



# Islamabad POST

Friday, October 11, 2024

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Price Rs. 30

**King of clay, Tennis legend Nadal to retire in November**

Detailed News On Page-06

**Australia, Pak mark 40 years of agri coop**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Kang wins Nobel Prize for literature**

Detailed News On Page-08



**SCO meeting to strengthen regional coop: Tarar**

Country received foreign remittances of worth 8.8 billion dollars during the past three months

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar says holding the SCO Council of Heads of Government meeting in Islamabad will pave way for strengthening regional cooperation and resolving common issues. Addressing a media workshop organized by China Media Group in Islamabad today, he said it is great honour for Pakistan to host the SCO Summit. The Information Minister said the SCO Summit is taking place at the time when our economy is on a positive trajectory and the economic indicators are showing positive trends. The Minister said the country received foreign remittances of worth 8.8 billion dollars during the past three months, while the number of tax filers has also increased due to comprehensive reforms introduced by the government. He said Pakistan's IT exports have risen to 3.2 billion dollars, showing fourteen percent increase in the overall exports of the country.

**Punjab imposes Section 144 in eight cities**

Section 144 will be enforced in Multan, Sahiwal, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Vehari, Pakpattan, Okara

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Thursday imposed Section 144 in eight cities. According to the notification issued by the Punjab government, Section 144 will be enforced in Multan, Sahiwal, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Vehari, Pakpattan, Okara, and Wazirabad. This will prohibit all forms of political gatherings, sit-ins, rallies, demonstrations, protests, and similar activities. A spokesperson for the Punjab Home Department stated that the decision to implement Section 144 was made at the request of the relevant district administration. The measure will be in effect for three days in the eight districts, from Thursday, October 10, to Saturday, October 12.

**IHC orders CDA to de-seal KP House**

"Don't make it seem like you are targeting someone," says IHC CJ Aamer Farooq

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday ordered to de-seal the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House in the federal capital, two days after the Capital Development Authority (CDA) sealed it. The court's orders were issued by IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq during the hearing of a plea filed by the KP government. Justice Farooq told the CDA lawyer that the authority can issue notices to seal the property according to the law. "Don't make it seem like you are targeting someone." Presenting arguments during the hearing, the authority's lawyer said that illegal construction has taken place on the property.

**Saudi minister receives Hilal-e-Pakistan**

## Pak-Saudi investment relations strengthened

The Prime Minister also conveyed his warm regards to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

ABID RAZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Investment of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia H.E. Khalid bin AbdulAziz calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Minister for Investment of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia H.E. Khalid bin AbdulAziz Al Falih called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. The Prime Minister warmly welcomed the Saudi Investment Minister and his delegation to Pakistan. The Prime Minister said that Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations were based on decades long brotherly ties and were becoming stronger with each passing day. The Prime Minister further said that Saudi Arabia had stood by Pakistan in every difficult situation. Referring to the current visit of Saudi Investment Minister the Prime Minister said that this visit was an important milestone in the strengthening of investment ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, setting the stage for greater collaboration in the sectors of mutual interest between the two countries. The Prime Minister of Pakistan extended his heartfelt congratulations to H.E. Khalid Al-Falih on receiving the prestigious

Continued on Page 06

**Saving consumers Rs 60bn**

### Govt decides to end agreements with five IPPs

Revision of agreements with other IPPs will gradually lower tariffs, create fiscal space of Rs411bn annually, says premier

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Thursday that five independent power producers (IPPs) have "voluntarily" agreed to cancel their power purchase agreements with the federal government, providing Rs60 billion in annual relief to inflation-hit consumers, following extended talks with the authorities. "By voluntarily agreeing to terminate their contracts prematurely with the government, these five

Continued on Page 06

**Grand Jirga**

## CM KP empowered to establish peace in KP

Jirga attended by heads of political parties decide holding talks with dissenting parties

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: A Grand Jirga organised by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and attended by top officials including Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has empowered Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur to hold talks with dissenting parties to improve law and order situation in the province. CM Gandapur hosted the high-level meeting at CM House on Thursday to discuss the current political and security situation in the province and reach a consensus plan of action after a three-day Pashtoon Qaumi Jirga was announced by the banned Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM). The key sitting was attended by KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Federal Minister Amir Muqam, lawmakers from the provincial assembly as well as heads and representatives of all political parties. According to a declaration issued after the sitting, CM Gandapur, at the participants' request, announced

Continued on Page 06

### SC issues detailed judgement in 63-A interpretation case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan on Thursday issued its 23-page detailed judgment in the Article 63-A interpretation case, ruling the earlier verdict against the clear language and mandate of the constitution. A five-member SC bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Aminud Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Mazhar Alam Miankhalil, and Justice Naeem Afghan through a short order issued on October 2 annulled its 2022 verdict that barred lawmakers from going

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Investment of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Khalid bin Abdul Aziz calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

### FO requests diplomats to limit movement

Foreign ministry says govt has instituted heightened security steps to ensure safety of foreign dignitaries

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office has advised all the diplomats to consider limiting their movements during the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, which is scheduled to take place from October 15 to 16 in Islamabad. Islamabad is all set to host the SCO Council of Heads of Government meeting next week with major foreign leaders, including Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar visiting the country.

Continued on Page 06

### Pak-Saudi business forum held

## Pak-Saudi economic ties 'have no limits', says Saudi minister

"We must strengthen Pakistan's economy," says Saudi minister

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Minister for Investment Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih said on Thursday that the ties between his country and Pakistan "have no limits" and the same applies to their economic cooperation. "We must strengthen Pakistan's economy. Pakistan has quickly stabilised its economy," the minister stated during his address at the Pakistan-Saudi Business Forum in Islamabad, where he is on a three-day visit. The minister's comments were echoed by the World Bank, which has said that Pakistan saw a quick recovery while noting that its economy would grow by 2.8% in the current fiscal year. A high-level 135-member Saudi delegation, led by the investment minister, landed in Islamabad a day earlier and is expected to sign agreements worth \$2 billion with Pakistan.

Continued on Page 06

### Pakistan on road to sustainable growth, says Ishaq Dar

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday citing the government's efforts for economic stability and existing huge potential for investment, said that the country's economy had been put on the road to sustainable growth to achieve the dream of joining the G20 club as soon as possible. The deputy prime minister, in his keynote address at the Pakistan-Saudi Business Forum held here, recalled that in 2017,

Continued on Page 06

### Four Khwarij killed in KP

Weapons Recovered from Terrorists in Bannu and North Waziristan

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: On 9-10 October 2024, four Khwarij were killed in two separate operations conducted by Security Forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. On 9 October 24, security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in general area Janikhel, Bannu District on reported presence of khwarij. During the conduct of the operation, after an intense exchange of fire, two khwarij were sent to hell. In another

Continued on Page 06

## President Zardari condoles killing of Chinese citizens

Talking to Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong, President Zardari said that the Chinese government and people had contributed to the socio-economic development of Pakistan and the enemies of both countries could not want to see the growing bilateral partnership

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday visited the Embassy of

China here and offered his heartfelt condolences on behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan over the tragic killing of Chinese citizens in a terrorist attack in Karachi that took place on

October 7, 2024. Strongly condemning the terrorist attack, the president reiterated the resolve to bring the perpetrators of this heinous crime to justice. He expressed Pakistan's solidarity with Chinese people in this hour of grief, according to a President House press release. Talking to Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong, President Zardari said that the Chinese government and people had contributed to the socio-economic development of Pakistan and the enemies of both countries could not want to see the growing bilateral partnership. He stated that such cowardly acts by the hostile elements could not weaken the bonds of friendship between the two time-tested friends. The president reiterated Pakistan's commitment to ensure the safety and security of the Chinese nationals residing in Pakistan.



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# Medical colleges sudden raise in fees creates panic

During the meeting with Irfan Siddiqui, Dr. Jamal Nasir said that he tried hard to solve the problem as caretaker health minister, but a very strong lobby became an obstacle. Dr. Jamal Nasir paid tribute to Senator Irfan Siddiqui for raising his voice for the rights of the youth and parents who were suffering from difficulties due to unjust fee structures of Private Medical Colleges

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Former provincial minister for health & population welfare, Dr. Jamal Nasir said that unprecedented increase in fees of private medical and dental colleges has panicked parents and students, as a significant number of candidates will

not be able to take admissions due to the exorbitant spike in fees. He expressed these views during meeting Senator Irfan Siddiqui here on Thursday. He appreciated the stance made by Senator Irfan Siddiqui, in Senate Standing Committee on Health. During the meeting with Irfan Siddiqui, Dr. Jamal Nasir said that he tried hard to

solve the problem as caretaker health minister, but a very strong lobby became an obstacle. Dr. Jamal Nasir paid tribute to Senator Irfan Siddiqui for raising his voice for the rights of the youth and parents who were suffering from difficulties due to unjust fee structures of Private Medical Colleges.



## Govt committed to provide basic healthcare at people door steps

ABBOTTABAD: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Health, Ehtesham Ali Khan Thursday has stated that the provincial government is taking comprehensive measures to ensure the provision of basic healthcare facilities at the doorsteps of the people. He expressed these views while addressing a seminar at Ayub Medical College on the occasion of World Mental Health Day.

The Advisor said that small hospitals are being equipped with modern facilities to provide better medical services to the people of remote areas, thus reducing the burden on major hospitals. Advertisement - Ehtesham Ali Khan expressed concern over the deteriorating mental health situation in Pakistan, noting that, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 50 million people in the country are suffering from mental health issues, with one in four individuals affected by stress or psychological disorders. He emphasized that current societal challenges such as corruption, inflation, misconduct, and poverty are contributing to the increasing rates of stress, depression, and anxiety among the youth. According to him, the government is developing a comprehensive strategy to provide a healthy environment for the younger generation so that they can play a productive role in the country's progress. The Advisor highlighted that the government is implementing reforms in the health and education sectors and will not tolerate any form of political interference in health matters. —APP

## Kundi emphasizes peace in provincial jirga

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Thursday highlighted the significance of peace in the province during a jirga held at the Chief Minister's House. Addressing the gathering, he expressed gratitude to the provincial government for organizing the event and to Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi for his presence. Governor Kundi acknowledged existing political differences and stressed that the safety and prosperity of the province remain the top priorities. He asserted that negotiations are essential for resolving issues, particularly in light of ongoing challenges, including the situation in Afghanistan. Referring to a recent tragic incident in district Khyber, he underscored the urgency of addressing security concerns, saying that many areas in the province are still considered no-go zones. He called for unity among all stakeholders, including the provincial and federal governments, to establish peace. The Governor emphasized the need for dialogue with those who respect the country's constitution and laws, urging participants to collaborate on finding solutions. "We must work together to bring peace to our province," he concluded. Earlier, an important high-level meeting held at the Governor House, attended by Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, and Federal Minister Amir Muqam.—APP

## Qatar consul general, Sindh PA Speaker for strengthening bilateral ties



### NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Consul General of the State of Qatar, H.E. Nayef Shahein R.M. Al-Sulaiti on Thursday visited the Sindh Assembly and held meeting with Syed Awais Qadir Shah, Speaker Provincial Assembly of Sindh, here at his office. On the occasion, various discussions focused on strengthening

bilateral relations, co-operation, and trade between Qatar and Pakistan. Speaker SA appreciated Qatar's efforts in promoting football in the region and congratulated them on successfully hosting the World Cup. The Qatar CG and Speaker SA discussed development of sports and other sectors in Sindh province to boost healthy activities. Speaker Syed Awais Qadir Shah expressed his commitment to enhancing bilateral economic ties. The Consul General commended the Speaker's office for its efforts and contributions for service. Speaker Shah invited H.E. Al-Sulaiti to attend an upcoming assembly session of Sindh Assembly. Syed Awais Qadir Shah honoured the Consul General with a Sindh Cap, Ajrak, and a legacy shield on the occasion.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for information and Culture Atta Ullah Tarar watching the art work of Mueen Saheed and his son, Bilal Raji Saheed at PNCA. —DNA

