



# Islamabad POST

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**PTI wants to disrupt SCO summit: Kundi**

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**Gauff beats Muchova for eighth title**

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## "No Disturbance Allowed"

# PM Shehbaz Sharif vows to stabilize Pakistan's Economy

He also commended the Islamabad Police for their outstanding role in thwarting the attack on federal capital as well as the Pakistan Army, Punjab Police, and Rangers in maintaining law and order

### BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said no one would be allowed to destabilise the economy, and all the upcoming international events in Pakistan would take place according to the schedule. He was talking to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who called on him in Lahore on Sunday. The prime minister said the situation is rapidly returning to normalcy and the development of the economy and nation's prosperity are the top priorities of his government. He said political opponents are unable to digest improvement in Pakistan's economy. He said the world acknowledges Pakistan's economic policies, while political opponents want to hinder country's progress. Shehbaz Sharif said the government is fully focused on taking the best and highest standards of security measures. He appreciated the interior minister, Islamabad administration, and Islamabad Police for maintaining law and order in the federal capital. He also commended the Islamabad Police for their outstanding role in thwarting the attack on federal capital as well as the Pakistan Army, Punjab Police, and Rangers in maintaining law and order. Shehbaz Sharif also prayed for higher status in heaven for the martyred police constable Hameed Shah, who sacrificed his life while protecting the lives and property of the public. He said the nation will always remember this sacrifice. Expressing solidarity with the family of the martyred constable, the prime minister directed to take care of the bereaved family members of the Shaheed. The interior minister briefed the prime minister that major roads have

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## Internet users face disruption in several cities

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Internet slowdown was experienced by users in various parts of Pakistan on Saturday, primarily due to overloading. The country has already been facing low bandwidth due to the upgrade of the Web Management System, commonly referred to as an 'internet firewall', a senior executive of one of the cellular mobile operators said. He said the system is being upgraded to cater up to 9 terabytes internet traffic. As PTI supporters neared Islamabad by Saturday noon, disruption in internet and social media services were reported from many parts of the country. According to Netblocks, reports about disruption in WhatsApp services were received from Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore during the past 24 hours. The suspension of cellular and mobile data services in the twin cities since Friday morning affected

Continued on Page 06



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

## Govt slaps ban on PTM

Ban has been placed under Section 11B of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Shehbaz Sharif-led coalition government on Sunday issued a notification banning the Manzoor Pashteen-led Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM). "The federal government having reasons to believe that the PTM is engaged in certain activities prejudicial to peace and security of the country [...] is pleased to list the PTM in the First Schedule as a proscribed organisation," read the notification issued by the Ministry of Interior. The ban has been placed under Section 11B of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997. The development comes as the country is facing a

Continued on Page 06

## Slams 'ransacking' of KP House Gandapur terms May 9 incidents a sheer 'drama'

Suddenly appears in the KP assembly; narrates his ordeal; says Imran Khan is ready to talk to the Establishment in the larger interest of the country

DNA

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister KP, after a dramatic situation, suddenly appeared in the KP assembly. He made his appearance soon after the Speaker issued production orders of the CM and the members of the Provincial Assembly. He said, as soon as he reached the KP House the Rangers and the Islamabad Police attacked the KP House, disregarding all norms and principles. He said the police launched direct shelling at the KP House. He said if they wanted to arrest him, they should have told him. He termed the May 9 incidents drama and a cock and bull story. He said 9 May was engineered to wipe out PTI. He said the way the PTI Chairman Imran Khan was arrested,

Continued on Page 06

## Imran faces legal heat: Booked for protest planning

Charges against him included kidnapping, robbery, attempted murder, interference in govt operations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A case has been registered against PTI founder Imran Khan for allegedly planning the D-Chowk protest. The charges against him included

Continued on Page 06

## Experts fear polio cases may hit 55-65 by year end

Pakistan so far recorded 28 cases in 2024, with Balochistan leading the count at 16

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: A report by the Institute for Disease Modeling (IMD) has raised alarms about escalating wild poliovirus cases in Pakistan, fearing that the number could hit 55 to 65 by the end of 2024. This growing threat is compounded by missed vaccinations, refusals and ongoing issues within the national polio eradication programme, according to the report. Pakistan has so far

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## Briefs

### II holds Gaza march in Karachi

Party leaders, including Mohammad Farooq and Hafiz Naemur Rehman, delivered fiery speeches condemning Israeli aggression

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Karachi witnessed a massive march led by Jamaat-e-Islami on Shahr-e-Faisal, as citizens gathered to show support for Palestinians in Gaza, ARY News reported on Sunday. The rally "Gaza Million March" saw participants from across the city joining in solidarity. Party leaders, including Mohammad Farooq and Hafiz Naemur Rehman, delivered fiery speeches condemning Israeli aggression. Farooq highlighted the ongoing bombings in Gaza, accusing Israel of targeting civilians, including women and children.

### Police cop laid to rest

Stresses police will lodge FIR and bring predators to justice

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General (IG) of Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, expressed deep sorrow over martyrdom of police officer, Hameed Shah, who succumbed to injuries sustained during clashes with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protesters. In a press conference, IG Rizvi stated that the Islamabad police had "lost a son" as Shah was killed during the unrest at Chungi No. 26. According to IG Rizvi, Hameed Shah was subjected to severe stone pelting and physical assault, leading to his death. He stressed that the police would lodge FIR and bring the predators to justice. He said the protesters led by the KP CM damaged to public property, including the safe city cameras and police motorcycles.

## PTI attacked federal capital

# Objective of PTI protest to derail economy: Tarar

Ataullah Tarar said that the country has a professional army chief and a strong leadership who cared about the country's interests

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Ataullah Tarar said on Sunday that the objective of the so-called "Tehreek-e-Insaf" was to derail the country's economy and spread chaos and anarchy. Talking to Media here, the minister said he wondered what were the objectives of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf protest movement? He said he was deeply saddened by the martyrdom of Islamabad Police Constable Abdul Hameed Shah. "Abdul Hameed Shah had left home to perform security duties and was martyred by the anarchist group," he added. The anarchist movement cannot feel the grief of the family members on the martyrdom of Abdul Hameed Shah, he said. The people of the PTI attacked the federal capital armed with weapons. The minister said the PTI was not digesting the country's

Continued on Page 06

## Five IPPs 'agree' to govt's demand for 'power purchase'

Govt intends to save Rs139-150 billion annually by not needing to make capacity payments to said IPPs, says official

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: As the incumbent government makes arduous efforts to tackle multi-prong challenges in the power sector, five independent power producers (IPPs) have "agreed" to terminate their contracts as demanded by the government. As per an official part of the task force on the power sector,

Continued on Page 06

# Unpacking U.S.-China economic engagement

While China remains a major military and economic power, it faces significant internal challenges that limit its ability to project power on the global stage. These challenges include a slowing economy, demographic pressures and increasing resistance from other nations to its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)



### OPINION

DR. M. AKRAM ZAHEER

THE small, seemingly insignificant actions in geopolitics often reveal much larger truths about the global order. A recent meeting of the U.S.-China financial working group offers a glimpse into the complexities of their relationship. This group, which includes representatives from the central banks and government agencies of both nations, met in China to coordinate changes in their respective banking systems. On the surface, this might seem like a routine event; after all, such meetings occur regularly. However, a closer look reveals a deeper geopolitical undercurrent. The coordination of financial policies between two of the world's largest economies is more than just a technical exercise. It is a

reflection of the broader tension that challenges and opportunities characterize U.S.-China relations. At first glance, the relationship between the U.S. and China appears highly strained. Tensions between the two nations seem ever-present and their military activities suggest the potential for conflict. Both sides have been positioning their weapons systems in ways that provoke anxiety in the other. For instance, in recent months, we have seen joint Russian and Chinese bomber missions probing near U.S. airspace in Alaska, prompting U.S. and Canadian fighter jets to respond. Similarly, China has violated Japanese airspace, raising concerns among U.S. allies in the region. These incidents are not isolated. The U.S. maintains a close relationship with the Philippines, a nation that frequently clashes with China over territorial disputes in the South China Sea. Additionally, U.S. support for Taiwan continues to be a significant source of tension with Beijing.

Continued on Page 06

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# Punjab intensifies efforts to reduce severity of smog

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab government is striving for adoption of a holistic approach to address the issue of air pollution and smog across the province and to avoid the situation this year, it has intensified working on an anti-smog plan since April. On the instructions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the Punjab government took several measures to combat smog from April to September, focusing on agriculture, transport, environment, industry, energy, education and health sectors. To reduce the intensity of smog, the government has accelerated its actions, as the severity of smog has made life haram for the citizens from October to February for many years. According to official statistics, 12,540 industrial units were checked in 6 months from April to September, while issuing notices to 4,403 industrial setups, while 117 units were demolished. Likewise, 594 units were sealed and cases were registered against 361, fines of Rs.70 million were separately imposed. In addition, during the checking of 75,881 vehicles, challans of 18069 vehicles and routes of 24 vehicles were canceled, while 13678 vehicles, emitting smoke were closed and fined 32 million rupees. Similarly, 8810 construction work inspections were made in 6 months. The sites were checked, 26 were sealed and 376 were given notices. According to the statistics, 38,528 kilns were visited, notices were issued to 9,617 and 240 were demolished, 1012 kilns were closed and cases were registered against 217 and a fine of Rs89 million was also imposed. Similarly, in the anti-plastic campaign, 59,389 inspections were conducted, 191 complaints were registered with the Environmental

Magistrate, 19 lakh rupees were fined, in the plantation campaign 3 crore 60 lakh trees were planted in Punjab and 48 lakh saplings were planted in Lahore alone. Special committees were formed in rural areas to control the burning of crop residues, green transport project was launched across Punjab in the context of transport, 5,000 electric buses will be introduced across Punjab. Meanwhile, 1,000 will run in the first phase, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has recently approved 24 e-buses while the e-bike scheme for students is also going on successfully. Furthermore, devices will be installed at various intersections of the city to check the rate of pollution, Safe City cameras has accelerated efforts in identifying vehicles emitting smoke. In this connection, 2,000 interns will be kept for 3 months to monitor the environment in Lahore, Faisalabad to ban plastic. additionally, anti-smog squad has been appointed in Gujranwala, that will monitor the emission of toxic gases from the industries. It is worth mentioning here that the checking of the industries will also continue with the help of drones. Following the vision of the Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has accelerated the supervision of the violating smoke-emitting vehicles while actively engaging in different crackdowns to prevent smog and protect the environment. Including Lahore, various operations against vehicles, factories, and kiln owners causing smog are ongoing throughout the province. The spokesperson for Punjab police told APP in this connection that since the first January of this year, 729 accused have been arrested and 939 cases registered during an anti-smog crackdown. In the provincial

capital, 71 accused have been arrested and 180 cases have been registered during anti-smog operations. He said that IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has directed an acceleration of the anti-smog crackdown in industrial areas, on highways, and at other relevant locations. To a query, the police spokesperson further informed that the importance of expediting actions against vehicles causing smog is being monitored through Safe City cameras. In this connection the Punjab Highway Patrol and Traffic Police have been directed to intensify measures against smog-causing vehicles on highways. Punjab IG Dr. Usman Anwar has recently stated that the Punjab Police is providing full support to the Environment Department in combating smog, by ordering immediate action against vehicles, factories, and open burning in fields that was contributing a great share to smog throughout the province. Furthermore, all field officers have been directed to ensure strict enforcement against the burning of crop residues, actions against kiln owners, and garbage burning to enhance the environmental protection efforts. Noted environmentalist Mahmood Khalid Qamar told APP that the higher air quality index in the morning in Lahore has grown up, and suggested doubling water sprinkling on roads by Wasa, PHA, and LVMC to combat smog. He said people should wear masks to minimise the effects of smog on their health. The reason for the high air quality index is India's crop residue burning, he informed. Environment friendly solutions along with solid policies are required to make significant improvements in the pollution levels in Lahore, that has consistently featured in World's top 10 most polluted cities since 2017, he said.



