



Islamabad POST

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Morocco-France embrace new era of bilateral ties: FM

Detailed News On Page-08

Adaptability drives China to success

Detailed News On Page-08

Saud enters ICC top 10 Test batters

Detailed News On Page-06



Shehbaz lands in Qatar

Saudi investment in Pakistan to 'reach \$2.8bn: PM

After meeting PM Shehbaz, Saudi investment minister terms new deals "beginning of something very special"

NEWS DESK

RIYADH: In a positive development, Saudi Arabia on Wednesday announced adding another \$600 million to its recently pledged \$2.2 billion investment in Pakistan, with Saudi Investment Minister Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Falih calling it "only the beginning of something very special". The development came during a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Saudi minister held on the sidelines of 8th edition of the Future Investment Initiative (FII) in Riyadh. The "very productive" meeting encompassed bilateral cooperation in multiple sectors including trade, finance, agriculture, technology and skilled manpower, according to a joint press stakeout. At the invitation of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the prime minister is currently on a two-day official visit to Saudi Arabia where he addressed the FII moot on 'Infinite Horizons: Investing Today, Shaping Tomorrow.' and joined the global leaders to discuss how investment could serve as a catalyst for a prosperous and sustainable future. Accompanied by Adviser at the Royal Court Mohammad Maziad Al-Tuwajri, Saudi Minister Al Falih told the media that during his recent visit to Pakistan, both sides had signed 27 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) for investment worth \$2.2 in Pakistan. He announced that following PM Shehbaz's meeting with the crown prince and their discussion, the number of MoUs has been increased from 27 to 34 to add \$600 million in investment taking the investment volume to \$2.8 billion. Speaking on the occasion, the premier said that the meetings with the crown prince and Al Falih were reassuring, adding that some of the projects agreed upon during the recent Saudi delegation's visit were under implementation. He said both sides would work on the timelines of the project and expressed the hope that under the leadership of Saudi crown prince, both sides would

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan, Vietnam pledge to boost tourism, trade ties

The two PMs met on the sidelines of the Eighth Future Investment Initiative Conference

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: Pakistan and Vietnam reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing tourism, trade, and investment ties during a high-level meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh in Riyadh on Wednesday. The two leaders met on the sidelines of the Eighth Future Investment Initiative Conference, where they underscored the mutual benefits of bolstering bilateral relations. The Prime Minister's Office released a statement following the meeting, highlighting PM Shehbaz's enthusiasm for deepening cooperation with Vietnam. Recognising the shared potential in trade and investment, he proposed delegations from both countries to explore business opportunities and strengthen economic ties. He praised Vietnam's dynamic role within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and sought Vietnam's support in advancing Pakistan's bid for full dialogue partner status within ASEAN.

Continued on Page 06

PM Shehbaz extends Diwali greetings

Praises Hindu community's role in Pakistan's development

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif extended heartfelt Diwali greetings to the Hindu community across Pakistan and around the world, marking the festival with a message of unity and optimism. "Diwali, the festival of lights, symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness and hope over despair," said Prime Minister Sharif in his statement. "As we come together to celebrate, let this occasion inspire us to look toward the future with optimism and unity."

Continued on Page 06



DOHA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif arrives at Doha International Airport for his 2 day official visit of Qatar. He was received by Qatar's Minister of State Muhammad bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi. - DNA

Pak HC to move Scotland Yard

Citizenship to be revoked for attackers of ex-CJ's car: Naqvi

Former CJP Isa's car was stopped and banged upon by a group of PTI protesters on Tuesday night where he arrived to attend a prestigious event organised by The Honourable Society of the Middle Temple

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: After the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) staged a protest against former CJP Qazi Faez Isa in London, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday vowed stern action, including cancellation of Pakistani CNICs and passports, against "attackers who targeted" ex-chief justice and high commissioner's vehicle. Former CJP Isa's car was stopped and banged upon by a group of PTI protesters on Tuesday night where he arrived to attend a prestigious event organised by The Honourable Society of the Middle Temple for his elevation as Clee after he relinquished charge as the country's top judge. Reacting to the "attack", the interior minister ordered the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) to immediately identify