## 75% challans of 2024 cases submitted in courts: SSP

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Police has been investigating the cases on fast-track basis as challans of all the cases for the years 2022 and 2023, along with 75% of 2024, have been submitted in courts. As per the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani, the police has made significant progress in the investigation of cases. "No case has been pending for 2022 and 2023 while challans of those registered in the first nine months of 2024 have been submitted in the courts," Senior Superintendent of Police (Investigation) Saba Sattar said in a statement on Thursday. "Out of 30,737 cases registered during the current year, challans of 23,000 had been submitted in the courts." "Effective investigation and prosecution of cases are critical for the delivery of justice. Arresting and challenging of the accused help in punishing them," he added. SSP Zunaira said instructions had been issued sub-divisional police officers and station house officers to ensure timely submission of challans of the cases in the courts. Senior officers were personally supervising the investigation of serious cases, he added.—APP

## 109 new dengue cases in Punjab

LAHORE: The Punjab Health Department confirmed 109 new dengue cases in the province on Thursday, reporting 96 cases in Rawalpindi. Faisalabad reported six cases, followed by three in Lahore and two in Gujranwala. Additionally, Mianwali and Toba Tek Singh reported one case each. In the previous week, 859 dengue cases were recorded, bringing the total number for 2024 to 2,976 so far. A spokesperson for the Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department assured the public that hospitals are fully stocked with necessary medicines and treatments to manage the outbreak. The department has issued an advisory urging the public to maintain clean and dry environments to prevent the spread of the virus. Citizens are encouraged to contact the free helpline (1033) for further information, treatment, or complaints. Health officials emphasized the importance of public cooperation and vigilance to control the situation. —APP

## Father-son joint exhibition to celebrate cultural exchange

### STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) recently hosted the concluding leg of a remarkable father-son art exhibition by internationally acclaimed Sri Lankan abstract artist Mueen Saheed and his son, Bilal Raji Saheed. Following successful exhibitions at the Lahore Museum and a prominent gallery in Lahore, this exhibition marks the final stop of their highly anticipated three-show tour in Pakistan. The exhibition has garnered widespread appreciation from the Pakistani public, art enthusiasts, and

prominent collectors. Chief guest, Federal Minister for information and Culture Mr Atta Ullah Tarar, expressed his admiration for the thought-provoking art work and its contribution to cross-cultural dialogue. In his address, he emphasized the importance of such international exhibitions in strengthening artistic and cultural ties between nations. He further invited Mueen Saheed to commemorate the strong friendship between Pakistan and Sri Lanka by creating a painting at a significant heritage site in Pakistan. Mueen Saheed, celebrated for his abstract interpretations of cultural heritage, pre-

presented a body of work that explores the ancient cave and rock inscriptions of Sri Lanka. Merging these with elements of the famous Apsara paintings, his pieces resonated deeply with the audience. In a gesture of goodwill, Mueen also gifted one of his paintings to the Lahore Museum's permanent collection, a contribution warmly acknowledged by the Director General of the museum. Bilal Raji Saheed, a graduate of the Royal College of Art in London, showcased a series of works that reflected his cultural musings and observations from his Sri Lankan heritage. His distinct artistic voice added an innovative dimension to the exhibition.

## Govt committed to provide basic healthcare at people door steps

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(WHO), more than 50 million people in the country are suffering from mental health issues, with one in four individuals affected by stress or psychological disorders. He emphasized that current societal challenges such as corruption, inflation, misconduct, and poverty are contributing to the increasing rates of stress, depression, and anxiety among the youth. According to him, the government is developing a comprehensive strategy to provide a healthy environment for the younger generation so that they can play a productive role in the country's progress. The Advisor highlighted that the government is implementing reforms in the health and education sectors and will not tolerate any form of political interference in health matters.

Efforts are underway to activate small hospitals and extend healthcare services to remote areas to ensure that every citizen has access to quality healthcare, thus reducing the patient load on major hospitals. He further stressed that drug abuse has become a significant threat to the youth, and the government is establishing drug rehabilitation centers in various hospitals across the province. These centers will provide modern facilities for the rehabilitation of individuals addicted to drugs. The seminar was attended by Ayub Medical College CEO Dr. Saqib Malik, Professor Aftab Alam Khan, Head of the Department of Psychiatry, Founder PHP Sikandar Zaman, clinical psychologists, professors, media persons, doctors, students, and others.—APP

## ISSI's launched book on Pakistan's pathways to development

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized the launch of its first edited book, Pakistan's Pathways to Development: Integrating Economy, Environment, & Society. The Guest of Honor on the occasion was Dr. Waqar Masood Khan, Former Advisor to the Prime Minister on Finance. Speakers included Mr. Haroon Sharif, Former MoS/Chairman, BoI; Ms. Kosar Bano; Dr. Faisal Bari Associate Professor, LUMS; and Dr. Safdar Sohail, ED, SPRC. Guest of Honor, Dr. Waqar Masood, congratulated the ISSI for taking the initiative to publish a book that features diverse writers from various disciplines. He also praised each contributor for selecting timely and relevant topics. In his remarks, Dr. Waqar highlighted the significant challenges Pakistan faces

on both international and domestic fronts. On the international stage, Dr. Waqar noted that while Pakistan has made progress despite many obstacles, the country is currently confronting unprecedented problems. He emphasized that Pakistan has been under sanctions, limiting its access to international markets compared to regional competitors like Bangladesh. In conclusion, Dr. Waqar emphasized that discussions on macroeconomic stability must incorporate key issues such as gender inclusion, equality, the reduction of income disparities, and ensuring access to essential services like health and education. He underscored the importance of addressing these critical topics in such publications to ensure they remain central to policy planning and decision-making processes. In his remarks, Amba sador

Sohail Mahmood, Director General of ISSI, highlighted key insights from the book, focusing on its critical themes of Economy, Environment, and Society. He stated that the authors had emphasized the importance of enhancing Pakistan's economic competitiveness through export promotion, leveraging digital technologies, and aligning economic policies with global geo-economic shifts. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood added that they had underscored the need for a green transition to ensure sustainable energy security and stressed the significance of addressing educational reforms, poverty alleviation, and youth empowerment. Dr. Neelum Nigar, in her opening remarks, highlighted that the book arrives at a pivotal moment, as the global conversation on development increasingly stresses the importance






of a holistic, integrated approach. She further stressed that for Pakistan, this shift is especially critical, given the current state of its economy, which faces persistent macroeconomic challenges, sluggish growth, and escalating external debt. The book brings together a diverse group of experts who advocate for Pakistan to adopt integrated strategies that recognize the complex interplay between the economic, environmental, and social spheres. Mr. Haroon Sharif, in his remarks, stated that the biggest challenge Pakistan faces is restructuring the economy towards a more competitive economy that can integrate with the region. The economy of Pakistan for long has been based on the usage of its geopolitical and geo-strategic positioning rather than competitiveness. Dr. Faisal Bari touched upon the issue

of population, the quality of education, out-of-school children, poverty, lack of health, and malnutrition. He was of the view that Pakistan, compared to other countries with the same level of income, has not invested in education and health and thus has achieved growth without development. Ms. Bano discussed the differentiated impacts of climate crises on men and women, highlighting how gender roles and inequalities exacerbate vulnerabilities among women and girls. She emphasized that women's traditional roles in agriculture, water collection, and household management make them particularly susceptible to increased workloads and limited resources during climate-related disasters. Dr. Safdar Sohail stated that the economic phenomenon has the autonomy to impact the social institutions.—APP

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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### OCTOBER

- Oct 01/China National Day
- 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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Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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



### Enquiry

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



### Hospitals

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



### Departments

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

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ISLAMABAD: High Commissioners and Heads of Missions of the ASEAN countries posing for traditional group picture on the occasion of the 79th Indonesian Armed Forces Day.—DNA

## Pak wants to transform ties with SA into partnership

Dr. Musadik spoke about Pakistan's robust strategic and implementation framework, the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), which aims to ensure collective success for both countries. "The synergies between our visions can be realized by leveraging asset-building infrastructure, ensuring food security, and sharing cultures," he said.

### SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Dr. Musadik Malik, said on Thursday that Pakistan aims to transform its long-standing historical and cultural ties with Saudi Arabia (SA) into a partnership focused on growth and development.

Addressing the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Business Forum, he emphasized the importance of strengthening bilateral relations and Pakistan's desire to foster closer cooperation with Saudi Arabia to promote mutu-

al economic and developmental progress. "Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have deep historical ties. Saudi Arabia has been a steadfast ally, and both countries continue to enjoy strong economic and strategic relations," he added. He expressed Pakistan's interest in further developing cooperation in key areas such as food security, economic growth, and energy security. He said that both nations are prepared to join hands and move forward to present the ongoing global industrial revolution. He further mentioned that Pakistan seeks to boost exports, diversify its

economy, increase remittances, create employment, and enhance productivity. He said that Pakistan is focusing on improving ease of doing business, shifting from "red tape to red carpet," and working on reducing poverty through a higher tax-to-GDP ratio. Referring to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, Dr. Musadik Malik highlighted the Kingdom's goals of achieving growth, diversification, indigenization, and innovation-driven, energy-intensive development. He also spoke about Pakistan's robust strategic and implementation framework, the

Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), which aims to ensure collective success for both countries. "The synergies between our visions can be realized by leveraging asset-building infrastructure, ensuring food security, and sharing cultures," he said. He said that Pakistan requires significant development in roads, railways, and infrastructure, areas where Saudi Arabia can offer substantial support. He further elaborated on Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which focuses on 13 strategic sectors including aviation, automotive, construction, consumer

retail, entertainment, financial services, food and agriculture, mining, real estate, telecom, media and technology, transport, healthcare, and energy. He expressed Pakistan's interest in collaborating on many of these sectors. He said that investments in these sectors will be aimed at delivering high returns and creating strategic value, particularly in technology and capability development. Dr. Musadik Malik thanked the Saudi Arabian delegation for visiting Pakistan, stating, "Our success is your success; together, we will bring about a revolution."

## QAU ranks among top 400 globally

ISLAMABAD: Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) proudly holds its No. 1 position as Pakistan's premier institution, securing a place among the top 400 universities globally in the 2025 Times World University Ranking.

Consistently illuminating the realm of academia with its unparalleled success, QAU not only attained the impressive top 400 position in Times world university ranking but also clinched the 315th spot in the global QS world university rankings, solidifying its standing as Pakistan's number one university. Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar, the Vice Chancellor of Quaid-i-Azam University, extends his heartfelt congratulations on this momentous achievement, attributing it to the unwavering dedication and excellence of the faculty, students, staff, alumni and ranking committee.—APP

## Clean, Green Islamabad top most priority : Ahsan Bakhtawari

ISLAMABAD : Former President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Bakhtawari, has stated that the Clean and Green Islamabad is among his top priorities. Addressing an anti-dengue spray and awareness walk event organized at the I-8 merkaz

, He emphasized that he will work collaboratively with institutions to make Islamabad a disease-free, clean, and emerge as beautiful city. The event was attended by District Health Officer Dr. Zaem Zia, DSP Sajjad Bukhari, and officials from the Traders Welfare Associations. Former President ICCI said that We will not rely solely on government institutions; instead, we will take initiatives under the 'Self-Help' approach to address our issues. He announced that dengue elimination efforts will be extended to every sector of Islamabad. He also said collective efforts are crucial to tackle issues rather

than relying solely on government institutions. Dengue elimination is a key focus area. Awareness campaigns will be extended to every sector of Islamabad. Islamabad will be transformed into a model city in terms of health, education, cleanliness, and natural beauty.