ISLAMABAD: Ali Imran, player of the Rising Stars Hockey Club getting certificate from former Secretary Pakistan Hockey Federation Asif Bajwa, for supervising the Junior departmental hockey championship. Secretary PHF Rana Mujahid and former Captain Shehbaz Senior are also present. —DNA

## Another May 9-like coup of PTI foiled: Azma

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari said on Sunday that another May 9-like coup of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was foiled yesterday. In her statement issued here, Azma Bokhari said that due to the best strategy of the federal and Punjab governments, the rebellion of the miscreants was thwarted. She said that a senior police officer was martyred by stone pelting by miscreants, while dozens were injured, adding that the terrorists and rioters had called their protest peaceful. She said that the invasion of the federation through government resources and government employees of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the participation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police officers and Afghan citizens in the protest were a matter of concern and called for an investigation. She said that the people of Punjab had rejected the "revolution" and its mastermind and those who came out to bring about a revolution ran away, leaving their shoes behind. "I feel sorry for parents who are exposing their children to the politics of this fitna," she said, adding that are the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa only left with sit-ins, rallies and beatings? The provincial minister said that the people of KP were entitled to the same facilities that the people of Punjab are getting for the best quality of life. "The people of KP should hold these criminals accountable for their better future," she added.—APP

## Political stability crucial for economic growth: Iftikhar

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former president Iftikhar Ali Malik said on Sunday that political stability was vital for achieving sustainable economic growth and at this crucial time, the country could not afford politics of agitation and confrontation. Commenting on prevailing political situation, he said a stable political environment was necessary to attract both domestic and foreign investment, which were essential for re-

vitalizing the economy and improving the livelihoods of millions. He further pointed out that economic development and prosperity were closely linked to political certainty, without which long-term planning and policy implementation suffer. He urged all political stakeholders to prioritize the national interest above individual or party agendas. Instead of resorting to political turmoil, he called for dialogue and consen-

sus-building among political parties to ensure smooth governance and economic reforms. Highlighting the challenges facing Pakistan, including inflation, unemployment, and dwindling foreign reserves, Malik stressed that unity among political leaders was a key to overcoming these hurdles. He concluded that Pakistan's future prosperity depends on a collaborative political wisdom that fosters growth, peace, and stability.—APP

## Campaign launched to protect children from 12 diseases

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department in collaboration with District administration has launched an immunization campaign aimed at protecting children from twelve (12) diseases. The initiative targets the vaccination of 53,000 children under the age of five. Deputy Commissioner Sarmat Salim Khan kicked off the campaign at Molve Gee Hospital by administering vaccinations to children. The campaign would continue up to Oct 30. Talking to the media, the Deputy Commissioner urged parents to ensure.—APP

## Politicians slam PTI agitation politics at Islamabad

PESHAWAR: The politicians of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here Sunday slammed the agitation of Pakistan Tahrir-e-Insaf at Islamabad and termed it illogical. "From recent protest demonstrations and agitation, it is seemed that PTI leadership has not been interested in the economic recovery of the country rather trying to get relief for their founder, who was in jailed in serious corruption cases," said Ikhair Wali Khan, Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Information Secretary and former MPA while talking to APP. Declaring the un-called for protest agitation of PTI leadership as unjustified, Ikhair Wali Khan said PTI leadership did not learn lesson from their past mistakes and flopped Dhar-

na at D Chowk in the past and was again repeating the same blunder despite losing KP and Punjab Govts due to premature dissolution of assemblies in these provinces. Terming politics of hooliganism as detrimental for democracy, he said that Pakistan Tahrir-e-Insaf's agitation first at Lahore and later in Rawalpindi and Islamabad have totally negated the spirit of democratic principles and political tolerance. "The clashes of PTI workers with Punjab Police have exposed the tall claims of the former calling themselves as champion of democracy and rule of law," he said, adding "PTI workers' scuffling with law enforcers were also tantamount to take law into hands and create anarchy in society".

"PTI workers have not only violated the 144CrpC but also tarnished their own image before the entire nation due to uncalled for political hooliganism," he said, alleging that pelting of stones on police's vehicles and breaking citizens' cars has no service to the nation. The PMLN leader said that no government could allow holding of such agitation rallies and demonstrations at red zone especially at Islamabad, claiming that the PTI has been repeatedly requested to postpone its rally for security reasons that were not reciprocated well. "The flopped rallies exposed the PTI leadership's deep frustration and anxiety after people of Punjab kept their distance from it," he said.—APP

# Federal Constitution Court need of the hour: Babar

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: President human rights cell of the PPP ex Senator Farhatullah Babar has said that a historic opportunity had presented itself to do away with a chaotic approach to the constitution by setting up and federal constitution court and streamline procedure for the appointment of judges to guard against a dangerous tendency of a judiciary of the judges, for the judges by the judges. He was speaking at a dialogue with civil society at SZBIST in Islamabad today. He said that the appointment of judges has been dangerously centralized

as chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry alone appointed over a hundred and sacked another hundred judges of superior courts all by himself. It is not to question the competence and integrity of judges thus selected by one individual, he said. It is a far more serious issue namely stuffing the superior courts with likeminded judges and turning it into a monolithic unit like a military battalion, he said. He said that the parliament through 18th Amendment sought to rationalize judges' appointment but the judiciary under Chaudhry stood in the way and discreetly threatened to undo the constitutional Amendment if the parliament itself

did not revisit this provision. Unfortunately the parliament and the political parties had cold feet and back tracked. He said that it was an irony that the judiciary allowed the generals and itself to rewrite and superimpose the constitution but denied the people to exercise this right through their elected representatives in the parliament. A constitution Court is needed to address constitutional issues alone so as to reduce burden of cases of ordinary litigants and inject an element of provincial balance in addressing constitutional issues. If the political power has been rationalized among provinces by setting up senate why the

judicial power should also be not balanced between provinces by providing for equal number of judges from all provinces in it he asked. He said that nearly four lac cases were pending in the courts of which over 60 thousand were in the SC because the constructional cases have to be accorded priority and they also take time. As the common litigants suffer incalculably the trust in the state and judiciary also erodes. He said that after the 18th amendment the constitutional court is needed to address issues between the federation and the provinces. Rejecting the claim that the constitution court was against the basic

structure of the state he said that the basic structure of the state rested on the separation of powers, the independence of judiciary and the fundamental rights of the citizens and asked in what way the constitution court undermined the so called basic structure or independence of judiciary. The seminar was also addressed by ex Senator Afrasiab Khattak, Barrister Masood Kausar, CEO Bhutto Foundation Asif Khan, General Secretary ppp HR Cell Samana Malaika Raza and followed by interactive session with lawyers, academia, media, former civil servants, political activists and other members of civil society.

## Improved transport facilities boon for commuters

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In recent years, Islamabad has witnessed a transformative upgrade to its public transportation system enhancing the commuting experience for its citizens, especially women. Spearheaded by the Capital Development Authority (CDA), these changes have introduced a new era of inclusivity, safety and convenience, addressing long-standing mobility and accessibility challenges faced by female commuters. In a city dominated by private cars, those reliant on public transport—mainly women, students and low-income groups—found themselves disproportionately affected. Therefore, the introduction of modern bus services, in-

cluding the Metro Bus and the Green and Blue Line networks, have proved to be game changers. Equipped with air-conditioned buses, fixed schedules and dedicated lanes, these services have alleviated many of the burdens previously experienced by commuters. The Metro Bus, in particular, with its strategically placed stops, has become a lifeline for women, allowing them to travel for work, education and other duties without the hassle of long waits or overcrowding. What makes these services different from previously run private transport between twin cities are the seats reserved for women and families, creating a more comfortable and respectful travel environment. Enhanced safety measures at bus stations, including

proper lighting, CCTV surveillance and security personnel, have further bolstered female travelers' confidence in using public transport throughout the day. Maryam Sultan, a high school teacher commuting from Rawalpindi to Islamabad, shared her enthusiasm for the upgraded transport system. "As a working woman, the new bus services have been a game changer for me. Before the Metro, it was exhausting and sometimes intimidating to rely on the old vans. Now, I feel much safer traveling to and from work, especially during the evening hours." She noted that the reserved seating for women makes a big difference and said that now many of her female colleagues were using public transport regularly. "It has surely made it easier for us

to travel safely, respectfully and reach our destination well on time." The impacts of this progress in the public transport system extend beyond mere transportation for bringing significant social and economic changes in their lives. With reliable and affordable transport options now available, this newfound mobility has reduced economic barriers, enabling women to travel independently rather than relying on costly alternatives such as ride-hailing services. "The recent launch of 'Pink Bus Service' is an appreciable addition to Capital's transportation system and mode of easy travelling for both male and female commuters," remarked Sadia Khan, a university student. "This also speaks loud of the government's commitment to facilitate women's mo-

bility, with 10 routes designated specifically for female students, teachers and other female travelers from rural to urban areas," she stated. With operations running from early morning to late afternoon, this service, she said enables women to have safe and accessible transport tailored to their needs. The Capital Development Authority is also adding electric buses to the city's fleet with 30 such buses are already operational on routes connecting major healthcare and educational institutions, with a flat fare of Rs50. The arrival of an additional fleet of buses, along with ongoing discussions about technology transfer for electric vehicle manufacturing in Pakistan, signals a commitment to creating a sustainable and eco-friendly public transport system.

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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

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- Oct 01/Cyprus National Day
- Oct 01/Republic of Korea Armed Forces Day
- Oct 01/Nigeria Armed Forces Day
- Oct 02/Guinea National Day
- Oct 03/Germany Unification Day
- Oct 03/Republic of Korea National Foundation Day
- Oct 05/Indonesia Armed Forces Day
- Oct 06/Egypt Armed Forces Day
- Oct 09/Uganda Independence Day
- Oct 12/Spain National Day
- Oct 23/Hungary National Day
- October 24/United Nations United Nations Day
- Oct 25/Romania Armed Forces Day
- Oct 26/Austria National Day
- Oct 27/Turkmenistan Independence Day
- Oct 28/Czech Republic National Day
- Oct 29/Turkey Republic Day

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& Rescue Services.4451122  
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CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

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DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666



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

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Pakistan' economy shows signs of recovery: Ihsan

Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan also expressed gratitude to the Pakistan Army for their coordination efforts in supporting the government's economic revival initiatives

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan Sunday expressed optimism about Pakistan's economic recovery, highlighting the government's initiatives that have boosted investor confidence, exporter confidence, and attracted foreign investment, paving the way for sustainable economic growth. Pakistan's economic recovery is gaining momentum, driven by strategic reforms and investments, he said in an exclusive talk with PTV news channel. Pakistan's economy is showing promising signs of recovery, thanks to the government's strategic efforts, he said. He pointed

ed a positive picture of Pakistan's economic outlook and expressed confidence in the government's reform agenda, citing notable progress in tax stabilization, privatization and exporter support.

Pakistan is poised for significant economic growth, with a focus on resolving long-standing issues faced by manufacturers and exporters, he said, adding, the government is actively addressing refund issues and implementing strategies to boost exports.