Continued on Page 06

Parliament not empowered to make laws contrary to Islam

Islam is the state religion of Pakistan: JUI-F chief

SHAMIM SAHAHID

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that the parliament cannot make laws contrary to Islam. Addressing a public gathering on Wednesday, he said that Islam is the state religion of Pakistan according to the constitution. "Islam is the basics of Pakistan's constitution.

Continued on Page 06

1 terrorist killed in Zhob IBO

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: On night 29/30 October 2024, security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in general area Sambaza, Zhob District, on reported presence of Khwarij. During conduct of the operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and Khwarij, as a result of which, one Khariji was sent to hell, while one Khariji was apprehended in injured condition.

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Justice Shah reappointed as ADR Committee Chairman

Committee will comprise Justice Mansoor, Justice Ayesha and Justice Shahid

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: CJP Yahya Afriqi has again nominated Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah as Chairman ADR. Earlier, after reserved seats case judgement, Justice Shah was removed from ADR committee. Former CJP Justice Qazi Faez Isa has re-constituted ADR Committee on August 06. The ADR Committee will comprise Justice Mansoor Ali Shah as chairman while Justice Ayesha A Malik and Justice Shahid Waheed will be the members.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Green lockdown imposed in Lahore

All construction activities will be completely banned

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Punjab Environmental Department has made a major move to combat smog by enforcing a "Green Lockdown" in Lahore. Lahore has been experiencing the worst smog for the last few days, and it has aggravated to a level that has touched 708 points on the Air Quality Index (AQI). The Environmental Department on Wednesday issued a notification for the lockdown. Davis Road, Egeron Road, Durand Road, and Kashmir Road, along with the areas from Shimla Hill to Gulshan Cinema and Abbott Road, have been designated as hotspot areas.

PIA privatization bid to 'take place' today

Only one bidder remains as PIA privatisation nears auction deadline

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Only one consortium has submitted prequalification documents for the privatisation of PIA despite the bidding deadline approaching. With just one day left in the cut-off time, concerns regarding potential delays in the sale, sources familiar with the situation have said. The Privatisation Commission has prepared for the auction, set for today (October 31), inviting media and key stakeholders and advising PIA officials to remain on standby. Initially, the deadline was extended to October 31 following IMF request for completion by the end of September.

Seeks stronger protections

Chinese envoy miffed at CPEC security lapses

Ambassador Jiang says terrorist attacks on Chinese personnel unacceptable

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: In a rare public rebuff, the Chinese envoy to Pakistan said that two deadly terror attacks within only six months were unacceptable and the government should launch a crackdown against all anti-China terrorist groups. Speaking at a seminar titled 'China at 75', Ambassador Jiang Zaidong further said that security was the biggest constraint to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and "without safe and sound environment nothing can be achieved". The ambassador spoke twice during the seminar, organised by the Pakistan China Institute of stalwart politician Senator Mushahid Husain. Jiang first spoke before the speech of Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, and then he used his right to reply after Dar's remarks on the security for the Chinese. "It is very unacceptable for us to be attacked twice in only six months and these attacks have also caused casualties," Ambassador Jiang said. He added that Beijing hoped that the

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Pak-Iran gas pipeline Pakistan hires law firms for arbitration

Islamabad is bound to pay \$1 million per day to Tehran from January 1, 2015, under penalty clause

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has hired the services of three law firms to contest its case in the Court of Arbitration in Paris after it was moved by Iran over Islamabad's failure to complete its portion of the bilateral gas pipeline and have an intake of 750mmcf/d gas. Law Division and Attorney General's Office sources have said that the federal government has acquired the services of White & Case, Three Crowns, Willkie Farr Gallagher - well-reputed international law firms - and one main counsel,