District Health Officer Dr. Zaem Zia appreciated Bakhtawari's initiatives, particularly the anti-dengue awareness campaign. He said Ahsan Bakhtawari is an exemplary figure, inspiring society to take action and promote awareness. He assured that the District

Health Department will collaborate with Bakhtawari to combat dengue and other diseases, ensuring citizens' protection and a clean environment. The event marked the beginning of a comprehensive campaign to eradicate dengue from Islamabad.—DNA

## Ayaz stresses collective efforts for thriving Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday reaffirmed the government's commitment to achieving a healthy and prosperous Pakistan through collective efforts and divine guidance. "We will soon achieve this mission with Allah's guidance and our collective efforts," the speaker stated in his message on World Mental Health Day being observed on Oct 10 (Thursday). He stressed the importance of taking proactive steps to curb the rise of mental health issues, adding, "Now, more than ever, there is an urgent need for comprehensive and effective action to tackle mental health challenges." Speaker Ayaz Sadiq emphasized the critical role of mental health in national development, stating, "A healthy mind is the cornerstone of a prosperous nation."—APP

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## Briefs

ANF seizes  
65 kg drugs  
in four  
operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations managed to recover 65 kg drugs worth Rs 5.2 million and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He said, in an operation, 13.2 kg hashish was recovered from a rickshaw intercepted near Sangiani toll plaza and two accused were arrested. 308 grams hashish was recovered from an accused netted near a major educational institution in Karachi. The arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions. He informed that in other operations, 9.6 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused arrested near Pirwahai Bus Stand, Rawalpindi.

42 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Babu Petroleum in Faisalabad and two accused were arrested during the operation. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process. Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers conducted raids in different areas and arrested 6 accused besides recovering over 5 kg charras and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Rattaamral, Taxila, Jattli, Civil Lines, Warais Khan, and Saddar police rounded up Akhlaq, Mazhar, Irshad, Qayyum, Riasat, and Shoukat and recovered a total of over 5 kg charras and other items from their possession. Separate cases have been registered against all the accused while further investigations are underway. —APP

IRSA releases  
132,700  
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 132,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 98,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1536.79 feet and was 138.79 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 55,000 cusecs and 60,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1206.55 feet, which was 156.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 8,300 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 84,400, 67,100, 61,800 and 16,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 19,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala. —APP

Exhibition MOKU-HANGA,  
prints from Pak inaugurated

Ambassador WADA said that MOKU-HANGA, a traditional Japanese woodblock printing technique, has been a cornerstone of Japanese art for centuries. "This exhibition not only showcases the beauty and elegance of MOKU-HANGA but also serves as a bridge between our cultures, promoting cross-cultural understanding and appreciation", said the Ambassador.

MAHNOOR ANASR

ISLAMABAD: WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, on Tuesday inaugurated the exhibition "MOKU-HANGA, prints from Pakistan" at the National Art Gallery, Islamabad showcasing a unique fusion of traditional Japanese woodblock printing "MOKU-HANGA" techniques with the Pakistani artistic sensibilities. The exhibition, which runs until October 15, has been organized by the Pakistan-Japan Cultural Association Islamabad (PJCA) in collaboration with Khad'o Khaal Gallery, COMSATS University, National Testing Service-Pakistan (NTS), Embassy of Japan in Islamabad and the Pakistan National Council of the Arts. While speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Ambassador WADA said that MOKU-HANGA, a traditional Japanese woodblock printing technique, has been a cornerstone of Japanese art for centuries. "This exhibition not only showcases the beauty and elegance of MOKU-HANGA but also serves as a bridge between our cultures, promoting cross-cultural understanding and appreciation", said the Ambassador. Mr. Jamal Shah, President PJCA said in his welcome address noted that Pakistan-Japan Cultural Association Islamabad (PJCA) is delighted to present the exhibition "MOKU-HANGA, prints from Pakistan, for the art lovers. This exhibition has been beautifully showcased in collaboration with Pakistani artists that reflects the diversity and richness of our shared culture, he added. Prof. Dr. Shahida Mansoor,



the curator of the exhibition, expressing her views said that this pioneering project brings together Pakistani artists and Japanese experts to explore the centuries-old MOKU-HANGA printmaking technique, characterized by its use of water-based

inks and delicate, subtle results. She said MOKU-HANGA is created on hand made paper and the warm glow of these prints is due to water based eco-friendly paints and organic materials and humble tools made from natural materials. The Am-

bassador and President PJCA gave away the commendation certificate to Prof. Dr. Shahida Mansoor, the Curator of the Exhibition, appreciation certificate to the participating artists. The exhibition will travel to Peshawar after Islamabad.

Govt financing  
construction of dams

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government is financing the construction of various small, medium, and large dams/reservoirs in the country through the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) to address growing water scarcity and drought. Scores of such projects have been planned to store surplus water which becomes available during the flood season and to provide the same for irrigation and drinking purposes when the natural flow of water in rivers gets reduced, official sources told APP here Thursday. Sharing details they said that the Federal Government is sponsoring construction of 32 dam projects, costing Rs. 1,056,985.586 million during the current fiscal year. Once completed, these projects would store about 8,429,288 acre-feet of water, they added. They said the new areas which would come under irrigation after completion of the said 32 dams would be 436,934 acres whereas the 6.4 million acre-ft water stored in Diamer Basha Dam would be utilized to augment irrigation supplies presently being made to the existing 45 million acres of the canal-irrigated land in the Indus Basin Irrigation System. In addition to the said projects, cognizant of the water scarcity and climate change situation, several projects are under planning stages, mainly including Shyok Darn (5.0 MAF), Akhori Dam Project (6.0 MAF), Chiniot Dam Project (0.9 MAF) and Murunji Dam Project (0.45 MAF) to enhance water storage. —APP

Mental health crisis  
reaches boiling point

ISLAMABAD: October 10 marked World Mental Health day, prompting psychiatrists to sound the alarm on the devastating repercussions of silence surrounding mental health and emphasized the urgent need for collective action to educate people to adopt healthy lifestyle, as mental health concerns continue to rise alarmingly. Talking to Private news channel, Renowned Psychiatrist Nargis Asad from Agha Khan Hospital stressed for breaking down barriers to mental health care which was crucial and we need to dismantle the obstacles that prevent individuals from seeking help, starting with stigma and lack of awareness. She said we must educate communities about mental health, normalize conversations and promote empathy. "It is time to prioritize mental health equity and ensure everyone has access to quality care, regardless of background, socioeconomic status, or geographic location," she mentioned. Dr. Nargis emphasized, "Timely diagnosis and

treatment of mental illnesses are crucial to preventing mental disorders and related issues, adding, unfortunately, major challenges associated with mental healthcare include delayed treatment due to lack of awareness, false beliefs, and stigma attached to mental health problems." "The consequences of delayed treatment can be devastating," Dr. Nargis warned. "Untreated mental illnesses can lead to severe symptoms, impaired relationships, decreased productivity, and even suicidal tendencies," she said. "It is imperative that we address these challenges head-on," she added. "Millions of people in Pakistan struggle with mental health issues, yet many remain undiagnosed and untreated," Dr. Nargis lamented. "According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over 20 million Pakistanis suffer from mental disorders, with depression and anxiety being the most common," she added. —APP

Modi made  
India unsafe  
place for  
Muslims,  
other  
minorities

ISLAMABAD: Modi has made India an unsafe place for Muslims and other minorities as the RSS-backed Indian regime is on a mission to purge India of its minorities. A report released by Kashmir Media Service, said Muslims and other minorities are living in a perpetual state of fear in India, adding they are attacked with impunity. It said forcible conversion, attack on mosques and churches and lynching of Muslims by Hindu fanatics is common in Modi's India. Persecution of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and low-caste Hindus has increased manifold since Bharatiya Janata Party came to power in India, it added. The report said the global experts on genocidal violence have warned that India was preparing for a genocide of Muslims in India and occupied Jammu and Kashmir. It predicted that rights and life of the Indian religious minorities would remain under threat until BJP's rule in India. The report said unchecked attacks on religious minorities in India is a challenge for the global community and International rights bodies must come forward to save Indian minorities and Kashmiri Muslims from Hindu fascism. —APP

Naqvi reviews  
arrangements  
for SCO summit

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited key areas of Islamabad on Thursday to review the city's preparations for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Islamabad next week. The minister conducted a comprehensive inspection of critical sites, including D-Chowk, Constitution Avenue, Murree Road, and the Islamabad Expressway, to assess the beautification and cleanliness efforts being undertaken for the high-profile event. During the visit, Minister Naqvi stressed the importance of completing all construction and beautification tasks ahead of the summit. He issued specific directives to the relevant authorities, urging them to ensure that preparations meet the highest standards. "The entire city of Islamabad, particularly the VIP routes and the Red Zone, must be thoroughly cleaned," he said, underlining the importance of presenting a polished image of the capital during the summit. In addition to these preparations, the minister ordered the immediate removal of any encroachments along the designated summit routes, ensuring unobstructed and well-maintained pathways for international delegates. Minister Naqvi highlighted that the natural beauty of Islamabad would be showcased during the event and that every effort should be made to reflect the prestige of the SCO Summit in the city's appearance and arrangements. Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, briefed the minister on the progress of construction projects, while Naqvi provided further instructions related to beautification and sanitation efforts. Key officials, including the Federal Interior Secretary, Chief Commissioner of Islamabad, Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Deputy Commissioner, and other relevant authorities were also present during the visit. —DNA

President  
to pay two-  
day visit to  
Turkmenistan

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari will undertake a two-day visit to Turkmenistan from today to attend an international forum being held to mark the 300th birth anniversary of Magtymguly Faragi, a great Turkmen thinker, poet and philosopher. The International Forum titled "Interaction of Times and Civilizations – Basis of Peace and Development" is being held in Ashgabat on October 10-11, 2024, according to a curtain raiser issued by the Foreign Office. At the Forum, President Zardari will underline the importance of the values of peace, unity and development for the region. He is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with the Turkmen leadership on the sidelines of the Forum. —APP

A,O Levels  
exams to  
continue amid  
SCO closures  
in ICT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration on Thursday clarified that as it prepares to host the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meeting, educational institutions in the Federal Capital will face closures, however, centers conducting A-Level and O-Level exams will remain open, ensuring that exams proceed as scheduled. In this regard, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, confirmed that students taking these exams will be unaffected by the city-wide closures. According to the DC, A-Level and O-Level exams will be held at three centers in the city: E-11, Noormahal G.T. Road, and H-8 examination centers. These centers will operate as scheduled to ensure students can take their exams without any disruption. While these exam centers will remain open, all other educational institutions across Islamabad will be closed during the SCO meeting. Meanwhile, the district administration also refuted the rumors about the closure of wedding halls, restaurants, and cafes during the SCO session. Sources clarified that there is no truth to these reports. No orders have been issued by either the federal government or the district administration regarding the closure of such venues. Wedding halls will be allowed to operate, but they will need to follow the traffic plan issued by the local authorities. Roads near the meeting venue will be closed, and there will be restrictions on traffic in certain areas. —APP

Businesswomen pleased  
with economic stability

Samina Fazil said that we have requested the inclusion of women-owned businesses in trade delegations and the provision of subsidies to facilitate their business promotion

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The president of the Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI), Samina Fazil, stated Thursday that businesswomen are very pleased with the stabilization of the economy because the country is moving in the right direction. She said that we have high expectations for Federal Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, who is making every effort to encourage commercial ventures and strengthen the economy. After thoroughly discussing with Jam Kamal Khan, she addressed the office bearers and IWCCI members. She said that we have sent the minister recommendations that, if approved, will greatly benefit the businesswomen and the economy. Samina Fazil said that we have requested the inclusion of women-owned businesses in trade delegations and the provision of subsidies to facilitate their



business promotion. She said that IWCCI has also sent a proposal for subsidies to assist women business owners in attending international trade shows and exhibitions, thereby enhancing their visibility and prospects globally. The founder president of IWCCI stressed the significance of incorporating women's viewpoints in national and

international trade policies. She also called for the representation of women as leaders on the boards of various organizations, such as the Export Development Fund. The businesswomen also asked for a follow-up on the budgetary allocation for women entrepreneurs in the previous fiscal year; additional measures to promote women-led firms; and

the allocation of an amenity plot for the IWCCI building. She also requested that the government assist IWCCI in hosting the Single Country Exhibitions in the African Region through the EDF, to foster trade links and provide women-owned firms with access to markets. The minister was informed about the issue of pending women's cham-

bers licenses at the General of Trade Organisations (DGTO) and requested support to strengthen the Women Exporters Network (WEXNET). In addition to providing additional recommendations aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs in Pakistan, she advocated for the official recognition and support of women's chambers, thereby enabling them to contribute to the country's economic progress. She informed the businesswomen that Minister Jam Kamal Khan urged them to select international exhibitions in which they would like to participate and receive the government's support. According to her, the minister assured all out support and pledged to make sure they attended these gatherings in order to advertise their companies internationally, which will help them get business.