In fact, Pakistan has planned to raise its exports to \$50 billion in five years, with an ambitious long-term target of \$100 billion, he added. Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan

emphasized that eliminating the non-filer category will have a positive impact on exporters, boosting Pakistan's economic growth. Coordinator to the Prime Minister also highlighted a significant shift in Pakistan's economy, adding, previously, investments were largely concentrated in the property sector, which did not contribute significantly to the country's economic growth. He mentioned that maintaining an exchange rate aligned with market rates is our priority to benefit exporters. Responding to a query, he said the government has committed to maintaining

current tax rates in the budget, prioritizing sustainability over increases. This move aims to promote economic stability and growth, while also ensuring that the tax system remains fair and efficient, he added. To another query, he said Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) is undergoing a significant transformation through privatization, with the government seeking investors for a majority stake. This move aims to revitalize the airline, addressing its financial struggles and operational inefficiencies, he added. The privatization process is expected to attract both local and international investors,

particularly from the Middle East, Asia, and Europe, he mentioned. Rana Ihsan have also shed light on Pakistan's economic prospects that by implementing non-filer restrictions, the government aims to encourage more citizens to file taxes, ultimately boosting the economy. Khan expressed confidence that Pakistan's economic reforms are yielding positive outcomes, demonstrating the government's commitment to sustainable growth. Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan also expressed gratitude to the Pakistan Army for their coordination efforts in supporting the government's economic revival initiatives.—APP

## Siddiqui terms Indian FM's participation in SCO summit positive sign

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Party Leader of the Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) in Senate and Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman, Senator Irfan-ul-Haque Siddiqui has termed the announcement of Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's participation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit as a positive development for the bilateral relations between Pakistan and India. In a statement posted on his social media account on platform 'X' on Saturday, the senior PML-N leader said the presence of the Indian foreign minister at the summit holds promise for easing tensions between the two neighboring countries. However, Senator Siddiqui expressed concerns regarding the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) party's approach toward this diplomatic event. He criticized PTI for extending an invitation to only the Indian foreign minister, among all SCO leaders, to participate in its protest demonstrations. Senator Siddiqui further remarked that PTI should showcase its 'remarkable achievements' by taking the Indian foreign minister to visit more than 200 destroyed defense installations and memorials of martyrs, hinting at recent unrest, to solidify the 'eternal ties' between PTI and India.—APP

## Police arrest wanted criminal

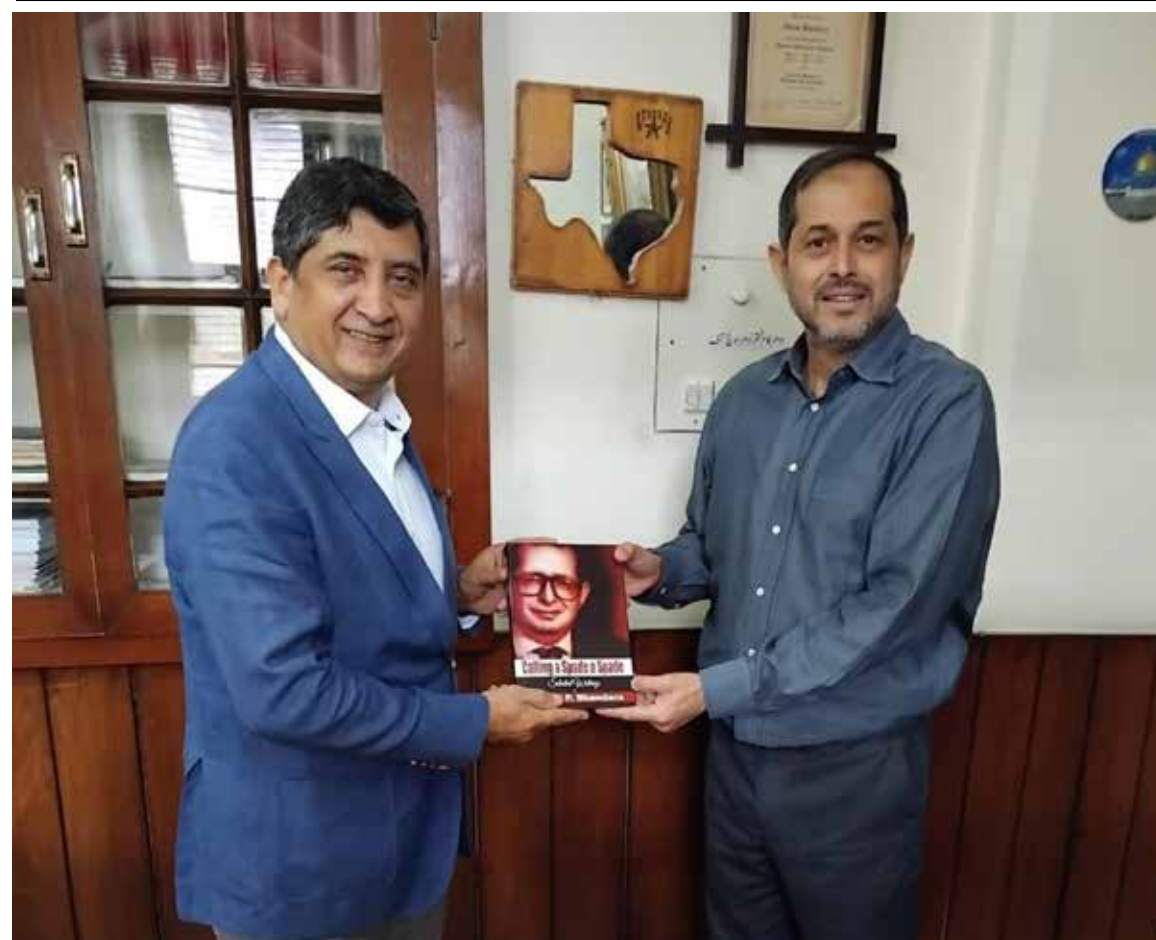
RAWALPINDI: Police on Sunday have arrested a wanted criminal involved in a murder and attempted murder case that took place in February 2024. Hazrat Wali allegedly killed Noor Alam and injured two others, Jameel and Anwar, during the incident. According to the police spokesman, Wali had been on the run since the attack. The police tracked him down using multiple resources, including human intelligence. An associate of Wali, who was also involved in the crime, is already under custody. SP Pothohar Nasir Nawaz commended police team Taxila stated that the arrested suspects would be charged with solid evidence and would face strict punishment.—APP

## Education, tolerance in society crucial in preventing radicalization

ISLAMABAD: A prominent research analyst Syed Imran Sardar at the Institute of Regional Studies on Sunday advocated for robust laws to counter extremist narratives that threaten the well-being of Pakistan's youth due to unchecked social media. Talking to the PTV news channel he made a pressing appeal to policymakers for controlling the social media's harmful influence and proposed societal tolerance as an antidote to extremism. Syed Imran Sardar further emphasized that promoting tolerance within society is crucial to countering extremism. "We need to foster an environment where diverse perspectives are respected and encouraged," he said. "This can be achieved through education, community engagement and inclusive dialogue," he added. By promoting tolerance, "we can create a society where our youth are resilient to radical ideologies," he noted. The analyst underscored the need for collective responsibility in promoting tolerance, adding that it is not just the government's duty; every citizen, community leader and institution must play a role in fostering inclusivity and respect". Sardar cautioned that societal polarization and intolerance provide fertile ground for extremist ideologies to flourish. "We must bridge the gaps between communities and promote mutual understanding to prevent the spread of hatred," he urged. Sardar advocated for curriculum reforms that emphasize critical thinking, cultural diversity and peaceful. "By instilling tolerance and empathy in our youth, we can ensure a brighter, more harmonious future," he said. "We must recognize the humanity in everyone, regardless of their background or beliefs," he added. Responding to a query, he said by promoting tolerance, understanding, and open dialogue, we can create a society resilient to radicalization and extremism.—APP

## AI-powered E-challan system to yield promising results

ISLAMABAD: Punjab's road safety landscape has undergone a significant transformation with the introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) based E-Challans, a technological innovation aimed at automating traffic violation detection and enforcement, said Operation Commander Punjab Safe City Muhammad Shafique Ahmad on Sunday. Talking to the PTV news channel, he said Punjab under Chief Minister Maryum Nawaz's leadership has taken a significant step towards enhancing road safety by introducing AI-driven e-challans to curb traffic violations. This innovative approach uses artificial intelligence to automate the detection of 19 traffic violations, including driving on the wrong side of the road, triple riding and speeding, he said. He explained that in the first phase, an e-challan service will be introduced using Safe City cameras for not wearing helmets on motorbikes.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Ispahanyar Bhandara, the CEO of Murree Brewery Company and a member of the National Assembly of Pakistan, presented a book to the Ambassador of Pakistan to Nepal Abrar H. Hashmi, during his visit to the Murree Brewery Company.— DNA

## Ex BD Secretary remembers his teachers at ICB G/6-3

ISLAMABAD: A nostalgic testament from a student Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed a retired Additional Secretary of the Bangladesh Government, who called Islamabad College for Boys G-6/3 home from 1969 to 1971. Though fate took him to Bangladesh in 1971, his affection for his school and teachers endured. On World Teachers' Day, Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed who is former Editor of Bangladesh Quarterly, currently working as a columnist for the Dhaka-based 'The Financial Express' also showed his deepest gratitude in this special message "Remembering My Teachers at Islamabad Model School for Boys I have wonderful memories of my alma-mater 'Islamabad Model School for Boys' (IMS), later called Islamabad College for Boys - G-6/3 (ICB)". "My encounter with one of the IMS teachers happened even before I got admitted to the school in April 1969. That was when the then sports teacher of the school saved my life by taking me to the nearby Poly Clinic on his motorcycle when I was profusely bleeding from the head after accidentally hit by a stone on the playing ground of the school. That teacher even escorted me to my home after I was treated at the Poly Clinic" he mentioned. "Later, when I joined class six of IMS at the start of the 1969 academic year, I encountered many wonderful teachers who wielded enormous influence in my life and career. They included our dynamic and upright principal Mr. H. H. Siddiqui, who was one of the most inspirational figures and eloquent speakers that I ever met. Then there was our hugely handsome class teacher Mr Fazle Rahim - who infused much-needed confidence in me about my mathematical skills; the stylish and sports-minded geography teacher Mr Subhanullah - who was good in both Urdu and Bengali - always making us feel at home in his presence and actively engaging with us even in the playing-field. He said then there were the outstanding English teachers - the phenomenal Mr Jinnah and the legendary Mr Robson- whose pronunciations were as good as any native Englishmen; the demure Mr Iftekharuddin another UK-trained teacher who took us to the golden realm of history, heritage and civilization; the vibrant religious studies cum civics teachers Mr Irshad and Mr Arif who were always ready to explain everything to us most candidly and conversationally; the philosopher-like Easy-Urdu teacher Mr Jan-e-Alam who himself was a distinguished poet; and the empathetic house-master Mr Shamsi who was a caring and father-like figure to many of us. "I am eternally grateful to my IMS teachers, as I can still earn a living as a freelance translator cum writer even in my retired life because of a strong foundation in English that was laid during my school years" he remembered. He recalled that many other students of Bangladesh origin at IMS did even better than me. They included the ex-Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh late Mijarul Quayes, high-ranking IMF/IFC officials S M Tareq, Syed Akhtar Mahmud and Reza Kibria, former CEO of GSK-Bangladesh and GSK-Pakistan Azizul Huq, and many others. "It is because of the edifice that was laid at our wonderful alma mater that many of us could shine in life. Our gratitude, love and respect for our IMS teachers are bound to last forever till we land on the other side of the rainbow. May the Almighty Allah continue to shower His immense blessings and mercy on them all".—DNA

## UK, Gulf to establish 280 skills centres in Pakistan for youth employment

The UK delegation looks forward to fruitful discussions and a lasting partnership that will improve the education sector in Pakistan"