Continued on Page 06

Kamala Harris warns of dangers of another Trump presidency

"We know who Trump is," Harris takes a dig at the former president



NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Democrat Kamala Harris warned tens of thousands of people gathered in Washington at her biggest rally that her Republican opponent Donald Trump was seeking unchecked power as their tightening race for the presidency entered its final week. Harris spoke on Tuesday evening to an outdoor rally estimated by her campaign to number more than 75,000 people at the spot near the White House where on Jan. 6, 2021, Trump addressed his supporters before they attacked the US Capitol.

Continued on Page 06

India, China complete troops pull-back

Indian official says soldiers will exchange sweets and begin their patrols after commanders finalise modalities

AGENCIES

BEIJING: India and China have completed pulling back their troops from two face-off points on their disputed Himalayan frontier as planned, an Indian defence official said on Wednesday. The nuclear-armed neighbours reached a deal last week on patrolling the frontier in the Indian territory of Ladakh to end a four-year military stand-off, paving the way for improved bilateral political and business ties. The disengagement that began last week has been completed and verification of the process is in progress, the Indian official told Reuters. Soldiers will exchange sweets in a goodwill gesture on Thursday and will begin their patrols of the frontier soon after commanders on the ground finalise the modalities, he added.

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Kundi concerned over deteriorating law, order in KP

Commenting on the upcoming PTI rally in Peshawar, Kundi remarked that the success of the event now depends on the party workers coming from Punjab. He said a significant shift in dynamics, recalling that in the past, funds from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were used to launch protests in Islamabad, but the current circumstances have changed

DNA

ISLAMABAD :Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Wednesday raised serious concerns regarding the worsening law and order situation in the province, saying that the provincial government has failed to maintain peace. In a media interaction during his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, he criticized the provincial leadership, claiming that the chief minister is neither showing seriousness nor addressing the province's pressing issues, focusing instead on political activities and protests. Kundi emphasized that the federal government must take the situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa seriously. He expressed his plans to write a letter to the prime minister within the next few days to ensure that the province's challenges are acknowledged and addressed by the

federal government. Commenting on the upcoming PTI rally in Peshawar, Kundi remarked that the success of the event now depends on the party workers coming from Punjab. He said a significant shift in dynamics, recalling that in the past, funds from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were used to launch protests in Islamabad, but the current circumstances have changed. In light of a recent fire incident at a factory in Hayatabad, Peshawar, Kundi criticized the unavailability of fire brigade vehicles, which he claimed had been diverted for use in protests in Islamabad by the federal government. He said that he would engage with the federal authorities to reclaim these vehicles and questioned the legitimacy of their allocation for protests. Governor Kundi also commented on the recent elections for the Supreme Court Bar, saying that the PTI leadership faced a decline in popularity in Peshawar. He questioned, "To whom will you be against staging

a protest or conducting public gatherings in Peshawar where you (PTI) are in government." He said, "We face the opponents in politics and playing with someone's life is not our way." Faisal said that the release of the PTI founder Chairman was possible only through the Courts as his wife and sisters obtained relief from the Courts. He added that the PTI founder should have the same facilities in jail as he had expressed while addressing a public meeting in the United States, quoting him no TV, no food from home and no seven-star hotel facilities. He acknowledged the role of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in the success of the 26th Constitutional Amendment, adding that if needed, a 27th amendment could also emerge in the future. On the health and treatment of the PTI founder, Kundi said that reports regarding his health and diet are satisfactory, suggesting that he is facing consequences for his actions.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Cheema meeting with High Commissioner of Maldives Muhammad Thoha.