Samina Fazil said that the minister has promised more efforts to mainstream women in the economy.

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## US support for Israel

**N**ETANYAHU has spent the past year pursuing a military victory to compensate for the intelligence failure on October 7th. He aimed to restore the deterrence lost that day by delivering decisive blows to the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon. This group poses a greater threat to the Israeli occupation entity than any other front, including the Resistance in Gaza. The reality is that if any military faced the kinds of setbacks that the Lebanese Resistance has, it would likely not have survived. The Resistance has endured infiltrations of communication, attacks on key figures, and the assassination of top commanders. In his overconfidence, Netanyahu believed he had defeated the Lebanese Resistance, prompting him to initiate a ground invasion. He operated under the assumption that sustained attacks could dismantle the Resistance before it had the chance to recover. He believed that instability, low morale, and a campaign of displacement would ultimately cripple the Resistance. Alongside this, a media campaign sowed seeds of division, blaming Iran for abandoning its allies. Netanyahu has gained a measure of popularity within the entity due to this. The opposition viewed the assassination of the Secretary-General of the Lebanese resistance as a turning point. America observed these tactical successes and effectively granted the entity freedom to act without intervention, especially during an election period when decisive actions are often avoided. Netanyahu is reasserting his role in shaping Western policies in the region, using shock, force, and fear to impose his vision. This ambition was evident at the UN, where he presented maps and spoke of a Middle East shaped by his fantasies. This included the forced transfer of Palestinians, a permanent occupation of Lebanon, and attempts to limit Yemen and Iraq, all culminating in a 'regime change' in Iran from within. He also believes that if Trump returns to the presidency, he will endorse these actions and support his achievements. However, this ambition was significantly challenged by Operation True Promise 2, which shook the entity and brought reality into focus. The ongoing battle is existential for the entity. Its tactical successes hinge on destructive force, technological superiority, and intelligence. However, the cost of losses mounts with direct confrontation, and the entity will not yield except through force. America is now redefining the functional role of the entity after decades, allowing it to undertake tasks that the US had been unable to manage for the past thirty years. The time has come for the entity to demonstrate its capacity to achieve stated objectives. The Israeli military is given a free hand now to operate as it sees fit, setting the stage for a New Middle East by the end of the year. If successful, the entity stands to gain significant rewards, potentially expanding its territory to encompass all of Palestine and parts of Lebanon and beyond. While it will receive the necessary support, America does not desire direct intervention. However, failure to defeat the Resistance could mark the end of the entity's current trajectory. The Israeli occupation entity cannot survive without American backing. If the US withdraws support, the entity's collapse is inevitable. Therefore, its operational boundaries are defined by American interests. The US is unlikely to engage directly in a counterattack against Iran, meaning Israeli responses will be limited to what America permits.



## Britain and Chinese investment

**A**LTHOUGH the brief "golden era" of Sino-British relations between 2015 and 2017 is over, an extended period of more sober and pragmatic commercial relations may be at hand. UK media reports point to senior Chinese and British finance ministry officials setting the stage for detailed economic talks in the near future. Reports also suggest Britain's new finance minister, Rachel Reeves, may travel to Beijing early next year to discuss trade and investment. The news follows China's Vice-Premier He Lifeng's phone call with Reeves last month. Both stated an interest in resuming economic and financial dialogue which has been on ice since 2019. The new mood music emerged shortly after British Prime Minister Keir Starmer was elected in July. In his second month in office, Starmer spoke on the phone with Chinese President Xi Jinping. During their call, the leaders talked about potential areas of cooperation such as the economy, trade and education. Both also emphasised nurturing consistent and stable political and economic ties. To launch this fresh policy approach, there would be a series of bilateral dialogues involving their various ministries, which are now swinging into motion. Interestingly, Starmer's election campaign prioritised new foreign policy initiatives including a "full audit" of UK-China relations. The mere fact of this use of business terminology might suggest a greater emphasis on economic objectives in preference to volatile geopolitical issues. During his election campaign, Starmer had championed wealth creation driven by economic growth. Indeed, from the outset, China may well have been considered when the Labour government was setting ambitions to deal with the UK's deepening economic disparities. The focus would likely be on the economic upgrading of regions outside the wealthy centres of London and surrounding southeast England. No doubt, turning this complicated objective into reality will require attracting substantial levels of investment into England's north and midlands. The Labour Party lost its traditional heartlands in an unprecedented swing to the ruling Conservatives in 2019, but which it regained this year. Starmer is well aware that retaining these pivotal regional constituencies would require successfully activating this policy – a feat easier said than done. After his party won these regions in 2019, then prime minister Boris Johnson talked about "levelling up" between the north and the south. In the end, the agenda fizzled out. Part of this was due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which hit Britain hard. Even so, longer-term policy errors also played a role, including Johnson's and successive Conservative governments' assaults on inward Chinese investment. In 2020, Johnson's government decided to remove Chinese telecoms company Huawei Technologies from Britain's 5G mobile network. The Conservative government then introduced the National Security and Investment Act 2021. China says UK has 'poisoned' Sino-British relationship over Hong Kong and Huawei Under Rishi Sunak, the UK forced the highly-publicised sale of a stake held by a Chinese state-owned company in a British nuclear plant project. Major deals involving Chinese investment were blocked, including the purchase of an advanced semiconductor facility in Wales and the licensing of state-of-the-art robot camera technology from Manchester.

## Challenges ahead for Harris even if she wins

Qamar Bashir



This composition might change in the November 2024 U.S. Senate elections where 34 seats are up for grabs, with 23 currently held by Democrats or Independents who caucus with them, making it a challenging cycle for the Democratic Party. Republicans need a net gain of two seats to regain control of the Senate, and they have a strong chance, with forecasts giving them a 67-71% probability of winning. Key vulnerabilities for Democrats include potential retirements or tough re-election battles

**T**HOUGH the U.S. President is from the Democratic Party, his party does not hold a majority in either the Senate or House of Representatives. In the Senate, Republicans have 49 seats, while Democrats hold 47 seats; however, four independents caucus with the Democrats, giving them a slim majority. In the House, Republicans control 220 seats, compared to 212 for Democrats, with three vacancies. Despite a thin pseudo majority in the Senate, passing legislation by democrats remains challenging due to tight margins and divisions within both parties. This makes control of both chambers critical for policy decisions into 2025. This composition might change in the November 2024 U.S. Senate elections where 34 seats are up for grabs, with 23 currently held by Democrats or Independents who caucus with them, making it a challenging cycle for the Democratic Party. Republicans need a net gain of two seats to regain control of the Senate, and they have a strong chance, with forecasts giving them a 67-71% probability of winning. Key vulnerabilities for Democrats include potential retirements or tough re-election battles in states like Michigan, West Virginia, and Montana, which lean Republican. This cycle presents an uphill battle for Democrats, while Republicans aim to capitalize on these opportunities. If Donald Trump wins the 2024 election, he would likely have more legislative control due to the Republican presence in both the Senate and House, giving him more freedom to advance his policies. This would allow him to push for legislation that aligns with Republican core values: limited government, lower taxes, deregulation, and free-market capitalism. On social issues, Trump would likely advocate for traditional family values, religious freedom, pro-life policies, and gun rights, while maintaining a strong focus on national defense and assertive foreign policy. If Kamala Harris wins the election, but the Senate and House remain tilted toward the Republican Party, she would likely face significant resistance in passing key legislation, making appointments, and pursuing her party's agenda. Her goals, such as expanding healthcare, advancing climate action through the Green New Deal, and championing civil rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and women's reproductive rights, would encounter opposition from Republicans. Efforts to reduce inequality through progressive taxation, social programs, and raising the minimum wage

would also be difficult to achieve. I am currently based in Macomb, Michigan, a swing state, where voter loyalties are shifting, particularly among immigrant populations. While Detroit, home to a large Arab community, is increasingly leaning toward Trump due to his non-interventionist stance in the Middle East, much of the white population remains strongly pro-Trump. However, this simplification doesn't capture the fluid nature of voter preferences, which continue to evolve until election day. It is becoming increasingly difficult for Kamala Harris to sell her policies promoting economic inclusivity, such as raising the minimum wage, expanding healthcare access, gun control, progressive taxation, and education reform, including free community college and student debt relief. On social issues, she struggled to sell her reproductive rights, pushing to codify Roe v. Wade (the landmark 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion nationwide), access to affordable healthcare and her support to Ukraine and favors diplomatic engagement in the Middle East. Donald Trump's campaign, on the other hand, revolves around deregulation, tax cuts, and his "America First" agenda, aiming to bring back manufacturing jobs and lower inflation by reducing foreign dependencies. He emphasizes law and order, strong border security, and minimal government intervention in healthcare. Trump supports state-level abortion restrictions and promotes school choice programs, advocating for charter schools and vouchers. His foreign policy focuses on reducing U.S. involvement in international conflicts, particularly in Ukraine, and strengthening ties with Israel through the Abraham Accords (a series of agreements brokered by the U.S. starting in 2020, normalizing diplomatic relations between Israel and several Arab nations), while adopting a tougher stance on Iran. In U.S. elections, typical Republican "red" states, like Texas, Alabama, and Wyoming, traditionally support conservative candidates, focusing on issues like gun rights, lower taxes, and limited government, providing a solid base of electoral votes in the South and rural West. On the other hand, Democratic "blue" states, such as California, New York, and Illinois, tend to favor progressive policies, with a strong base in urban areas and coastal regions, focusing on healthcare, education, and environmental issues. The key to winning presidential elections often lies in swing

states like Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Arizona, and Georgia, which do not consistently favor either party and can shift based on candidates' appeal and local issues. These battleground states are highly contested because their electoral votes can swing the balance in a tight race. Both parties rely on their traditional strongholds, but ultimately, securing a majority in the swing states is essential to reaching the 270 electoral votes needed to win the presidency. Recent surveys indicate that the race between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump for the 2024 U.S. presidential election remains tight, with Harris holding a slight edge in most national polls. For instance, an Ipsos poll shows Harris leading Trump 48% to 44% among likely voters. However, when undecided voters are pushed to make a choice, more lean toward Trump. Other polls, such as one from The Economist/YouGov, also place Harris ahead by about 4-5 points, but the margins are narrow, especially in key battleground states. Harris is generally favored by voters who consume mainstream and digital media, while Trump finds strong support among conservative media audiences, particularly on issues like inflation and immigration. In contrast, Harris holds an advantage on political extremism. The impact of swing states, where many results are within the margin of error, could be crucial in determining the final outcome, making the race highly competitive. The last presidential debate between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump was held on September 10, 2024, hosted by ABC News. The next presidential debate is likely to be scheduled soon. This debate would play a crucial role in shaping public opinion, particularly among undecided voters, as this debate would highlight the candidates' positions on critical issues like the economy, healthcare, foreign policy, and social justice. Till that time the American economy is frozen and the entire world is eagerly awaiting the assumption of power by the most powerful person on this planet.