ISLAMABAD: Government of United Kingdom and Middle East institutions will provide jobs to millions of Pakistanis around the world by creating 280 skills centers in Pakistan. A high-level British delegation is on a two-day visit to Pakistan to discuss possible cooperation with Pakistan in education, with a special focus on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The delegation included Lord Boateng, House of Lords member Wendy Thomson, University of London Vice-Chancellor, University of Greenwich Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Edward, Queen Mary University Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Richard Grose, Tony Degazon, City and Guilds Regional Director Dr. Aamir, and Executive Director of GEMS Middle East. The delegation aims to take initiatives for skill development as per the needs of the industry in Pakistan. In order to discuss the areas of mutual interest with the delegation, Federal Secretary Education Mohiyuddin Wani,

Chairperson National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) Miss Gulmina Bilal, and Executive Director NAVTTTC on behalf of the government, represented Pakistan. On this occasion, the delegation was told that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for Education Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Prime Minister's Advisor on Youth Affairs Rana Mashhood have their priorities that quality training should be provided to as many people of Pakistan as possible in accordance with the requirements of the modern era so that these people can offer their services in the best way not only in Pakistan but also around the world. The delegation representatives said that around 280 skills centers will be established in Pakistan. The candidates who successfully complete the training in these centres, they will be given a joint certificate by Pakistani, UK and Gulf universities. They said that in the first phase, 80,000 jobs will also be given to the successful candidates of the Skills

Centers for which arrangements have already been made. These jobs would be offered in different Gulf countries including Dubai in the security, hospitality, construction and veterinary nursing and Dubai Police, they informed. The delegation further said that wherever skilled people are needed around the world, including the Gulf, they will be provided with manpower by these 280 Skills Centres. The delegation will visit Karachi where they will meet Federal Education Minister Maqbool Siddiqui to discuss strategic partnerships that will strengthen Pakistan's vocational training framework and equip the workforce with the necessary skills for the global job market. A representative of the delegation said that "we are committed to promoting educational cooperation that will empower Pakistani youth and meet the needs of industries in Pakistan and abroad. We can create sustainable pathways for The UK delegation looks forward to fruitful discussions and a lasting partnership that will improve the education sector in Pakistan".



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## Briefs

## PILDAT hosts launch ceremony of Jabbar's new anthologies

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) hosted the launch of two new anthologies by former senator Javed Jabbar – a distinguished author and filmmaker. The event featured discussions surrounding the themes of "Streams" and "Shade and Light", highlighting Jabbar's intellectual contributions to Pakistan's literary and cultural discourse. PILDAT President Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, in his opening remarks, spoke about his longstanding relationship with Jabbar, spanning over 22 years. He talked about the importance of engaging with the nuanced perspectives Jabbar brings to the forefront in his works, particularly in an era of rapid global and local change. Navid Shahzad, Professor Emeritus, Head of LGS Resource Centre, and accomplished author, introduced "Streams" as a vital offering. She referred to it as an "intellectual history of our times" that probes new dimensions of media, content, and culture, focusing on essays like "Knowledge and Nowledge" highlighting how Javed Jabbar stated that in today's fast paced world everything is now. She praised the book's ability to navigate contemporary complexities with clarity and depth. Dr Sikandar Hayat, Dean at Forman Christian College University, introduced "Shade and Light" by reflecting on its unique treatment of historical figures such as Muhammad Ali Jinnah. "The anthology delves into critical moments of Pakistan's history, including lesser-explored narratives of East Pakistan and Bangladesh, while also analyzing the nation's evolving relations with India and the USA," he added. Dr Hayat noted that the anthology presented not just history, but lived experiences and personal insights that challenge traditional accounts. Javed Jabbar, in his keynote address, shared the inspiration behind both anthologies, expressing how "Streams" embodies an exploration of knowledge and media in a rapidly changing world, while "Shade and Light" addresses pivotal historical events that continue to shape Pakistan today.—APP

## ICE, ASITA sign MoU; expect direct flights to Pakistan soon

Atta Ul Karim Witnessed by the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad Signs MoU with ASITA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Creatives Exchange (ICE) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the oldest tourism association in Indonesia, ASITA (Association of the Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies) at the Al Barkat Palace, South Jakarta, on Saturday, (5/10). The MoU consists of 11 points which aims to increase tourism for the two friendly countries, Indonesia and Pakistan. Atta Ul Karim as the Chairman of ICE expressed his appreciation on the mutual cooperation, since him self was born in Pakistan and grew up in Indonesia. He unquestionably wishes to do something impactful for the benefits of both countries. "I was born in Pakistan, but grew up and successful in Indonesia. So, I have to thank to the two countries," Atta said, who was wearing golden brown batik at that time. "One of the best way for it is by continuously trying in all possible ways to improve tourism in the two brotherly countries," he added. Atta looks at ASITA as the right partner in realizing his wishes, since the association has been well-known as the leading association in tourism industry in Indonesia since 1971. Mrs. Rusmiati, President of ASITA was proud and happy on the MoU, as Pakistan is one of the countries that has not been touched well in the tourism world, even though



its potential is extraordinary. In addition, there are many halal tourism destinations in Indonesia, so there are huge similarities between Pakistan and Indonesia. "Many countries have collaborated with ASITA, but Pakistan has not had any. In fact, its natural beauty is beyond imagination, even if it is compared to Switzerland or New Zealand," Rusmiati explained while wearing black Pashmina. "Pakistan also has similarities with Indonesia as the two largest Muslim countries in the world, so it's really a

very good package to sell," she continued optimistically. According to the data, ASITA has 89 branches with seven thousand travel agencies as its under-bow spread throughout the Indonesian archipelago. On this occasion, Mrs. Siti Nur Azizah, Daughter of Indonesian Vice President and Mr. Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma, Chargé d'Affaires of the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad, were present to witness the MoU signing ceremony. Mrs. Siti Nur Azizah, who had just attended the 79th

Anniversary of the Indonesian National Armed Forces deeply wished that the cooperation will be beneficial for tourism industries between the two nations. "I wish it could be an access to build further levels of the long-standing friendly bilateral relations", she said referring to the commemoration of 75th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Indonesia and Pakistan, next year. In line with Siti Nur Azizah, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Indonesian

Embassy in Islamabad, who had just arrived from Pakistan also fully supported the MoU. "As an Indonesian living in Pakistan, I really enjoy wonderful natural landscapes in Pakistan. The culture is also very unique. The people are very friendly, especially when they know we are from Indonesia. Hopefully this can be an open door for direct flights between Indonesia and Pakistan. There will be many multiple positive impacts," the senior Diplomat said. During his one-year term

in Pakistan, he has visited various regions in the country of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. As it is well-known, currently there are no direct flights serving the two countries. That is one of the challenges in boosting tourist numbers from Pakistan to Indonesia or vice versa. "With the MoU between ICE and ASITA, we want to see the increased numbers of tourists in the two countries. Subsequently, the airlines further open the direct flights," Rahmat concluded.

## Capital's residents enjoying electric buses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The residents of federal capital were enjoying and feeling comfortable by commuting in electric buses, providing cheap and environmental friendly travel and access to various sectors of the metropolis. Talking to APP, Waqar Ali, a resident of G-11, lauded the standards of the e-buses and said that with the commencement of mass transit public transport system in Islamabad the swarms of automobiles would reduce and enable a modern commute facility in a modernized fashion for the citizens. He said that he was travelling regularly to these electric buses and feeling relaxed till the destination, as

the buses were established on international standards with spacious seats, inbuilt air conditioning system as compared to poor public transport vehicles with untidy seats, tightly packed occupancy and pathetic services of the transporters. He further appreciated the landmark initiative of the present government under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, who directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to launch the electric buses in various sectors of the city that were not covered under the erstwhile Metro Bus service. Huma Rafique, a student reside of G-8 Markaz, said that being a student, she was commuting on the public e-transport which she considered as cheaper and eco-friendly as

compared to others. She was not only enjoying rides on the electric vehicles, but appreciated the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government for launching this mega project as it had already launched Metro Bus Service for the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Earlier, the electric bus service in federal capital was inaugurated by Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi. The masses have showered special praise to this service for making all sectors of the capital accessible. Moreover, the CDA was charging a flat Rs 50 fare from each passenger. The charging points have already been set up for the electric buses on an emergency basis at the Convention Center and H-9 to ensure seamless operations.

## PDMA issues fresh rain alert

ISLAMABAD: Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Director-General Irfan Ali Kathia Sunday assured that all concerned departments of Punjab are on high alert, following Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's instructions as the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) had issued a fresh rain alert. In his message on a private news channel, he said we are fully prepared to tackle any emergency-like situation, citing the rain prediction till October 8. "Our control rooms are monitoring the situation 24/7 and rescue personnel with machinery are on standby," he added. Kathia confirmed that water flow in all rivers and canals is normal. Measures have been taken for water drainage in low-lying areas.—APP

## BMP stresses structural changes in power sector

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has stressed the need for large scale structural changes in power sector, controlling line losses of DISCOs by using modern technology, and customer-oriented business approach, as the public exchequer has been facing loss of billions of rupees by the power distribution companies. FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar stated that due to high electricity rates, power theft will become rampant as the tariff was unaffordable to consumers. Quoting the media report, he observed that the performance of distribution companies (DISCOs) throughout 2023-24 remained very poor, and the expected power sector reforms were not achieved. Given the ongoing poor performance, it is apparent that, under the existing circumstances, the current DISCO setup is unlikely to be able to deliver the desired results. No significant improvement has been witnessed on part of some DISCOs in this regard. During FY2023-24, the overall actual losses of DISCOs were 17.21% against the actual loss of 15.68% in FY 2022-23. The actual T&D losses are much higher than the allowed T&D losses, which is 11.31%. Unfortunately, the majority of DISCOs have not adhered to the NEPRA given targets, except FESCO, GEPCO, and K-Electric which have managed to keep their losses below the levels or equal to targets set by NEPRA. However, other DISCOs have exceeded these limits, which contributed to a substantial loss of over Rs165 billion to the national exchequer. Anjum Nisar said that it is an undeniable fact that DISCOs are deliberately drawing less power than their demand, despite being provided with an adequate quota on account of loadshedding based on Aggregate Technical & Commercial losses policy. The AT&C based loadshedding is still being carried out and DISCOs particularly PESCO, QESCO, SEPCO and HESCO have considered it an easy path for them to manage the recovery rather than to put the efforts and ensure maximum collection.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Students taking part in a Milad un Nabi program held at A. L. I School System, Sector G 10. The audience appreciated the skills of the young students and exhorted them to continue their activities even in the coming days.—DNA

## Foreign remittances flow to support account balance

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As the remittances to Pakistan has hit a record high in first two months of the current fiscal year the Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has said that foreign remittances flows are crucial which can support the country's account balance amidst low volumes of foreign direct investment (FDI) and nominal growth of exports. PIAF chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol observed that overseas Pakistanis sent 44 per cent more remittances in the first two months of July and August of the current fiscal year (FY25), compared to the same period of the previous fiscal year. In July, remittances went up by 48 per cent year-on-year, setting

a trend of higher inflows. The receipts for July were \$2.994 billion, but it dipped to \$2.942bn in August. According to data issued by the State Bank on Monday, the inflows during July-Aug FY25 rose to \$5.936bn, while inflows in the same period of previous fiscal year FY24 was \$4.123bn – an increase of \$1.813bn, or 44 per cent. The PIAF Chief said that the inflows must be a relief for the government at a time when it is struggling to strike a deal with the donor agencies. This inflow would not only improve Pakistan's image in the eyes of international rating agencies but will also open doors for other sources. The country managed to bring down the current account deficit in FY24 to a negligible \$665 million while it was just \$162m in July FY25. Although the

economy suffered due to restricted imports and growth fell to just 2.4 per cent in FY24, the government succeeded in tackling the current account deficit. Faheem Saigol said that if remittances keep improving at the same pace, the country would be able to increase its imports to spur growth. Data showed that inflows from almost all destinations rose during the first two months while the highest increase among important destinations was from the UAE. Remittances from UAE jumped by 84.3 per cent to \$1149m from \$624 in the first two months of the previous fiscal year. However, the highest inflows were from Saudi Arabia, which rose 50.7 per cent. Remittances from Saudi Arabia shot up to \$1.473bn during July-Aug FY25, compared to the same period of last

year fiscal year. The other important inflows were \$918.3m from UK (up by 44.4 per cent); USA \$622.4bn (up 23.5 per cent); GCC countries \$569.7m (up 20.4 per cent) and EU countries \$726.6 per cent (up 26.5 per cent). The inflow from EU has exceeded the inflows from the GCC countries. Currency experts said one of the reasons for higher remittances is the tough stance of the government against illegal currency business. They said the currency smuggling and Hundi and Hawala system are working at the lowest level. The PIAF leader said that gulf should further be motivated to maintain an upward momentum in remittances, as they contributed more than 60 per cent of the total inflows during last couple of months.



