action against those responsible in the incident. The medical professional was booked by Umerkot police under Section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code for allegedly sharing 'blasphemous posts' on social media. DrKunbhar was taken into "protective custody" on Sept 18 by the local police. Later, the suspect was transferred to Mirpurkhas but the next day he was shot dead by Sindhri police, what they called "an encounter".

Sindhri SHO NiazKhosro alleged that the doctor along with 'accomplices' opened fire at police. In retaliatory action, the suspect was shot dead whereas his accomplice managed to escape, he added. The doctor's body was handed over to his relatives but a mob emerged again and torched it. The alleged encounter prompted widespread public outcry, with Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah taking notice of the incident and ordering the suspension of the Mirpurkhas DIG, SSP and other police officers. Addressing a press conference on Thursday, the Sindh minister said the investigation committee led by DIG PervaizChandio of Shaheed Benazirabad termed the alleged police encounter fake. He said the Sindh Assembly had demanded the suspension of the cops involved in the alleged encounter and added that the suspension of a DIG and a SSP among other officials and the holding of a probe into the incident is rare instance. Giving details of a 31-page detailed investigation report, Lanjar said that the probe team reviewed the CCTV footages and call data records (CDR) and traced the mobile phones.

ECP seeks SC's guidance

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has once again approached the Supreme Court to seek its guidance whether to follow amended Election Act 2017 or its judgment on the matter of allocating reserved seats to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). In its plea on Thursday, the top electoral authority mentioned the National Assembly Speaker AyazSadiq's letter stating that amendments were made to the Election Act after the top court's verdict declaring the opposition party eligible for the reserved seats. It is worth mentioning here that Speaker Sadiq had told the ECP in his letter that the apex court's July 12 ruling was "incapable of implementation" after the amendments to Election Act 2017. The ECP sought SC's advice on whether to prioritise the amended Election Act or the detailed verdict to resolve the reserved seats' row. It also informed the SC that denotified lawmakers had also approached to seek implementation of the amended law and the ECP implemented the court order to the extent of 39 Members of the National Assembly (MNAs). The amended act has been applied retroactively with modified laws relating to reserved seats, the ECP stated. It added that the court gave clear verdicts that parliament's wisdom could not be reviewed, therefore, it would be a question mark if the Election Act is not implemented in view of the court orders. In his last week's correspondence, the NA speaker urged the ECP to maintain the supremacy of parliament by allocating reserved seats in accordance with the Election Act Amendment Bill. - DNA

Pakistan FO spox supports Lebanon's sovereignty

MOFA calls for international accountability of Israel's actions, condemns war crimes in Gaza

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has condemned Israel's recent military aggression against Lebanon, calling it a grave violation of international law and the UN Charter. Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch reaffirmed Pakistan's support for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity in a press briefing on Thursday. At the weekly briefing held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Baloch highlighted the ongoing violence in Gaza, accusing Israeli occupation forces of committing grave violations of international humanitarian law. She also condemned the recent return of a container with 88 decomposing bodies of Palestinians to Gaza, describing the act as a violation of basic human dignity and international standards. Baloch called on the international community to hold Israel accountable for its alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. In discussing Pakistan's international engagements, Baloch shared that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is currently in New York, attending high-level meetings at the 79th United Nations General Assembly session.

World powers call for 'immediate' 21-day ceasefire

NEW YORK: The US, France and other allies jointly called Wednesday for an "immediate" 21-day ceasefire to allow for negotiations in the escalating conflict between Israel and Hezbollah that has killed more than 600 people in Lebanon in recent days. The joint statement, negotiated on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, says the recent fighting is "intolerable and presents an unacceptable risk of a broader regional escalation." "We call for an immediate 21-day ceasefire across the Lebanon-Israel border to provide space for diplomacy," the statement reads. "We call on all parties, including the Governments of Israel and Lebanon, to endorse the temporary ceasefire immediately." The signatories include the United States, Australia, Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar. French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot told the UN Security Council during a meeting that "we are counting on both parties to accept it without delay." - Agencies

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