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

## War blocks the path to prosperity

Syed Laique Haider

Economies are destroyed by war that would lock up all their resources and even infrastructure. Measuring the cost of conflict at more than \$1.5 trillion each year, research shows conflict slows development and, worse, deepens poverty and inequality. War also affects the exportation and importation process, transportation services, and manufacturing industries, and in essence, jobs and economic imbalances are created. Many people don't realize the amount of harm that is caused to the environment in war

**C**onflict has been another recurrent element of human existence, and neighbors have fought other neighbors and groups to achieve their aim. However, the demerits of going to war outweigh the benefits by far. Too much is lost in war to give it the perception of being a solution, which is a fallacy; war is the dead end. War appears to be very costly to human life, involving unlimited pain, suffering, loss of properties, homelessness, and deaths. The increases in the effects of war and conflicts affect civilians most and especially women, children, and the elderly. War physical and emotional impact is always felt for generations; this returns to encompass mental illness, social organizations, and interpersonal relationships. Economies are destroyed by war that would lock up all their resources and even infrastructure. Measuring the cost of conflict at more than \$1.5 trillion each year, research shows conflict slows development and, worse, deepens poverty and inequality. War also affects the exportation and importation process, transportation services, and manufacturing industries, and in essence, jobs and economic imbalances are created. Many people don't realize the amount of harm that is caused to the environment in war. Wastes that include fumes and chemicals pollute the air, water, and soil. Military actions harm wildlife and the environment, and they worsen global warming. Of particular note is the fact that infrastructure destruction has a terrible toll when it comes to the physical landscape of a society. War is more likely to generate a power vacuum that leads to the emergence of tyrant groups/forc-

es, terrorism, etc. It tends to be followed by authoritarian rule or terrorism, thus creating continued cycles of violence.

Scholars have indicated that in most cases, war does not solve problems. War has been known to solve most problems. But it generates new conflicts and dissatisfactions, as the histories of the continuing hostilities in the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe demonstrate. Effective conflict resolution requires alternative approaches: diplomacy, practice, talks, discussions, settlements, international relations, and organizations. Modernization and development, charitable support, and scholastic and cultural intercourse can all help to create and cement long-term stability and success. of the successes as we have seen in conflict resolution are that the European Union has never had conflict issues related to borders since its formation and the Oslo Accords in Middle East peace negotiations, as well as the Good Friday Agreement that brought an end to Northern Ireland's troubles. The United Nations is the global organization through which cooperation for peace and security is effective. Other organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Health Organization avert humanitarian effects. New approaches to solving conflict are associated with technological and social inventions like block chain and social enterprise, respectively. Exchange of education and culture helps in building up a healthy perception. It is therefore imperative that the world transform into a 'new', less violent one through common effort. The \$106 tril-

lion required for sustainable development can only be mobilized if governments, civil society, and individuals put diplomacy and cooperation at their core. Nelson Mandela is right: "War is a defeat for humanity." The task is our common aim—to make the world just, equal, and without war. Thus the future belongs to those who are eliminating tradition and turning to more worthy methods of solving conflicts. With this understanding and recognizing war's failures and then the peaceful resolution's potential, we move forward. War is not the answer; war is old school. Together we will turn the conflicts in a diplomatic way and with cooperation and understanding of one another. In essence, some of the impacts of war are not only expressed as multiples at the time of actual fighting but also in future generations. As citizens of this world, we owe ourselves the right to at least try to find other ways of doing things. Thus, war is a dead end and not a perspective that can be strived for. Instead, it is more humane, economically, environmentally, and politically costly than any perceived gain. Building acceptance of nonmilitary means to solve conflicts enhances an environment that will support enduring peace and development. Since we are doing our best for achieving the goal of a world without wars, we should never forget the fact that war has an effect of destruction and killing. So the role is to make sure peace diplomacy, cooperation, and training become the keys to a better future for all of us.

## Briefs

## Govt decides to end agreements with five IPPs

FROM PAGE 01  
IPP's prioritised the nation's interests over their own," the premier said addressing the Cabinet. "The 'take or pay' contracts with the five independent power producers have been fully terminated, and they will only receive the outstanding amounts owed by the government, without any interest." The federal government has been under immense pressure to reconsider its power purchase agreements (PPAs) with the IPPs following outcry across the country as the addition of capacity payment charges inflated the power bills beyond the affordability of the inflation-burdened masses. The PM said that in the first phase, five IPPs were ending deals with the government; however, revision of PPAs with other IPPs would gradually lower the tariff further, saving the national exchequer Rs411 billion a year, creating more fiscal space for the cash-strapped country.

## CM KP empowered to establish peace in KP

FROM PAGE 01  
the formation of a new jirga, which he will lead, to engage in talks with dissenting parties in hopes of resolving KP's political and security crisis amicably. It further said that the chief minister thanked the Grand Jirga participants for empowering him to hold dialogue. It added that the process of formulating the next strategy and consultations for peaceful resolution of KP issues would be completed at the earliest. Sources privy to the development told Geo News that the participants of the high-level sitting also finalised the terms of reference (ToRs) of the new jirga headed by CM Gandapur, however, members of the negotiation body were not decided yet. They added that the development came after the chief minister sought authority from the Grand Jirga participants to hold talks with a banned organisation. "I'm ready to sit on the floor with the second party for negotiations," the sources quoted Gandapur as saying at the Grand Jirga.

## SC issues detailed judgement in 63-A...

FROM PAGE 01  
against party directions when voting in parliament. In its detailed judgment, the SC ruled that its earlier verdict opened the way to transform the leader of a political party into a 'dictator'. "Nothing can be more undemocratic; the majority's judgment has opened the way to transform the leader of a political party into a dictator, simply because the party's leader can never be challenged," the detailed judgment read. "The majority's judgment (in 2022) interestingly referred to decisions from a number of countries and forums, including from the United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, India, and the Privy Council. Foreign legal books and authors were also quoted. But, this appears to have been done, without first ascertaining the law in the respective countries regarding defections, and the consequences thereof."

## Four Khwarij killed...

FROM PAGE 01  
operation, conducted in general area Hassan Khel, North Waziristan District on 10 October 24, own troops effectively engaged khwarij location and in ensuing fire exchange, two more khwarij were sent to hell. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from killed khwarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces as well as abductions and target killing of innocent civilians. Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any other khwarij found in the area as security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.

## King of clay, Tennis legend Nadal to retire in November

Iconic tennis star says he will hang boots after Davis Cup finals in November, ending career which brought 22 titles

## SPORTS DESK

MADRID: Rafael Nadal, the 22-time Grand Slam champion, will retire from tennis at the end of this season. The 38-year-old will represent Spain in his final appearance at next month's Davis Cup Finals in Malaga. Nadal has barely played over the past two seasons because of injuries and suggested last year he could retire at the end of the 2024 season. In a video message released on Thursday, Nadal said: "I am here to let you know I am retiring from professional tennis. 'The reality is that it has been some difficult years, the last two especially. I don't think I have been able to play without limitations.' Nadal retires as the second-most successful men's singles player of all time, behind only long-time rival Novak Djokovic. Dubbed the 'King of Clay', Nadal won the French Open singles title a record 14 times, winning 112 of his 116 major matches at Roland Garros. No player has won as many Grand Slam singles titles at the same tournament. Nadal is also a four-time US Open champion and won both the Australian Open and Wimbledon twice. He also won Olympic singles and doubles gold and helped Spain win five Davis Cup finals, most recently in 2019. Alongside enduring rivals Djokovic and 20-time major cham-



pion Roger Federer, Nadal formed the 'Big Three' that dominated the men's game from the early 2000s and drew in legions of fans. "What a career, Rafa! I always hoped this day would never come," Federer, who famously cried alongside Nadal when he retired in 2022, said.

"Thank you for the unforgettable memories and all your incredible achievements in the game we love. 'It's been an absolute honour.' When announcing he would not play in the 2023 French Open, Nadal said he planned to retire at the end of 2024 because of the series of injuries which were taking their toll on his body. But, having returned earlier this season, Nadal became increasingly non-committal about his future. The former world number one regularly said he wanted to keep playing as long as his body let him. Now, after a chastening defeat by long-time rival Djokovic at the Paris Olympics in July, he has decided the time is right. "It is obviously a difficult decision, one that has taken me some time to make. "But, in this life, everything has a beginning and an end." After returning to competitive action in Brisbane in January, Nadal was sidelined again with a thigh injury, missing the Australian Open. Nadal played four tournaments during the European clay-court season, culminating in a first-round defeat at the French Open. Since then he has played just two more tournaments - in Bastad and the Olympic Games at Roland Garros. Last month he was included in Spain's squad for the Davis Cup Finals, which takes place between 19-24 November. "I think it's the appropriate time to put an end to a career that has been

long and much more successful than I could ever have imagined," Nadal said. "I'm very excited that my last tournament will be the final of the Davis Cup and representing my country." Nadal was aged three when he was introduced to tennis by his uncle Toni, who encouraged him to transition to playing left-handed after seeing how strongly he could hit the ball. He turned professional aged 15 and three years later helped Spain win the 2004 Davis Cup as they beat the United States, with Nadal defeating world number two Andy Roddick. The following year, he began his dominance of the French Open, beating Argentina's Mariano Puerta in the final. Nadal's five-set win over Federer in the 2008 Wimbledon final - an epic that finished 12 minutes short of five hours - is regarded as one of the best matches in history and one of the pinnacles of their 15-year rivalry. In between those two finals, he won the 2009 Australian Open for the first time with another five-set victory over Federer, and completed the career Grand Slam at the 2010 US Open. Although he won all four majors, Nadal will forever be synonymous with the French Open, where a metallic statue of him hitting his trademark forehand was built in 2021. From 2005 to 2014, he won nine of 10 Roland Garros titles and then five of six between 2017 and 2022.

## Pak batting disaster puts England in touching distance

## DNA

MULTAN: England bowlers inflicted a batting collapse, leaving Pakistan reeling at 152-6 at Stumps on Day 4 of the first Test after the batters piled up a mammoth 823-7 here on Thursday. Pakistan were in a state of both at the conclusion of the penultimate day of the three-match series opener despite an unbeaten fighting partnership between Salman Ali Agha and Aamir Jamal. The home side had a dismal start to their second innings as right-handed opener Abdullah Shafique fell for a duck on the second delivery of the first over. His dismissal jolted Pakistan's batting unit, which accumulated 556 runs in the first innings, and England made successive strikes to reduce them to 82/6, trailing a further 185. Agha, unbeaten on 41 and Jamal,

27 not out, however, offered fightback in the dying minutes of the day with a gritty 70-run partnership. The duo will resume Pakistan's second innings on the final day with the home side still 115 runs behind. Gus Atkinson and debutant Brydon Carse bagged two

wickets each for England, followed by Chris Woakes and Jack Leach, who shared two between them. The visiting side achieved a lead of 267 runs courtesy of their stroke play. Chris Woakes and Brydon Carse were playing at 17 and 9 respectively when the captain called them back.

England batters frustrated Pakistan bowlers with a dominant batting display on the morning of the fourth day as they racked up 166 runs without any loss, pushing the team's total to 658-3 in the first session on Day 4. Joe Root fell early in the second session.