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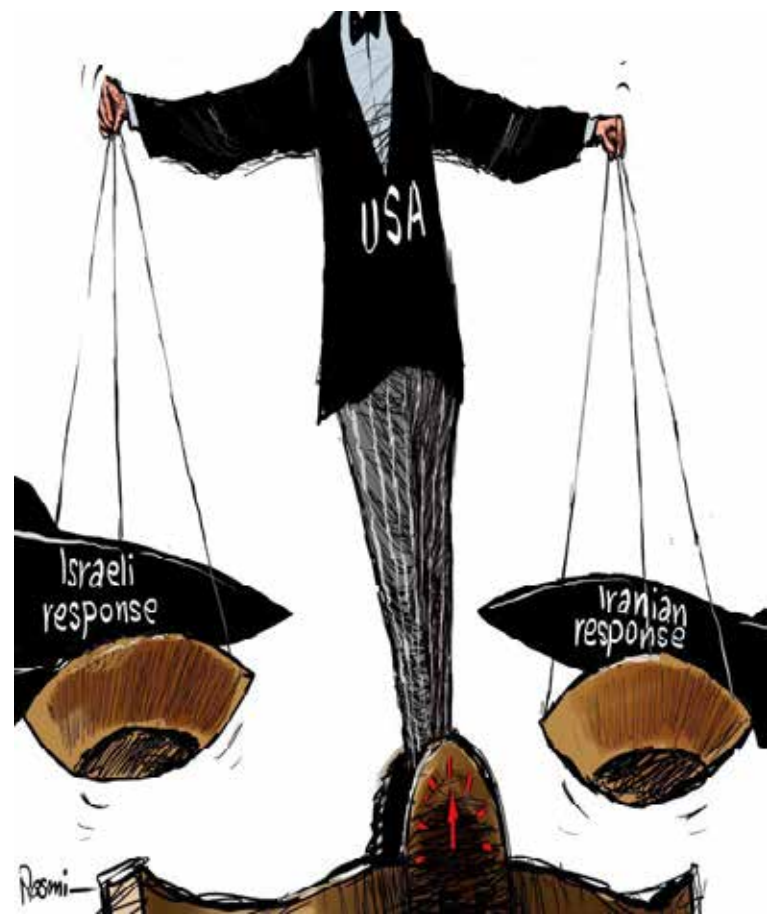
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## Gaza's pre-war struggles

THE economy of the Gaza Strip has suffered long-term deterioration due to blockade and marginalization. Even before the war, a World Bank report from May 2023 highlighted that over half of Gaza's population faced food insecurity, and more than half of the workforce was unemployed. So, how have all the economic sectors fared after a year of this genocidal war, and where might the region be heading? To understand the magnitude of the economic catastrophe caused by the Israeli war on Gaza, we need to look at the pre-war state of Gaza's economy. The area had been grappling with water and electricity shortages, rising costs, and irregular supplies. These social and economic challenges pushed the unemployment rate to around 46% and poverty to 26.5%, with 83% of workers earning less than the minimum wage, according to the UN Development Program. This situation led to the shrinking of the agriculture sector and the decline of the industrial sector, which form the backbone of Gaza's economy. As a result, Gaza's ability to achieve real development weakened, its production structure became distorted and service-oriented, and its output fell far short of its potential. This was despite Gaza's immense natural gas reserves, discovered off its coast in the 1990s. Since the beginning of the ongoing genocidal war, the economic situation has worsened. By the end of December 2023, early estimates showed a sharp decline in living conditions. Unemployment soared to 79.3%, and poverty among Gazans rose to about 96%. Both total and per capita GDP contracted by approximately 24% and 26%, respectively, compared to the previous year. The industrial sector, in particular, suffered from widespread destruction, continuous power outages, and disrupted supply chains. Industrial production dropped to about \$51 million in the fourth quarter of 2023, compared to earlier periods. By May 2024, the World Bank estimated that the damage to various economic sectors in Gaza was immense: 73% in education, 81% in health, 75% in municipal services, 55% in water and sanitation, 75% in information and communications, 63% in transport, 80% in trade, and 62% in construction and housing. Economic contraction and hyperinflation: A year after the war, the World Bank's report from September 26, 2024, revealed that the entire population of Gaza now lives in poverty, with inflation reaching unprecedented levels. Economic Update," highlighted a 35% drop in the real GDP of Palestinian territories in the first quarter of 2024—the largest ever recorded. Gaza's economy shrank by 86% during this period, and unemployment in the Palestinian territories exceeded 50%. The report also noted that the halt in commercial activities in Gaza left families without income, while the prices of essential goods skyrocketed, with inflation surpassing 250%. The near-total cessation of economic activity pushed Gaza into a deep recession, reducing its share of the Palestinian economy from an average of 17% in previous years to less than 5% now. The report also emphasized the significant damage to Gaza's healthcare system. The destruction of water supply infrastructure, solar panels, electricity shortages, and fuel for backup generators led to the closure of 80% of primary care centers. Only 17 out of 36 hospitals remain operational, three of which are field hospitals, providing about 1,500 beds across Gaza—compared to 3,500 beds before the war.

## Election and US dysfunction

ON November 5, Americans will go to the ballot box in what could be one of the most important elections in the country's history. It looks likely that the result will confirm that the nation is divided into three camps, unable and unwilling to interact. Many do not vote, while the rest are roughly evenly split between voting Republican or Democrat. The strength of a democracy is that the electorate listens to debates, opinions and programmes of the candidates, judges the parties on the basis of their record in office and weighs the candidates' opinions against what they see in daily life. It appears that there is little of this in the United States. This year's election will determine seats in the US House of Representatives and Senate as well as the presidency. In the House, Republicans hold a majority of 220 seats to 212 with three vacancies. If polls suggesting a close election prove accurate, the House could be pushed into a case-by-case approach with compromises and horse-trading. Some members hold extreme views on issues and cannot be expected to vote for the party line. Such a situation has been seen in the preceding 12 months. When facing crucial decisions, the Republican leadership conducted painful and drawn-out internal negotiations to all Republican members of the House on board. The picture in the Senate is not much different. Democrats hold a 51-49 majority, thanks to four independent senators who caucus with the Democrats. Mitch McConnell, the Republican minority leader, at times appears to be out of step with Donald Trump, former US president and the party's candidate this year. A small swing in votes could change the majority party or create a 50-50 tie, giving the vice-president the decisive vote. The polls for the presidential election are close to unequivocal in one sense and ambiguous in another. The popular vote — which US President Joe Biden won by more than 7 million votes in 2020 — seems likely to be won by US Vice-President Kamala Harris, the Democratic Party's nominee. The picture in the electoral college is more ambiguous. Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by almost 3 million votes in 2016 but lost 227-304 in the electoral college. It is possible for the two votes to contradict each other, and if they do the result in the electoral college is decisive. Biden's 306-232 majority in the electoral college in 2020 might have looked solid, but in fact it was almost too close for comfort. He won Arizona by about 10,000 votes, Georgia by about 12,000, Michigan by 150,000, Pennsylvania by 80,000, Nevada by 33,000 and Wisconsin by 20,000. A small number of votes swinging Republican could have produced a picture analogous to 2016. The first scenario for this year's election is that Harris wins both the popular vote and the electoral college. If her margin in the electoral college is at least comparable to Biden's in 2020, that could take the wind out of Trump's attempts to contest the result. However, if Harris' winning margin in the electoral college is thin, Trump could once again refuse to concede the election. Constitutionally, that would not constitute a barrier to Harris taking office, but Republicans in Congress could take action to stymie the process.

# Punjab: Making Governance more responsive

Abdul Rashid Shakir



Moreover, projects like 'Field Hospitals' and 'Clinics on Wheels'; renovation and upgradation of 2500 Basic Health Units (BHUs), 300 Rural Health Centres (RHCs) and major hospitals across Punjab; establishment of trauma centers and ambulance service on Motorways; Pakistan's first air ambulance service for the distressed across the province; the country's first public sector cancer hospital, Nawaz Sharif Cancer Care Hospital Lahore; Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology Sargodha; rehabilitation and construction of 600 arterial..

BASE, Efficiency & Effectiveness (3Es) along with 'Better, Faster & Cheaper (BFC)' are cornerstones of a responsive governance in modern tech-savvy society, where netizens expect their government to deliver key amenities at their doorsteps. For this, welfare governments adopt lean structures and streamline systems by cutting out 'waste' and 'inefficiency' in delivery processes. Cumbersome and manual procedures marred with inordinate delays are replaced with IT-based automated and more responsive initiatives for better service delivery. These tech-driven systems not only eliminate a culture of 'Speed Money' and 'Palm Greasing' but evoke public confidence in getting best value for the money paid. Punjab Government's recent drive to restructure its departments by abolishing the duplicate organizations is a step in the right direction to make the system more efficient and responsive. Moreover, the welfare-focused Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has developed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)-based Scorecard to objectively evaluate quality of service delivery of administration, police and revenue authorities. 'Maryam ki Dastak' is a remarkable initiative of the Punjab Government to ensure better and quick service delivery to people at their doorsteps. Initially 10 services are included in the Program for Lahore region, but their number is expected to reach 65 by year-end, besides expanding the program to the entire province. The services like domicile, e-stamping, birth, death and marriage certificates, property tax, token tax, motor, and vehicle transfer and registration of new vehicles can be availed through 'Dastak App' in Phase-I, whereas services of police, revenue, municipalities, excise, TMA, development authorities and other departments will also be made available in Phase-II. The Government has launched a programme to register 'Dastak' representatives across Punjab. Which would generate decent employment opportunities for around 100,000 youth. Earlier, under a Rs 30 billion 'Ramazan Nigahban Relief Package 2024', around 6.5 million free relief hampers containing 10 kg flour, 2 kg rice, 2 kg sugar, 2 kg ghee and 2 kg 'besan' were delivered at the