## Kane &amp; Grealish out of Greece game

LONDON: Harry Kane will not be fit to feature for England in their Nations League match against Greece at Wembley while Jack Grealish will also miss out, says interim manager Lee Carsley. England and Greece are both on six points from two games in Group B2, having beaten the Republic of Ireland and Finland last month. Record England goalscorer and captain Kane went off in Bayern Munich's last game against Eintracht Frankfurt. "Harry is nursing an injury - a small knock, something we won't take a chance with," said Carsley. Carsley said Manchester City forward Grealish "picked up a slight knock" on Tuesday. "They will be OK in a couple of days, so we are not going to take any gambles with them," he added. The manager is expected to lead England for the six Nations League group games and said Manchester City defender John Stones would captain the side at Wembley. "It's a brilliant achievement for John, something he deserves," said under-21s boss Carsley. Stones said: "[It's] definitely everything that I could have dreamed of as kid - for my family to see me walk out as England captain is a special moment. "[It's] one that I can't thank Lee enough for. It was a great conversation we had last night and one that I was speechless in." Morgan Gibbs-White, Ezri Konsa and Kobbie Mainoo were ruled out on Tuesday, with Curtis Jones and Tino Livramento called up to replace them. Carsley was asked about Chelsea forward Cole Palmer, who was recently named England's player of the season - without having started a competitive game.—APP

## FIBA statistician workshop starts in Federal Capital

## OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The much-anticipated FIBA Statistician Workshop has started in Islamabad on Thursday, marking a significant step forward in the development of basketball in Pakistan. A total of 11 candidates from across the country are participating in the workshop, having successfully completed FIBA training and passed the necessary exams to qualify for this advanced program. This workshop is being conducted under the supervision of an instructor appointed by FIBA ASIA from Bahrain. The program aims to train

and certify Pakistan's first-ever FIBA-licensed statisticians, who will be responsible for covering both national and international basketball events. This development is a historic milestone for the sport in Pakistan, enhancing the technical expertise available for high-level competitions. The Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) has been working tirelessly to improve the various dimensions of the game in the country. This workshop is the latest in a series of initiatives, including the successful FIBA Referee Workshop and Olympic Solidarity Level 1 Coaching Course, both held in the past year.

## Pak-Saudi investment relations strengthened

## FROM PAGE 01

Hilal-e-Pakistan award, a recognition of his outstanding contributions to the advancement of Pakistan-Saudi relations. The Prime Minister also conveyed his warm regards to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, acknowledging their leadership and support in enhancing bilateral ties. The Prime Minister expressed his pleasure over the productive discussions held at the Pakistan-Saudi Business Forum. The dialogue between the Pakistani and Saudi business communities has paved the way for new investments, underscoring Saudi Arabia's commitment to deepening economic cooperation with Pakistan. The Prime Minister recalled his visits to Saudi Arabia, including the meeting with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed

bin Salman in Makkah, and his participation in the World Economic Forum in Riyadh. He emphasized that this visit represents the third high-level Saudi delegation to Pakistan within six months, a testament to the growing momentum in the bilateral relationship. The successful signing of various Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) in April and May further illustrates the deepening ties. The Prime Minister also highlighted the progress made through the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), which has been instrumental in accelerating foreign investment in Pakistan. The Prime Minister appraised the Saudi side of the privatisation program of the government and invited Saudi Arabia to invest in aviation sector especially in the outsourcing of international airports of Pakistan. The Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to Saudi Arabia's sovereignty and territorial integ-

rity, particularly in the face of regional and global challenges. He expressed Pakistan's readiness to strengthen defense ties, including support for Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which seeks to develop indigenous defense and security capabilities. The Prime Minister expressed appreciation for Saudi Arabia's leadership within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), particularly on issues of vital importance such as Palestine, Kashmir, and combating Islamophobia. The Prime Minister emphasized that the Pakistani diaspora plays a significant role in the economic development of both countries and expressed his commitment to further strengthening consular services for their welfare. The Saudi Investment Minister reiterated the commitment of Saudi Arabia with regard to increasing its investment portfolio in Pakistan especially in the fields of Mining, Agriculture, Food security, infrastructure. He further said that the 27 MoUs being signed today was just a beginning of the journey. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Ishaq Dar, Chief of the Army of Staff General Asim Munir and Federal Ministers were also present in the meeting.

## India crush Bangladesh to clinch T20 series

Bangladesh scored 14 in first over but were never in the chase as they lost regular wickets

NEW DELHI: Rookie all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy smashed 74 and took two wickets to help India thrash Bangladesh by 86 runs for a series-clinching win in the second T20 international on Wednesday. Reddy's blitz included four fours and seven sixes and his 108-run fourth-wicket stand with Rinku Singh, who hit 53, powered India to 221-9 at New Delhi's Feroz Shah Kotla ground. India, led by Suryakumar Yadav, kept Bangladesh down to 135-9 in 20 overs to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. Mahmudullah Riyad top-scored with 41 after the veteran batsman on Tuesday announced his retirement from T20 internationals at the end of this series. The 38-year-old Mahmudullah hit three sixes in his 39-ball



knock of his 140th T20 for Bangladesh. Spinner Varun Chakravarthy and medium-pace bowler Reddy, playing his second match after he made his international debut in the opening win, took two wickets each. The tourists elected to field first and reduced India to 41-3 inside six overs before Reddy and Rinku counter-attacked in their century stand. Reddy took on the attack with sixes and fours and reached his fifty in 27 balls. Reddy hammered Mehidy Hasan Miraz for three sixes and a four before being caught out by him in the next over from Mustafizur Rahman. Rinku kept up the attack as he smashed fast bowler Tanzim Hasan for two fours and a six to raise his fifty in 26 balls but soon got out to Taskin Ahmed.—APP

## Pak-Saudi economic ties 'have no limits'..

## FOM PAGE 01

Speaking at the event, the Saudi dignitary underscored the rich history shared between the two countries and said: "We are family, not friends [...]. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia [relations] do not need any [formal] agreement [to prove themselves]". "Our economy and social values are linked together [...]. As many as 2.5 million Pakistanis are working in Saudi Arabia, he added. Referring to his interaction with President Asif Ali Zardari and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir, Al-Falih recalled that the former has emphasised the development and expansion of Pak-Saudi friendship, whereas the latter assured of the establishment of a single window in the Kingdom for Saudi investments in the country. Noting the significance of facilitation by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) for his country, the Saudi minister said that the army chief has insisted on turning the red-tape bureaucracy into a "red carpet" for the Kingdom. Providing details of his visit, the investment minister said that as many as 27 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) will be signed between Riyadh and Islamabad. Highlighting that the Kingdom has increased its cooperation and investment in Pakistan, he said while reaffirming his country's resolve to support Islamabad. Furthermore, Al-Falih acknowledged the Ministry of Commerce's commitment to enhancing trade relations between the two countries, noting that bilateral trade has already surged by approximately 80%, rising from \$3 billion in 2019 to \$5.4 billion.

## Pakistan on road to sustainable growth...

## FROM PAGE 01

the country had achieved the status of top 24th economy with 4% inflation, below 2% food inflation, 6% GDP, and highest foreign reserves, pursuing its journey to join the G20 which was derailed due to COVID pandemic and certain internal and external factors. The Pakistan-Saudi Business Forum was held as a high-level Saudi delegation led by Minister for Investment Engineer Khalid Bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih is on a three-day visit to Pakistan comprising representatives from a wide spectrum of government agencies and private sector entities. The visit is aimed at exploring investment opportunities and signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) across a variety of sectors. Ishaq Dra said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoyed deep-rooted and time-tested relations, marked by shared history, faith and values. He thanked the Saudi leadership for unwavering support to Pakistan on multiple occasions, particularly during the recent economic challenges and reiterated that Pakistan was committed to the sovereignty and integrity of the Kingdom and stood shoulder to shoulder with it through thick and thin. He said that 2.5 million Pakistani diaspora in the Kingdom was contributing to the Saudi development and Pakistan's foreign remittances.

## FO requests diplomats to limit...

## FROM PAGE 01

To ensure law and order situation in the federal capital during the forthcoming SCO summit, the federal government has deployed Pakistan Army's troops in Islamabad from October 5 to 17, under Article 245 of the Constitution. In a letter, addressing all resident diplomatic missions, UN agencies, funds, and international organisations based in Islamabad, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the government had instituted heightened security measures to ensure safety of incoming dignitaries and delegates as well as success of the summit. The FO requested the diplomats to limit their movements during the international event, both within and outside the city. It further advised them to confine their activities "primarily" to the Diplomatic Enclave and Red Zone areas.

## Briefs

## PSX loses 216 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend, losing 216.06 points on Thursday, a negative change of 0.25 percent, closing at 85,453.22 points against 85,669.28 points on the last trading day. A total of 503,750,595 shares were traded during the day as compared to 596,052,076 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 27.912 billion against Rs. 31.341 billion on the last trading day. As many as 313 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 115 of them recorded gains and 189 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 9 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were PTCL with 52,237,770 shares at Rs 14.52 per share, Hub Power Company XD with 46,573,519 shares at Rs 112.73 per share and PIA Holding Company with 25,513,036 shares at Rs 20.35 per share. —APP

## Rupee sheds 07 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Thursday depreciated by 07 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs277.79 against the previous day's closing of Rs277.72. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs278.25 and Rs279.75 respectively. The price of Euro decreased by 73 paise to close at Rs303.69 against the last day's closing of Rs304.42, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.86, whereas a decrease of 16 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs363.22 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs363.38. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 02 paise 01 paise to close at Rs75.63 and Rs73.98. —APP

## Gold price dips further by Rs.500 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.500 and was sold at Rs.271,200 on Thursday compared to its sale at Rs. 271,700 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs. 429 to Rs. 232,510 from Rs. 232,939 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs. 213, 134 from Rs. 213, 527, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs. 3,050 and Rs. 2,614.88, respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$4 to \$2,613 from \$2,617, the Association reported.—APP

## NIMS' 36th SMC officers visit BISP office

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of 17 officers from the 36th Senior Management Course (SMC) of the National Institute of Management (NIM) visited the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) headquarters on Thursday to gain insights into the program's operations and its impact on vulnerable communities across Pakistan.

The delegation was welcomed by the Secretary of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Mr. Amer Ali Ahmad. Secretary BISP briefed the delegation on BISP's core initiatives, including Kafaalat, Taleemi Wazaif, Nashonuma, the Undergraduate Scholarship, and the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER). He told the delegation that once one becomes part of this organization he is able to recognize the significance, spread and impact of BISP on the marginalized communities of the country. He highlighted that BISP has adopted a new payment model for its quarterly tranche disbursements. While the previous model involved only two banks, the new model has expanded to six banks. — APP

## Saudi delegation's visit headway in bilateral ties

Qureshi emphasized the importance of political stability for economic stability, noting that Pakistan is gaining stability, which is a good omen for future progress. This positive trajectory has sparked interest from friendly countries in investments and joint ventures, paving the way for economic betterment

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has commended the recent visit of a high-level Saudi delegation to Pakistan as a significant milestone in the bilateral relations between the two nations. Led by Minister of Investment Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih, the delegation's visit is expected to result in bilateral agreements worth \$2 billion. Talking to different delegations at ICCI, he by terming it a testament to the strong relationship between the two brotherly nations said that this development underscores the growing ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Qureshi emphasized the importance of political stability for economic stability, noting that Pakistan is gaining stability, which is a good omen for future progress. This positive trajectory has sparked interest from friendly countries in investments and joint ventures, paving the way for economic betterment. To foster economic growth,



he stressed the need to remove bureaucratic hurdles for ease of doing business by advocating facilities and resources to support businesses rather than relying

on intimidation, harassment, and burdensome taxes on existing taxpayers. Nasir Mansoor Qureshi said that as President of ICCI, he is committed to carry-

ing forward the legacy of creating business opportunities. The ICCI has been working to explore new business avenues for its members and attract foreign investments by

showcasing Pakistan's tourism potential, he concluded. On this ICCI members Naeem Siddiqui, Malik Mohsin Khalid and other were also present.

## Egypt, Somalia leaders visit Eritrea amid regional tensions

NAIROBI: The leaders of Egypt, Eritrea and Somalia were due to hold a three-way summit in Asmara on Thursday against a backdrop of heightened tensions in the Horn of Africa region. Concerns about security and stability in the volatile area have mounted since Ethiopia in January signed a controversial deal with the breakaway Somali region of Somaliland, giving it long-sought access to the sea. The maritime agreement infuriated Mogadishu and highlighted regional rivalries as relations soured between Ethiopia and Somalia. The summit between Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, Egypt's Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia will focus on "bolstering the ties between the three countries as well as matters of regional security and stability," Eritrea's information ministry said on X. Mohamud, who has already visited Eritrea several times, held separate talks with Isaias shortly after his arrival late Wednesday, the ministry said. They spoke of the need to bolster cooperation "in the heavy tasks of the maintenance of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence, and unity of Somalia; which remains a prerequisite for its development against the backdrop of enormous challenges in the past two decades," it added. El-Sisi — whose government is siding with Somalia in its standoff with Ethiopia — flew in on Thursday and will also meet Isaias before the tripartite summit, the ministry said. The agreement between Addis Ababa and Somaliland would see Ethiopia, one of the biggest landlocked countries in the world, lease a stretch of coastline from Somaliland for a naval base and port. But Mogadishu — which like the rest of the international community refuses to recognize Somaliland's 1991 declaration of independence — has described it as an assault on its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Somalia reacted by growing closer to Ethiopian rival Egypt, with the two countries signing a major military deal in August and Cairo pledging troops for a new African Union mission against the Al-Shabab jihadist group. Cairo has also long been at odds with Addis Ababa, particularly over the vast Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile which it says threatens its water supply. El-Sisi's office said his visit would focus on building relations with Eritrea and address "efforts to establish stability and security in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea in a manner that supports development and serves the interests of the peoples of the region." Relations between Addis Ababa and Asmara have also been deteriorating recently, even though troops from Asmara backed Ethiopian government forces in the brutal 2020-2022 war against Tigrayan rebels. Last month Ethiopian Airlines said it was suspending flights to Asmara because of "difficult" operating conditions. Dubbed the "North Korea" of Africa, Eritrea has been ruled with an iron fist by Isaias since it formally declared independence from Ethiopia in 1993 after three decades of war.—Agencies

## Steps taken to protect Beirut airport: Minister

BEIRUT: Lebanon's interior minister Bassam Mawlawi said all measures were being taken to maintain the safety of Beirut's Rafic Hariri airport in a televised address on Thursday. He emphasized that security and military agencies were doing their part to maintain security of the country. Mawlawi said Lebanon was seeking to increase the number of displaced people shelters in Beirut. "Unity is the way to maintain Lebanon's security, there is no place for strife among the Lebanese," he said. Israel has refused to rule out strikes on Beirut's civilian airport and its access roads, even as thousands of people continue to flee the country by air and road every day. United Nations officials warned Wednesday that Lebanon was starting down a "catastrophic" humanitarian crisis as the number of internally displaced people hit 600,000 and Israel presses its offensive against Hezbollah militants. Hezbollah said its fighters were locked in clashes with Israeli troops in southern Lebanon, using rocket-propelled weapons to repel Israeli attempts to breach the border. "Lebanon finds itself facing a conflict and a humanitarian crisis of catastrophic proportions," Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, the UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon, told a briefing. Israel has intensified air strikes on Hezbollah strongholds in Lebanon since September 23, leaving more than 1,190 people dead and forcing more than a million to flee, according to an AFP tally of official figures. The UN's humanitarian coordinator for Lebanon Imran Riza said that Lebanon was facing "one of the deadliest periods" in its recent history, reporting that 600,000 people are internally displaced — over 350,000 of whom are children. Israel's ground forces crossed into Lebanon on September 30 in response to Hezbollah rocket and artillery attacks over the past year that have forced tens of thousands of Israelis out of their homes in border areas. —APP

## Israeli airstrike kills 28 people sheltering in Gaza school

DEIR AL-BALAH: An Israeli airstrike on a school sheltering displaced people in central Gaza killed at least 28 people including women and children on Thursday, while three hospitals in the north were told to evacuate, putting patients' lives at risk, medics said. The strike, in which many more were wounded, occurred in the city of Deir Al-Balah where a million people have taken shelter after fleeing fighting elsewhere after more than a year of war. The Israeli military said on Thursday it had carried out a "precise strike on terrorists" who had a command and control center embedded in a school. "This is a further example of the Hamas terrorist organization's systematic abuse of civilian infrastructure in violation of international law," a military statement said. The Palestinian militant group denies such accusations. Medics said 54 other people were injured at the school. In Gaza's north, the Israeli military was pursuing an offensive begun six days ago when it sent its troops into Jabalia, the largest of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps, and the nearby towns of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia. Palestinian health officials say at least 130 people have been killed so far in the operation, which Israel says is aimed at preventing Hamas from regrouping. The military has told residents to evacuate an area in which the UN estimates more than 400,000 people are trapped. The health officials said the Israeli military on Wednesday gave patients and medics 24 hours to leave the Indonesian, Al-Awda and Kamal Adwan hospitals or risk being stormed as happened earlier in the war at Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. Israel, which has not yet commented on evacuation orders for medical facilities, has said Hamas has command facilities concealed within the hospitals, which it denies. Hussam Abu Safiya, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, said eight patients, mostly children with critical shrapnel wounds, were at risk inside intensive-care units should the army force their evacuation, and the hospital was also running out of fuel. Abu Safiya called for international pressure on Israel to allow medical staffers in north Gaza's three hospitals to continue to operate, saying: "Our message is a message of peace for the sake of those children." Ramesh Rajasingham, director of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said an OCHA-World Health Organization team could not reach Kamal Adwan Hospital despite having secured a green light from the Israeli military. "The team was forced to wait at the holding point for hours, and ultimately, the mission had to be aborted. And that's not an unusual practice," Rajasingham told a UN meeting. "In September, less than 10 percent of coordinated missions to the north (of Gaza) were facilitated by the Israeli authorities. "The essential conditions for effective aid operations are severely lacking or entirely absent," he added. Israeli bombardment near Kamal Adwan Hospital has already caused some damage to the facility, medics said. They said they know of many dead bodies lying on the roads outside the hospital because of Israeli fire. The Israeli military told residents of Jabalia and nearby areas to head to humanitarian-designated zones in southern Gaza, but Palestinian and UN officials say there are no safe places to flee to in the densely populated enclave. Philippe Lazzarini, the head of the UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA, told the UN Security Council: "Hundreds of thousands of people are again being pushed to move to the south, where living conditions are intolerable." Residents said Israeli forces had encircled Jabalia and ordered them to leave through one corridor. They said troops were interrogating those leaving and making arrests, while anyone trying to leave via a different route gets fired at. Hamas and ally Islamic Jihad said they continued to fight Israeli forces with anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs. The Israeli military said it killed dozens more militants, seized arms and dismantled militant infrastructure in the north. Israel began its offensive after Hamas-led militants carried out a cross-border attack on southern Israeli communities on Oct. 7, 2023, killing about 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.—APP

## Reform implementation must for continued economic recovery: WB

The twice-yearly Pakistan Development Update is a companion piece to the South Asia Development Update, a twice-a-year World Bank report that examines economic developments and prospects in the South Asia region and analyzes policy challenges countries face

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's economy has continued to stabilize from the recent economic crisis, with growth recovering to 2.5 percent in the fiscal year ending June 2024, says the World Bank (WB) in its latest country economic update on Thursday. The report on "The Pakistan Development Update: The Dynamics of Power Sector Distribution Reform", finds that following recession in FY23, economic activity strengthened in FY24 reflecting strong agricultural output, lower inflation, prudent macroeconomic measures, and reduced political uncertainty. But this level of growth is not sufficient to bring down poverty rates, which increased from 40.2 percent in FY23 to 40.5 percent

in FY24. "Pakistan's stabilizing economy is on a path of recovery. To sustain and strengthen that positive momentum, steady implementation of the government's structural reforms plan that aims to address long-standing constraints to faster growth will be key. These include reforming an inequitable and distortive tax system, reducing inefficient expenditures and untargeted subsidies, lessening the large state presence in the economy, reducing barriers to trade and investment, and reducing losses in the energy sector" said Najy Benhassine, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan. "Implementation of planned structural policy reforms supported by a strong national

political consensus and increased private sector participation, is critical to mitigate risks, support stronger private-led growth and poverty reduction," he added. As the economic stabilization continues, macroeconomic risks remain high reflecting high financing needs, modest foreign exchange reserves, high debt and debt servicing costs, financial sector vulnerabilities, and a loss-making power sector that continues to weigh on public finances. "Pakistan's recovery is expected to continue, with real GDP growth expected to reach 2.8 percent in FY25," said Mukhtar ul Hasan, lead author of the report. "However, output growth is expected to remain below potential over

the medium-term as tight macroeconomic policy, elevated inflation, and policy uncertainty are expected to continue to weigh on economic activity. Faster growth will be needed to support significant improvements in living standards," he added. This edition of the Pakistan development update also highlights the challenges in Pakistan's power sector and presents a roadmap for addressing these constraints through private sector participation. "Private sector participation in the power distribution sector offers the potential for better customer service, reduced losses, improved management, increased efficiency and new investment, but good outcomes are contingent on condu-

ctive government policies, strong political ownership, and robust private sector participation," said Waqas Idrees, co-author of the report. The twice-yearly Pakistan Development Update is a companion piece to the South Asia Development Update, a twice-a-year World Bank report that examines economic developments and prospects in the South Asia region and analyzes policy challenges countries face. The October 2024 edition, titled Women, Jobs, and Growth, includes economic growth projections and examines the roles greater female labor force participation and trade openness can play in realizing the region's untapped economic growth potential.—DNA

## Iraq repatriates 706 people from Syria camp

BAGHDAD: Iraq repatriated 706 people from Syria's Al-Hol camp, home to tens of thousands of people including family members of suspected militants, a security source said Thursday. More than 43,000 Syrians, Iraqis and other foreigners from at least 45 countries are held in the squalid and overcrowded camp in Kurdish-controlled northeastern Syria. Al-Hol houses relatives of suspected Daesh group militants alongside refugees. The security source, who requested anonymity because they are not allowed to speak to the media, told AFP that "706 people, or 181 families, returned to Iraq from Al-Hol and were transferred to the Al-Jadaa," a camp near the northern city of Mosul. It is the fourth group of Iraqis brought back from Al-Hol in a year, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor. Repatriation of family members of suspected Daesh members has stirred controversy in Iraq, where the militant group seized large swathes of land before being defeated in late 2017. —APP

## UK religious hate crime hits record high over Gaza war

LONDON: Religious hate crime in England and Wales rose by a record 25 percent in the last year, fueled by a spike since the start of the war in Gaza, government data showed Thursday. The highest annual figure of religious hate crimes in over a decade was due to a rise in offenses "against Jewish people and to a lesser extent Muslims" since the Hamas attack of October 7 last year, the interior ministry said. Overall, there were 140,561 hate crimes — defined as an offense based on a person's race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity — recorded by the police in the 12 months to March. Most — 98,799 or 70 percent — were racially motivated. Both the overall and race hate crime figures are down five percent on the previous 12 months. But religious hate crimes surged from 8,370 in 2022-23 to nearly 10,500 — the highest annual figure since data collection began in 2012. Hate crimes against Jewish people more than doubled to 3,282 while there were also 3,866 hate crimes against Muslims. "The appalling levels of anti-Semitic and Islamophobic hate crimes outlined in today's figures are a stain on our society," said interior minister Yvette Cooper.—APP

## Pakistan largest space festivities concludes at IST

ISLAMABAD: Three-day grand celebrations of World Space Week (WSW) 2024, dedicated to space science, technology, and innovation concluded at Institute of Space Technology (IST) after witnessing unprecedented participation of the students in a number of space related activities. The event was launched under the global theme of "Space and Climate Change", emphasizing the vital role of space technology in understanding, monitoring, and addressing the impacts of climate change on our planet. World Space Week 2024 at IST witnessed unprecedented participation, with over 2,000 participants from more than 45 institutions representing 10+ cities across Pakistan. The event was supported by 45+ space ambassadors and 50+ adjudicators, all working collectively to inspire and engage the next generation of space scientists and enthusiasts. In addition, 100+ dedicated students from IST actively managed and organized the event, ensuring a smooth and enriching experience for all attendees. The three-day celebration featured an array of interactive and engaging activities, including competitions, hands-on workshops, and project displays. —APP

## Briefs

### President departs for 2-day Turkmenistan visit

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday departed for a two-day visit to Turkmenistan mainly to attend the International Forum on "Interrelation of Times and Civilizations - Basis of Peace and Development" being held in Ashgabat. The International Forum is being held on October 10-11 to mark the 300th birth anniversary of Magtymguly Faragi, a great Turkmen thinker, poet and philosopher. On the sidelines of the forum, the president is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with the Turkmen leadership.