doorsteps of deserving families across Punjab. The Government has also launched, initially for Lahore Region, an online service for the citizens to get their residential maps approved hassle-free. The provision of free medicines in government health centers and hospitals across the province, and the free home delivery of medicines for patients suffering from cancer, heart diseases, TB and hepatitis are valuable public welfare initiatives of the Punjab Government. Moreover, the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed the authorities concerned to establish a Model Bazaar in every big city within a year, besides starting free home delivery of best quality goods including vegetables and fruits at rates lower than those fixed by the Government. "Meri Awaz, Maryam Nawaz," is Pakistan's first virtual women police station dedicated to addressing problems faced by women, including harassment, where women can share their problems with a female police officer with complete confidentiality and trust through '15' call, the women safety app's live chat and video call features, Punjab Police App and the Punjab Safe Cities Authority web portal. The installation of 100 modern emergency panic 15 buttons in universities, colleges, markets, intersections and bazaars across Lahore is another remarkable initiative of the Punjab Government to ensure security of its female folk. These panic buttons can be connected to the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) immediately by pressing them in case of any untoward situation. Moreover, projects like 'Field Hospitals' and 'Clinics on Wheels'; renovation and upgradation of 2500 Basic Health Units (BHUs), 300 Rural Health Centres (RHCs) and major hospitals across Punjab; establishment of trauma centers and ambulance service on Motorways; Pakistan's first air ambulance service for the distressed across the province; the country's first public sector cancer hospital, Nawaz Sharif Cancer Care Hospital Lahore; Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology Sargodha; rehabilitation and construction of 600 arterial and connecting roads, 05 Highways and Motorways in the province; besides a Rs 25 billion Undergrad Scholarship Program for the outstanding but deserving students; a Rs 10 billion Laptop Scheme for the talented

students of the province; skills training in high-end technologies like cloud computing, cyber security, data analytics, graphic designing, artificial intelligence, machine learning, e-merchandising and game development; construction of Nawaz Sharif IT City Lahore; "CM Maryam Nawaz Free Wi-Fi" service across Punjab, and the use of drone technology for the success of "Zero Waste Mission" on Eid-ul-Adha, effective monitoring of Muharram processions on 'Ashura', and timely drainage of water from low-lying areas across Punjab during Monsoon are no doubt impactful interventions of the visionary Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif-led Punjab Government for the welfare of its people. Inflation has, no doubt, become the most pressing problem of the common man recently because of multiple reasons both local and international, but the Government is fully mindful of the sufferings of people. It has taken many crucial steps to minimize shocks of the raging price hike. A crackdown against hoarding, smuggling and artificial shortage of goods in the market has significantly reduced prices of essential commodities including flour and its products. The price of bread has decreased from Rs 25 to Rs 13. A 10 kg flour bag, whose price was Rs 1380 in March, is now available for Rs 800. Establishment of a dedicated authority, Punjab Enforcement Regulatory Authority (PERA) for the purpose is also on the offing. The cost of electricity has skyrocketed as a result of meeting unavoidable IMF terms, but the Government of Punjab is determined to minimize its impact on the power consumers. It is bringing Pakistan's largest-ever solar project in Punjab, "Chief Minister Solar Panel Financing Scheme," under which free solar plates will be provided to consumers using up to 200 units per month, whereas those consuming 200 to 500 units per month will get solar systems on easy monthly installments. It will reduce their electricity bills by up to 50%. All above-mentioned initiatives speak volumes of the commitment of Punjab Government to mobilize its resources for the welfare of people by streamlining complicated approval procedures and plugging the pilrgrage.

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# The PTI versus yellow vest protests of France

Qamar Bashir



PTI's consistent pressure on judicial matters has also played a role in reshaping Pakistan's political landscape. Their protests against what they deem politically motivated cases have often rallied public support, placing the judiciary under intense public scrutiny. Legal challenges initiated by PTI have frequently led to delays or the invalidation of government actions, such as their intervention to challenge the amendments..

DURING my tenure as Press Minister in France, I witnessed firsthand the chaos of the Yellow Vest movement, which erupted in November 2018. The protests, sparked by rising fuel taxes and economic grievances, quickly evolved into a larger anti-government movement. Every weekend, thousands of protesters wearing yellow vests swarmed Paris, particularly targeting the posh Champs-Élysées, where the Embassy of Pakistan was located. The protests frequently spiraled into violence, with vandals setting vehicles ablaze, smashing windows of luxury boutiques, looting high-end stores, and even targeting banks by pulling out ATMs. This movement turned into a prolonged cat-and-mouse game between protesters and law enforcement, who often resorted to tear gas, water cannons, and mass arrests to contain the destruction. Over 200,000 people participated at the peak of the protests, causing over 200 million in damages in Paris alone. The movement severely impacted France's tourism industry, resulting in a 10% drop in bookings and a 30% decrease in tourist revenues during critical holiday seasons. The disruptions also tarnished France's global image, and its ranking in the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index fell from its usual top 10 position to 33rd, the lowest in Europe at that time. The unrest not only challenged the government but also left lasting scars on the French economy and society. It appears that the PTI leadership may have drawn inspiration from the strategy employed during the Yellow Vest movement in France. Like the Yellow Vests, PTI seems to rely on frequent, large-scale protests to challenge the government's authority. PTI's strategy of organized and frequent protests has proven effective in multiple ways, although it comes at a high cost to the public and the economy. PTI's protests have effectively kept the ruling coalition on the defensive, especially on political and electoral fronts. The protests continue to cast doubts over the legitimacy of the ruling coalition, accusing them of coming to power through rigged elections, particularly citing the manipulation of Form 45 and Form 47. PTI claims that the National Assembly members, who passed critical legislation, including constitutional amendments, do not represent the will of the people. These claims have not only disrupted parliamentary proceedings but also forced the government to allocate

resources to counter PTI's legal challenges and public demonstrations. The alleged manipulation of Form 47, where election results were reportedly altered in favor of the ruling coalition, remains a critical point of contention. Form 47 discrepancies highlight how PTI's protests have successfully raised doubts about the electoral process. Furthermore, PTI's strategy of street agitation and pressure tactics has forced the government to delay or reconsider sweeping constitutional changes that they intended to push through the National Assembly. PTI's consistent pressure on judicial matters has also played a role in reshaping Pakistan's political landscape. Their protests against what they deem politically motivated cases have often rallied public support, placing the judiciary under intense public scrutiny. Legal challenges initiated by PTI have frequently led to delays or the invalidation of government actions, such as their intervention to challenge the amendments in the Supreme Court's powers and electoral laws. In this context, PTI's protests have indirectly shaped the judicial narrative, even pushing the Supreme Court to review certain actions taken by the government. As a result, the judicial process has become an additional arena where the PTI has sought to counter what it sees as unconstitutional or undemocratic practices by the ruling coalition. PTI's protest strategy, however, comes at a steep economic cost to the country. Disruptions caused by their protests—whether in major cities or on critical national routes—result in financial losses on a large scale. Businesses in cities like Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi report up to a 30% drop in revenue on days when PTI's demonstrations are active. These losses, compounded over time, have taken a toll on businesses and employment. Transport disruptions during protest days also create logistical nightmares, with goods stuck in transit and supply chains slowing down. This leads to price hikes for consumers and supply shortages in the market, further hurting the economy. The government's response to PTI's protests has added additional pressure on national resources. The frequent deployment of anti-riot forces, tear gas, and other crowd-control measures not only strains law enforcement but also the national budget. The costs of policing PTI's protests are substantial, with tear gas, fuel, and logistical expenses running into millions of rupees per protest

day. According to estimates, the government allocates a significant amount from its law-and-order budget to deal with PTI's frequent protests, leading to a drain on public resources that could be used elsewhere. The law-and-order situation further deteriorates during protests as public property is often damaged, exacerbating the financial burden. PTI's protests have raised concerns about the government's ability to maintain control, tarnishing Pakistan's image abroad. This, in turn, leads to lower tourism rates and diminished foreign direct investment (FDI). Investors and tourists are deterred by the political instability, adding further pressure to an already struggling economy. Tourism in Pakistan, which had been gradually increasing, saw a decline due to these political uncertainties and unrest. Ultimately, PTI's strategy, while effective in challenging the government on multiple fronts, leaves the average citizen grappling with the negative consequences. Business losses, reduced foreign investment, and diminished employment opportunities are felt across the country. The wider economy suffers from these disruptions, and the trickle-down effects are evident in the loss of jobs and business closures. The French government ended the Yellow Vest movement by key policy reversals, such as canceling the fuel tax hike and increasing the minimum wage, addressing immediate grievances, while Macron's "Grand National Debate" gave citizens a platform to voice concerns. Additional reforms, including tax cuts and support for rural areas, targeted underlying economic issues. Over time, the movement lost momentum due to internal divisions, public opinion shifts, and protest fatigue, allowing the government to de-escalate the crisis. To defuse the PTI movement, the Pakistani government, judiciary, and parliament can learn from France's handling of the Yellow Vest protests by adopting a balanced approach. This includes initiating public dialogue to address grievances, such as electoral concerns, through transparent reforms and restoring election tribunals. While making reasonable concessions, such as ensuring fair electoral processes, the government must maintain strict law enforcement against violence, distinguishing between peaceful protesters and agitators. Additionally, fostering protest fatigue and addressing economic concerns through targeted reforms can shift public opinion and weaken the movement, helping to restore political stability.



## Briefs

Israeli strikes  
batter Beirut  
in heaviest  
bombardment  
so far

BEIRUT: Israeli air attacks battered Beirut's southern suburbs overnight and early on Sunday, the most intense bombardment of the Lebanese capital since Israel sharply escalated its campaign against Iran-backed group Hezbollah last month. During the night, the blasts sent booms across Beirut and sparked flashes of red and white for nearly 30 minutes visible from several kilometers away. It was the single biggest attack of Israel's assault on Beirut so far, witnesses and military analysts on local TV channels said. On Sunday a grey haze hung over the city and rubble was strewn across streets in the southern suburbs, while smoke columns rose over the area. "Last night was the most violence of all the previous nights. Buildings were shaking around us and at first I thought it was an earthquake. There were dozens of strikes — we couldn't count them all — and the sounds were deafening," said Hanan Abdullah, a resident of the Burj Al-Barajneh area in Beirut's southern suburbs. Videos posted on social media, which Reuters could not immediately verify, showed fresh damage to the highway that runs from Beirut airport through its southern suburbs into downtown Israel said its air force had "conducted a series of targeted strikes on a number of weapons storage facilities and terrorist infrastructure sites belonging to the Hezbollah terrorist organization in the area of Beirut." Lebanese authorities did not immediately say what the missiles had hit or what damage they caused.—Agencies

Iran's oil  
minister  
visits key oil  
terminal amid  
Israel strike  
fears

TEHRAN: Iran's oil minister landed on Kharg Island, home to the country's main export terminal, and held talks with a naval commander on Sunday, the oil ministry's news website Shana reported, amid concern Israel could attack energy facilities. An Israeli military spokesman said on Saturday that Israel would retaliate in response to last week's missile attack by Tehran "when the time is right." US news website Axios cited Israeli officials as saying Iran's oil facilities could be hit, while US President Joe Biden said on Friday that he did not think Israel had yet concluded how to respond. Iran is a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) with production of around 3.2 million barrels per day (bpd), or 3 percent of global output. Iranian oil exports have climbed this year to near multi-year highs of 1.7 million bpd despite US sanctions. Most of its oil and gas wealth is located in the south of the country, where the Kharg Island terminal is situated and from which around 90 percent of Iranian oil exports are shipped.—DNA

PFC delegation  
heads to US  
for expanding  
furniture export  
opportunities

LAHORE: A delegation from the Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC), led by CEO Mian Kashif Ashfaq, has embarked on a week-long visit to the United States to explore new export opportunities and expand the market for Pakistan's high-quality furniture products. Prior to his departure here on Sunday, he said delegation will engage with American businesses, industry stakeholders, and potential buyers to showcase the craftsmanship and design excellence of Pakistani furniture, which has gained global recognition for its quality and aesthetic appeal. He said the visit was a part of PFC's broader strategy to enhance the global presence of Pakistani furniture and foster collaboration between local manufacturers and international importers.—APP