### S. Korea's Kang wins Nobel Literature Prize

SEOUL: The 53-year-old fiction writer is a former winner of the Man Booker International Prize for her 2007 novel *The Vegetarian*. At the ceremony she was praised "for her intense poetic prose that confronts historical traumas and exposes the fragility of human life". The Nobel Prize committee has awarded the literary award since 1901 and this marks the 18th time a woman has won the prize. She has won 11m krona (£810,000) which is the amount awarded to each Nobel Prize winner this year. Han is the first South Korean winner of the prize, who was described by the Nobel Prize board as someone who has "devoted herself to music and art".

The statement also added that her work crosses boundaries by exploring a broad span of genres - these include violence, grief and patriarchy. A turning point for her career came in 2016, when she won the International Man Booker prize for *The Vegetarian* - a book which had been released nearly a decade before, but was first translated into English in 2015 by Deborah Smith. It depicts the violent consequences for a woman who refuses to submit to the norms of food intake. Han's other works include *The White Book*, *Human Acts* and *Greek Lessons*. - Agencies

### Taiwan's president vows to resist 'annexation'

TAIPEI: President William Lai has pledged to uphold Taiwan's self-governing status in his most high-profile public address since taking office earlier this year. In a thinly-veiled reference to China's claim over the island, Lai said he would "uphold the commitment to resist annexation or encroachment upon our sovereignty." At the same time, Lai promised to maintain "the status quo of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait" and pledged to cooperate with Beijing on issues such as climate change, combating infectious diseases and maintaining regional security. Responding to Lai's speech, a spokeswoman for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it "exposed his intransigent position" on Taiwan independence. - Agencies

## 40 years of Australia-Pakistan agri cooperation

# Bus art depicting ways to save water and improve food security launched

In launching project, HC Hawkins said: "For 40 years, Australia has stood beside Pakistan, working to tackle some of the most pressing challenges in agriculture and water management. This bus art initiative captures the essence of that collaboration - using creativity to inspire action and connect people in rural and urban Punjab



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Marking 40 years of Pakistan-Australia agricultural collaboration, Australian High Commissioner, Neil Hawkins and Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) CEO, Professor Wendy Umberger launched bus art depicting ways to save water and improve food security. Public buses will carry cartoons created by Australian alumnus and

renowned cartoonist NigarNazar, which convey messages to raise community awareness of simple practices to achieve sustainable agriculture and address the impacts of climate change including water scarcity. The messages reflect Australian and Pakistani efforts to improve Pakistan's agricultural sector over the last four decades. In launching the project, High Commissioner Hawkins said: "For 40 years, Australia has stood beside Pakistan, working to tackle some of the most pressing challenges in agriculture and wa-



ter management. This bus art initiative captures the essence of that collaboration—using creativity to inspire action and connect people in rural and urban Punjab." ACIAR CEO, Prof Wendy Umberger said: "We are honoured to celebrate this milestone through such a creative and impactful initiative that reaches beyond the fields and into the daily lives of Pakistanis. ACIAR has worked closely with Pakistani farmers, scientists, and policymakers over the past 40 years to develop sustainable agricultural practices,

improve food security, and enhance livelihoods, particularly in Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan." The initiative will involve five public buses which travel around Punjab's agricultural heartlands, reaching thousands of commuters and passers-by. The cartoons aim to encourage those that see them to conserve water and support sustainable farming practices. Cartoonist NigarNazar attended a professional course from the University of Canberra. She was awarded the Tamgha-i-Imtiazhonour from Pakistan's President in 2023.

## PML-N and PPP reach agreement on amendments

Both parties decided to present the amendments in Parliament following further consultation

KHAYAMN ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) President Nawaz Sharif and Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have held discussions during which the two leaders reached an agreement on constitutional amendments. Bilawal called on Nawaz Sharif at the Punjab House, where the former Prime Minister welcomed the PPP leader. The two leaders also exchanged views on the country's political situation. The discussion primarily focused on judicial reforms and constitutional amendments. They decided to present these amendments in Parliament following further consultation, with the timeline for this process to be determined in consultation with other political parties. Maryam Aurangzeb, Rana Sanaulah, Pervaz Rashid, Irfan Siddiqui, and Ahsan Iqbal attended of the meeting from the PML-N. Meanwhile, the PPP delegation included Yousaf Raza Gillani, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Khurshid Shah, MurtazaWahab, MurtazaJavedAbbasi, Naveed Qamar, and Palwasha Khan. Nawaz Sharif is scheduled to attend a dinner in honour of a Saudi

delegation later tonight. According to an earlier working paper for the 26th Constitutional Amendment, one of the key proposals includes the establishment of a parallel Federal Constitutional Court, alongside the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court will serve for three years, with retirement set at 68 years of age. Additionally, the amendment proposed that any member of parliament voting against party instructions will have their vote disregarded. The proposal also suggested that the authority to appoint the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court be transferred to the Prime Minister, based on recommendations from an eight-member committee of the National Assembly. One of the most notable amendments includes changes to Article 48 of the Constitution, which would prevent any court, tribunal, or authority from inquiring into advice sent by the Prime Minister or Cabinet to the President. Meanwhile, an amendment to Article 63 would ensure that votes cast against party instructions will no longer be counted. Another major proposal in the working paper involves changes to Article 78, which advocates for the creation of the Federal Constitutional Court.

## Massive sales tax evasion uncovered, arrests expected

Tax fraud offenders may face arrest, with up to 5 years for Rs1 billion evasion and 10 years for higher amounts

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has announced that there is tax fraud and evasion worth Rs3,400 billion in the country, and a major crackdown will be launched against sales tax evasion. Those involved in sales tax evasion will be arrested. He made this statement during a press conference alongside the Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). During the conference, slides of the tax returns of companies were presented, highlighting that many companies are involved in tax fraud worth billions of rupees. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb stated that there is significant potential for tax

collection. There is Rs3,400 billion worth of tax evasion and fraud in the country. The cement sector alone could generate an additional Rs18 billion in taxes, the battery sector could yield Rs 11 billion, and the beverage sector faces a tax shortfall of Rs18 billion. He further noted that only 14% of the 300,000 manufacturers are registered, and there is a tax shortfall of Rs18 billion in the textile weaving sector. In the iron and steel sector, Rs29 billion is being lost due to excessive input tax claims. A massive fraud is occurring through the input tax adjustment system. Minister Aurangzeb emphasized that individuals involved in tax fraud can be arrested, with penalties including up to five years of imprisonment for tax evasion of Rs1 billion and up to 10 years for larger amounts. At the event, FBR Chairman Rashid Langrial stated that companies have committed large-scale tax fraud in their sales. The tax returns presented are entirely fraudulent and false. While the names of these companies are not being revealed at this stage when arrests are made, they will be based on solid evidence, and the names will be disclosed. The Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) stated that the CFOs of companies are not the beneficiaries of tax evasion. CFOs are responsible for signing tax returns, and if there are incorrect sales tax returns, they should not sign them just because the owner tells them to.

## PIA privatisation stalled as bidders demand full ownership

The government remains firm on not offering 100% shares to investors amidst the current challenges

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has once again hit snags after the six bidding companies demanded 100% share ownership instead of the previously discussed 60%. Concerns have also been raised regarding employee contracts, which propose a three-year tenure without pension benefits. PIA sources indicate that the Privatisation Commission is struggling to address these concerns, causing delays in the bidding process. Initially scheduled for October 1, the bidding date was moved to October 30. However, further issues have since arisen, leaving the privatisation initiative in jeopardy. The government is resolute in not granting 100% shares to the bidding companies. Initially, the discussions focused on offering 60% shares, which has now shifted to 75%. The intention is to secure agreement from the companies on the 75% share offer. If they do not comply, the PIA privatisation will be postponed. The effectiveness of the Privatisation Commission in resolving the raised objections remains to be seen. On the other hand, officials from the Privatisation Commission stated that no new concerns have been presented by the bidding companies. Should any new issues arise, they will be addressed accordingly. As of now, the final bidding for PIA has not occurred, and no conclusions can be drawn until the process is complete. PIA employees and officers also face significant challenges related to the airline's privatisation. Concerns loom over the future of employees if the acquiring company does not provide contracts longer than three years and fails to offer pension and other benefits. Furthermore, the bidding companies assert that they would need to invest between \$500 million and \$600 million, contingent on receiving 100% ownership. Most of PIA's aircraft are currently leased and outdated, resulting in high operational costs. To reduce these costs, acquiring new aircraft is essential, which can only occur if the process is transparent and efficient. Previously, government disclosed that out of six selected parties, only two appear serious about acquiring PIA. The entity may not fetch as good a price as was possible during the last attempt to privatise it eight years ago. Out of the six shortlisted parties, "two parties were seriously active" during the due diligence process of PIA, said Secretary of the Privatisation Commission, Usman Bajwa. The committee meeting was chaired by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Talal Chaudhry.

## India holds state funeral for Ratan Tata

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: The funeral has taken place in Mumbai of Ratan Tata, the chairman of one of India's biggest conglomerates, Tata Group, who died on Wednesday aged 86. Business leaders, politicians and celebrities were among thousands of people who paid their last respects at the centre where his body lay in state before being cremated. Maharashtra state declared a day of mourning and his coffin was given a military salute as it was taken away for the funeral rites. Ratan Tata took over as group chairman in 1991 and is credited with transforming it into a global powerhouse. During his 20-year tenure, the conglomerate made several high-profile acquisitions, including the takeover of Anglo-Dutch steelmaker Corus, UK-based car brands Jaguar and Land Rover, and Tetley, the world's second-largest tea company. Tata was born in a traditional Parsi family in 1937. He studied architecture and structural engineering at Cornell University in the US. In 1962, he joined Tata Industries - the promoter company of the group - as an assistant and spent six months training at a company plant in Jamshedpur. From there, he went on to work at the Tata Iron and Steel Company (now Tata Steel), Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and National Radio and Electronics (Nelco).

## Saudi businessmen's visit signifies ties

COAS further assured the delegation of Pakistan's full support and commitment and conveyed his optimism for the promising outcomes that would mutually benefit both nations.

STAFF REPORT

Rawalpindi: His Excellency Khalid Bin Abdulaziz Al Falih, Minister of Invest-

ment, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, accompanied by a high-level government cum business delegation, met with General Syed AsimMunir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), at Rawal-

pindi. The meeting focused on matters of mutual interest, particularly initiatives to strengthen evergrowing brotherly bilateral cooperation in a variety of sectors. The COAS expressed his profound appreciation and gratitude for unflinching support for Pakistan from His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman. Manifestation of one of the largest business delegation's visit to Pakistan reaffirms the enduring and fraternal ties between Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He underscored the deep respect and affection that the people of Pakistan hold for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. COAS further assured the delegation of Pakistan's full support and commitment and conveyed his optimism for the promising outcomes that would mutually benefit both nations.



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