Iran condemns 'unlawful'  
US, UK airstrikes on Yemen

TEHRAN: Iran has condemned in the strongest terms the latest round of joint airstrikes by American and British forces against targets in Yemen, stating that the aerial attacks are in flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and international law. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei, in a post on X, formerly Twitter, on Saturday held the UK and US accountable for such infringements of international laws. "Repeated military aggression by the United States and Britain against Yemen constitutes a blatant infringement of

the UN Charter and fundamental principles of international law. "The attacking parties bear international accountability for such unlawful acts that run counter to the UN Charter," he wrote. Baghaei said Israel and its expansionist policy is destabilizing the region. "The Zionist regime's ongoing occupation, war-mongering policies, and expansionism are the main reasons behind insecurity and instability in West Asia," he added. He stressed the need for the cessation of Israel's bloody aggression against Lebanon and the genocid-

al war in Gaza as the prerequisite for the restoration of peace and stability in the region. The Iranian diplomat said the actions of the Yemeni people and other Muslim nations in the region are in retaliation for the Zionist regime's atrocities against Palestinians, Lebanese people, and Syrians. Baghaei explained that these solidarity operations are a natural response to the massacre of their Palestinian and Lebanese brothers and sisters. He reiterated that the illegal use of force by the US and its allies against the Yemeni nation

will not undermine their determination to defend the peoples of Palestine and Lebanon. Arabic-language al-Masirah television network reported on Friday that the US and UK had carried out 18 airstrikes on several regions in the country, including the national capital of Sana'a, and the provinces of Dhamar, al-Bayda, and Hudaydah. The channel said four strikes targeted the al-Sayana area in the Ath'thara district of Sana'a. Seven attacks also hit Hudaydah International Airport and the Al-Khatib area in the strategically

important western province of Hudaydah. Additionally, an airstrike hit the southern part of Dhamar, located approximately 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of Sana'a. Al-Masirah later announced another three joint US-UK strikes against the Jabana area in Hudaydah, but did not give further details. Yemenis have declared their open support for Palestine's struggle against the Israeli occupation since the regime launched a devastating war on Gaza on October 7, 2023, after the territory's Palestinian resistance movements carried out surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying

entity. It has been carrying out a series of strategic operations against Israeli interests, both in the Yemeni waters and inside the occupied territories, impacting Israel's economy and so-called security. The Yemeni Armed Forces have said they will not stop their operations until unrelenting Israeli ground and aerial offensives in Gaza end. So far, Israel has killed at least 41,825 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 96,910 others in Gaza. Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, leader of Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement, has said it is "a great honor and blessing to confront America directly."—Agencies

Philippines  
to send  
halal trade  
mission to  
Saudi Arabia  
this month

MANILA: The Philippines is preparing to send a halal trade mission to Saudi Arabia later this month as the Southeast Asian nation seeks to deepen trade relations with the Kingdom. Organized by the Philippine Department of Trade and Industry, the activities will cover Riyadh and Jeddah from Oct. 27 to Nov. 5. Philippine officials have been working to expand their domestic halal industry, while also seeking to boost trade relations with Saudi Arabia. "This Philippine halal mission to Saudi Arabia aims to effectively promote the burgeoning Philippine halal trade industry and further strengthen trade relations between the Philippines and Saudi Arabia," Rommel Romato, charge d'affaires of the Philippine Embassy in Riyadh, told Arab News on Sunday. "The Philippine delegation is composed of government agencies and private sector entities or representatives who will take part in the Saudi International Halal Expo 2024 in Riyadh." The mission will also include tourism and agriculture officials, as well as members of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos, the body governing Muslim affairs in the Southeast Asian nation, Romato added.—APP

Teenager  
'stabbed  
50 times',  
burned alive  
in Marseille

MARSEILLE: A 15-year-old boy was "stabbed 50 times" and burned alive this week in the southern French city of Marseille in an apparent case of drug-related violence, prosecutors said on Sunday. Speaking to reporters, Marseille prosecutor Nicolas Bessone said the teenager was murdered on Wednesday, describing the case as one of "unprecedented savagery." Marseille, France's second-largest city but also one of its poorest, is plagued by drug-related violence. Bessone said that victims and perpetrators of such violence were getting increasingly younger.

The city has in recent years witnessed a turf war for control of the highly profitable drug market between various clans including DZ Mafia. The teenager had been hired by a 23-year-old prisoner to intimidate a competitor by setting fire to his door, the prosecutor said, adding he had been promised 2,000 euros. The teenager had however been spotted by members of a rival gang who repeatedly stabbed him then set him on fire, he added. The same prisoner then recruited a 14-year-old minor to carry out a revenge attack and kill a member of the Blacks gang, promising to pay him 50,000 euros. The 14-year-old hired a 36-year-old driver who angered the minor and ended up being killed.—APP

1 dead as  
Russia strikes  
Ukraine with  
drones and  
missiles

KYIV: One person has died after Russian forces attacked Ukraine overnight with 87 Shahed drones and four different types of missiles, officials said Sunday. A 49-year-old man was killed in the Kharkiv region after his car was hit by a drone, said regional Gov. Oleh Syniubov. A gas pipeline was also damaged and a warehouse set alight in the city of Odesa, Ukrainian officials reported. Ukraine's air force said in a statement that air defenses had destroyed 56 of the 87 drones and two missiles over 14 Ukrainian regions, including the capital, Kyiv. Another 25 drones disappeared from radar "presumably as a result of anti-aircraft missile defense," it said. The barrage comes a day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Saturday that he will present his "victory plan" at the Oct. 12 meeting of the Ramstein group of nations that supplies arms to Ukraine. Zelenskyy presented his plan to U.S. President Joe Biden in Washington last week.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Oct06-Ambassador of Nepal, Tapas Adhikari visiting DAACHI arts and crafts exhibitions at Pak China Friendship Center in the Federal Capital.—ONLINE

Chairman CDA inspects  
ongoing JCC renovation work

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, conducted a thorough visit of the renovation work at the Jinnah Convention Centre

(JCC) on Sunday. The Member Engineering and other relevant officers of CDA accompanied him during the visit. During the visit, Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa was briefed on the upgrades and renovation being made to the JCC. Expressing satisfaction

with the overall progress, he directed to swiftly complete any minor remaining tasks and stressed to facilitate the timely handover of the Jinnah Convention Centre to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). The Chairman also closely examined the installation of

state-of-the-art equipment and furniture including SMDs, modern conferencing systems, advanced lighting, high-speed internet, and sound systems, ensuring that the facility is fully prepared for upcoming the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit.

Immigration is not  
a 'bad' thing, says  
France's Macron

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron said Saturday that immigration was not necessarily a "bad" thing, in a thinly veiled riposte to the country's hard-line interior minister who has vowed to crack down on migration. "Is immigration bad? The answer is no. It depends," Macron told broadcaster France Inter. "Is immigration from Africa bad in general? In truth, not totally," Macron said in remarks recorded earlier this week and broadcast on Saturday. On Friday and Saturday, Macron hosted dozens of leaders of French-speaking countries for the "Francophonie" summit, the first time the event has been held in France for 33 years. He hopes the gathering will help boost French influence in a world beset by crises, in particular Africa. The African continent receives more from immigrants in Europe sending remittances home than from European public development aid, Macron said. "Shame on us," he said. "All this is much more complex than people want to admit," Macron added, pointing to the "ethical and political tension" on the issue. Macron also said foreign-born French people helped make France stronger. "There are millions of dual nationals in our country. There are at least as many French people of immigrant origin," Macron added. "This is our wealth. And it is a strength," he added. "The difficulty at the moment is how we manage to fight against human traffickers, these illegal immigration networks," he said. France's new right-wing government has pledged to clamp down on immigration and fight people traffickers. A two-year-old child was crushed to death and several adult migrants died in two separate tragedies overnight Friday to Saturday when their overcrowded boats tried to cross the Channel to Britain, French officials said. France's new interior minister, Bruno Retailleau, has vowed new immigration rules to "protect the French," adding that he did not think that immigration presented "an opportunity" for France.—APP



FAISALABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari offering Fateha over the martyrdom of Lt Col Muhammad Ali Shaheed, at his family residence.—DNA

Kazakhstan holds referendum on building  
first nuclear power plant

Countries with nuclear power plants include the US, Russia, China, France, India, UK, Japan, and Germany, among others including Iran, Israel and Pakistan. Under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), these former eight nations are restricted from using nuclear technology for weapons development, committing to peaceful use, and working towards disarmament

BAKU: Kazakh citizens are voting in a crucial national referendum today, October 6, to decide whether the country should construct its first nuclear power plant. The vote, promoted by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's government, comes as the Central Asian nation seeks to reduce its reliance on coal and secure a more sustainable energy future. Over 12 million eligible voters can cast their ballots at 10,323 polling stations across the country, including 74 abroad in 59 countries. The referendum, which runs from 7am to 8pm local time, has drawn signif-

icant attention from both national and international observers, with 230 public associations and accredited foreign journalists monitoring the process. A recent survey by the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies indicated that 59.2% of respondents intend to participate in the vote, reflecting the high level of public interest in the issue. However, the proposed nuclear plant has sparked significant public debate, with concerns rooted in Kazakhstan's Soviet nuclear legacy and fears about the involvement of Russia's state-owned nuclear company, Rosatom. The village of Ulken, located in the

Almaty Region, has been identified as the most suitable site for the proposed plant, which is estimated to cost between \$10 billion and \$12 billion. While Kazakhstan is one of the world's largest uranium producers, the country lacks the infrastructure to enrich uranium for nuclear fuel. The government argues that nuclear energy is a logical choice to supplement renewable sources like wind and solar power. Kazakhstan's aging coal-fired plants, which currently dominate its energy sector, are becoming increasingly unreliable, and the nation has started importing electricity from Russia to meet

domestic demand. However, critics argue that Kazakhstan could achieve energy security by expanding natural gas-powered plants, which are less polluting than coal but do not carry the same risks as nuclear energy. There is also deep public distrust of nuclear projects, largely due to the Soviet-era Chernobyl disaster in 1986, which had lasting health impacts on thousands of Kazakhs involved in cleanup efforts. Additionally, decades of Soviet nuclear weapons testing in Kazakhstan have left large tracts of land uninhabitable and contributed to widespread health problems. Despite these

concerns, President Tokayev has urged the public to embrace nuclear energy as part of a forward-looking strategy, stressing that Kazakhstan must keep pace with global progress. Countries with nuclear power plants include the US, Russia, China, France, India, UK, Japan, and Germany, among others including Iran, Israel and Pakistan. Under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), these former eight nations are restricted from using nuclear technology for weapons development, committing to peaceful use, and working towards disarmament.—Agencies

## Briefs

### 'Lawyers to defend judiciary from threats'

Hamid Khan says black coats have already started a movement to protect Constitution

#### BURAU REPORT

LAHORE: Senior lawyer Hamid Khan has claimed that the ruling coalition is trying to amend the Constitution in a bid to weaken the judiciary, an attempt which the lawyers' community will resist with full force. Talking to the media with reference to the proposed 26th Constitutional Amendment, Khan said lawyers are a shield against every conspiracy targeting the judiciary. "We will not allow anyone to strike at the judiciary. Lawyers will protect the judiciary at all costs. We will neither allow the formation of a separate Federal Constitutional Court nor let it operate. Two hundred thousand lawyers across the country will not let any such attempt succeed," he added. The proposed constitutional amendment package includes some major changes in the country's legal system including formation of a separate constitutional court as well as extension in the tenure of the chief justice of Pakistan. The lawyer referred to the 2007 Lawyers Movement that resulted in the exit of former military ruler General Pervez Musharraf and said, "Like in 2007, we will observe a day of protest every Thursday."

**Floods in Bangladesh leave five dead**  
DHAKA: At least five people have died and more than 100,000 remain stranded as devastating floods, triggered by heavy rains and upstream torrents, continue to ravage northern Bangladesh, officials said on Sunday. In Sherpur, one of the hardest-hit northern districts, the water levels of major rivers have surged, submerging new areas and displacing thousands of families. Local authorities fear widespread damage to agriculture, with crops and farmlands, particularly rice fields, facing potential devastation. Many homes and roads are under several feet of water, cutting off villages and leaving residents in desperate need of rescue. "I have never seen such flooding in my life," said Abu Taher, a resident of the district. Army personnel, using boats and helicopters, have joined rescue efforts, delivering emergency supplies and evacuating those trapped by the floods. Bridges have collapsed, and roads have been submerged, making it difficult for local authorities to reach affected areas. — Agencies

**It is time to silence the guns: Guterres**

NEW YORK: The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the Israeli genocide in Gaza which has been going on for a year, "continues to shatter lives and inflict profound human suffering for Palestinians in Gaza, and now the people of Lebanon." In a video message marking the anniversary of the Gaza war, Guterres urged the international community to focus on the "terrible events" that occurred, expressing his solidarity with all the victims and their loved ones. "It is time for the release of the hostages. Time to silence the guns. Time to stop the suffering that has engulfed the region. Time for peace, international law, and justice," he said. The UN chief stressed the need for "a permanent solution to the conflict to allow Israel, Palestine, and all other countries in the region to live in peace and dignity and with respect for one another." Guterres had previously underscored during a UN Security Council meeting in October 2023 that Hamas's attack on Israel did not come "from the vacuum". — Agencies

# Israeli strikes batter Beirut in heaviest bombardment so far

Videos posted on social media, which Reuters could not immediately verify, showed fresh damage to the highway that runs from Beirut airport through its southern suburbs into downtown

#### NEWS DESK

BEIRUT: Israeli air attacks battered Beirut's southern suburbs overnight and early on Sunday, the most intense bombardment of the Lebanese capital since Israel sharply escalated its campaign against Iran-backed group Hezbollah last month. During the night, the blasts sent booms across Beirut and sparked flashes of red and white for nearly 30 minutes visible from several kilometers away. It was the single biggest attack of Israel's assault on Beirut so far, witnesses and military analysts on local TV channels said. On Sunday a grey haze hung over the city and rubble was strewn across streets in the southern suburbs, while smoke columns rose over the area. "Last night was the most violence of all the previous nights. Buildings were shaking around us and at first I thought it was an earthquake. There were dozens of strikes — we couldn't count them all — and the sounds were deafening," said Hanan Abdullah, a resident of the Burj Al-Barajneh area in Beirut's southern suburbs.

Videos posted on social media, which Reuters could not immediately verify, showed fresh damage to the highway that runs from Beirut airport through its southern suburbs into downtown. Israel said its air force had "conducted a series of targeted strikes on a number of weapons storage facilities and terrorist infrastructure sites belonging to the Hezbollah terrorist organization in the area of Beirut." Lebanese authorities did not immediately say what the missiles had hit or what damage they caused. This weekend's intense bombardment came just ahead of the anniversary of the Oct. 7 attack by Palestinian militant group Hamas on southern Israel in which some 1,200 people were killed and more than 250 taken hostage, according to Israeli figures. The target of Israel's airstrikes across Lebanon and its ground invasion in the south of the country is the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah, Iran's chief ally in the region. The assault has killed hundreds of people including civilians and has displaced 1.2 million, Lebanese officials say. For days Israel has bombed the Beirut suburb of Dahiyeh — considered a stronghold

for Hezbollah but also home to thousands of ordinary Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian refugees — killing its leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah on Sept. 27. A Lebanese security source said on Saturday that Hashem Safieddine, Nasrallah's potential successor, had been out of contact since Friday, after an Israeli airstrike on Thursday near the city's international airport that was reported to have targeted him. Israel continues to bomb the area of the strike, preventing rescue workers from reaching it, Lebanese security sources said. Hezbollah has not commented on Safieddine. His loss would be another blow to the group and its patron Iran. Israeli strikes across the region in the past year, sharply accelerated in recent weeks, have devastated Hezbollah's leadership. Gaza war: Israel's war in Gaza, launched after the Oct. 7 attacks and aimed at eliminating Hamas, another Iran-backed group, has killed nearly 42,000 people, Palestinian authorities say. The coastal enclave lies in ruins. At least 26 people were killed and 93 others wounded when Israeli airstrikes hit a mosque and a school sheltering displaced

people in the Gaza Strip early on Sunday, the Hamas-run Gaza government media office said. Hezbollah began firing rockets at Israel a day after the Oct. 7 attacks and after Israel had begun bombing Gaza, saying it was acting in solidarity with the Palestinian group. Cross-border fire continued between Israel and Hezbollah for months, but were mostly limited to the Israel-Lebanon border area before the recent upsurge. Israel says it stepped up its assault on Hezbollah last month to enable the safe return of tens of thousands of citizens to homes in northern Israel, bombed by the group since last Oct. 8. Israeli authorities said on Saturday that nine Israeli soldiers had been killed in southern Lebanon so far. In northern Israel, air raid sirens sounded on Sunday and the Israeli military said it had intercepted rockets fired from Lebanese territory. Iran has signalled it does not want a direct war with Israel but has launched responses on occasion to Israeli attacks. It fired a barrage of ballistic missiles at Israel on Tuesday that did little damage. Israel has been weighing options for its response.

### PTI wants to disrupt SCO summit, says Kundi

#### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Levelling serious allegations on PTI, KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has said the party transport terrorists in Punjab and other cities in the guise of protests and sit-ins. "The PTI wants to disrupt Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit by inviting Indian FM to address their protest rally. "They are treading course of collision. They have nothing to do with the prosperity of the country. They just know how to commit corruption and dance," the KP governor said. In a statement, the governor said PTI supplies weapons to other cities in the name of political struggle, adding Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi had claimed that 100 Afghans were arrested from PTI protest in Islamabad. To a question, Kundi said dialogue with PTI is not possible as it follows anti-country agenda. "They tried to sabotage talks with IMF by sending a letter to the funding agency, they created May 9 violence and now they wanted to disrupt the tour of Malaysian PM," he alleged.

## Iran decorates commander with top order

#### AGENCIES

TEHRAN: Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has conferred the Order of Fat'h (Conquest) on Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh, the commander of the IRGC's Aerospace Division. The order is granted to warriors with dramatic victories. The awarding on Sunday came after Iran's launch of 180 ballistic missiles at Israeli military and intelligence bases in the Tel Aviv area on Tuesday. "The awarding of the order is in recognition of the brilliant Operation True Promise," Iran's news agencies reported. The medal consists of the likeness of three palm leaves on top of the grand mosque of Khorramshahr in southwest Iran as a symbol of resistance, the flag of Iran and the word fat'h. Operation True Promise refers to Iran's retaliatory strikes on Israel on April 13 and October 1. In April, Iran launched hundreds of drones and missiles against Israel, in an unprecedented attack that came as a response to the occupying regime's raid on the Iranian consulate in Syria.



ISLAMABAD: The troops of Pakistan Army and Frontier Constabulary (FC) have completely taken the control of D Chowk on Sunday. — Online

### PHC moved for KP CM's 'recovery'

#### SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: PTI lawyers wing moved the Peshawar High Court (PHC) for the recovery of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. Alam Khan Adeenzai Advocate stated that a petition had been prepared for the chief minister's recovery, and it would be filed once the high court staff arrives. Advocate General Shah Faisal Utmankhel said that contact has been made with the Registrar of Peshawar High Court, and a request has been made for a hearing today. It is hoped that the chief justice will form a special bench today, he added. Alam Khan Adeenzai Advocate said that Ali Amin Gandapur is the chief minister of the province; what message does the federal government want to convey by arresting the chief executive of the province?

### Court grants physical remand of Imran's sisters

#### COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The sessions court of Islamabad on Sunday remanded both the sisters of PTI founder Imran Khan. Aleema Khan and Uzma Khan were handed over to police on one-day physical remand. Both the sisters of Imran Khan were produced before the court. Meanwhile, the duty judge also directed to produce Aleema Khan and Uzma Khan before an Anti-Terrorism Court tomorrow. The session court also remanded Adnan Khan, the brother of former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser, for one day. It merits mention here that Islamabad Police on Friday had arrested PTI founder Imran Khan's sisters in D-Chowk.

## Argentina offers technical support in food security

CM Maryam Nawaz emphasized that bilateral relations between Pakistan and Argentina were improving, and steps would be taken to increase business-to-business interactions between the two nations

#### BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Argentine Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Sebastian Sayus met Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif at Chief Minister house here on Sunday. During the meeting, matters related to enhancing cooperation in various sectors including livestock, agriculture, information technology, and other industries were discussed in details. They agreed to launch a pilot project for silos in Okara. CM Maryam Nawaz

emphasized that bilateral relations between Pakistan and Argentina were improving, and steps would be taken to increase business-to-business interactions between the two nations. She highlighted the desire to leverage Argentine meat processing technology and underscored the need to enhance trade in livestock, sports goods, and surgical instruments with Argentina. The CM assured that the government was committed to providing security and all necessary facilities to foreign investors in Pakistan, noting the abundant investment opportunities in various sectors in Punjab.



## Mohsin Naqvi, Aleem's efforts lead to repatriation of Pakistani prisoners

Minister Naqvi expressed his gratitude to the Sri Lankan government and its High Commissioner for their assistance in the matter. He also thanked Minister Abdul Aleem Khan for generously taking on the financial responsibility of bringing the prisoners home

#### MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The combined efforts of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Federal Minister for Privatisation Abdul Aleem Khan have successfully led to the return of 56 Pakistani prisoners in Sri Lanka for several years. A chartered plane was dispatched to bring the prisoners back to Pakistan, and they are expected to arrive home on Sunday. The repatriation effort was a result of three months of coordination between the Ministry of Interior, under the direction of Mohsin Naqvi, and Sri Lankan authorities. Naqvi had tasked the ministry with facilitating the release and safe return of the Pakistani nationals. In a significant gesture of support, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan will cover all the expenses associated with the prisoners' repatriation from Sri Lanka. Minister Naqvi expressed his gratitude to the Sri Lankan government and its High Commissioner for their assistance in the matter. He also thanked Minister Abdul Aleem Khan for generously taking on the financial responsibility of bringing the prisoners home. The return of these 56 Pakistani prisoners marks a significant humanitarian effort by the government, bringing relief to the families awaiting the return of their loved ones.

## PTI vs Federal Govt: time to settle issues

#### SHAMIM SHAHID

AT the moment there is a complete deadlock between federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government after 'arrest' of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and takeover of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa house Islamabad by armed forces. Islamabad police has confirmed registration of FIR against leading PTI leaders. However, names of nominees nominated in FIR yet to be made public. The situation is turning worse after the expiry of an injured policeman who succumbed in Islamabad hospital and summoning of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly for discussing the situation erupted with arrest of Chief Minister and several others. Though the PTI leaders are accusing the federal government for the arrest of deposed Prime Minister Imran Khan and other top PTI leaders. But the matter in fact rests between the PTI and the powerful military establishment. At the moment, the effective and powerful military establish-

ment is not willing either to forgive deposed Prime Minister Imran Khan or to make him free. But in a bid to get the release of Imran Khan and his spouse, the PTI leadership is building pressure and criticism against the PML(N) lead federal government. According to an FIR registered by Islamabad police around 105 top persons including PTI leaders have been arrested, over 40 vehicles including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government-controlled RESCUE 1122 vehicles and ambulances were also impounded by Islamabad and Punjab Police. The top Executive officer Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (nominated and posted by Federal government) has also directed Secretary Relief for submitting detailed reports of RESCUE resources (vehicles and personnel) used in PTI agitations/protests against the federal government. Some of top PTI leaders are publicly reaffirming support and loyalty to Imran Khan and Ali Amin Gandapur but the internal

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