Muqam holds meeting with Nazriati Group

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and President PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Engr. Amir Muqam held a meeting with Nazriati Group leaders on Wednesday. During the meeting held at residence of Ishfaq Chhattan, the Leaders of Nazriati Group announced to abolish the Nazriati Group and expressed full confidence on the leadership of PML-N, president Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Engr Amir Muqam and Murtaza Javed Abbasi. Extending full support to provincial president Engr Amir Muqam, the leaders vowed to work together for strengthening the party. The Nazriati Group leader Abdul Subhan Khan, Malik Imran, group president from Peshawar Arbab Ghulam Haider Khan, group leader from Abbottabad Sardar Abdur Rashid also spoke on this occasion. Provincial President Engr Amir Muqam hailed their decision and termed the decision of abolishment of group as "better late than never". He expressed the resolve to work under the dynamic leadership of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. On this occasion President PML N Mardan Inayat Shah Bacha, Swabi President Shiraz Khan, Buner President Salir Khan, Shangla president Intikhab Alam, Babar Salim, Nawabzada Khan, Adil Khan, Ajar Akram Bacha, Shah Bakht Rawan, Amanullah Khan, Liaqat Khan, Ishtiaq Khan, Javed Ghazali and others were also present.—APP

Pakistan, Maldives to form joint working groups on various sectors

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Maldives have agreed to form Joint Working Groups on various sectors. This understanding reached at a meeting between Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Cheema and High Commissioner of Maldives Muhammad Thoha in Islamabad today. Both sides agreed to extend their bilateral ties in key sectors. Ahmad Cheema proposed the creation of sector-specific Joint Working Groups on Tourism, Trade, Labour, Investment and Aviation under the framework of the Paki-

stan-Maldives Joint Commission. The Maldives High Commissioner welcomed the proposal and assured that his country will send their official representation for these Working Groups in the near future. They agreed to hold the inaugural session of the Pakistan-Maldives Joint Commission in early next year. The Minister informed that Pakistan is keen to explore new avenues for cooperation with Maldives in key priority areas. He welcomed the Maldivian side to explore the industries of Halal meat, Agricultural

Products, Fruits and Surgical Instruments in Pakistan. The High Commissioner, while emphasizing the physical proximity between Karachi and Maldivian Port, assured of his efforts to enhance bilateral trade between both countries. The Minister also highlighted the significant role both countries can play in regional and international forums like SAARC and OIC on significant issues such as stronger climate action. Both sides agreed to continue their efforts in enhancing bilateral tie.—DNA

Federal Ombudsman's team to hold 'Open Court'

MIRPUR (AJK): In order to hear public grievances against the federal government's institutions, Federal Ombudsman's team will hold an 'Khuli Katcheri (open court)' here on October 31 (tomorrow) at the Industrial Rest House, and issue directions on the spot, it was officially announced on Wednesday. "Federal Ombudsman, Ajaz Ahmed Qureshi, while taking notice of a large number of complaints against federal institutions in Mirpur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, directed Director General, Muhammad Ashfaq Ahmed to be one in the head", Media Spokesperson, Federal Ombudsman Secretariat of Islamabad, Khalid Sial told APP. The federal Ombudsman team will listen to public complaints on this occasion and issue the directions on the spot for their redressal, he added.—APP

Court Notice

In the court of Suleman Asif Civil Judge Gujrat

Title: Muhammad Rafique. Versus Suleman Sarwar etc.. Notice to: Malik Jahangir Baber S/o. Malik Alishan Anjum R.o. Awan Sharif Tehsil & District Gujrat. Suit for Specific performance of an agreement and permanent injunction Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 5-11-2024, otherwise case will be decided ex parte.

Enforcement drive launched in wedding halls, restaurants

PESHAWAR: As the wedding season kicks off and winter approaches, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) has launched a targeted monitoring and enforcement drive in wedding halls and restaurants across the province. The initiative, directed by KPRA's Director General Fauzia Iqbal, aims at enhancing tax compliance within these sectors during this peak business period. Teams of KPRA are conducting visits to wedding halls and restaurants in Peshawar and other districts to check records and educate management on sales tax on services. The teams are also issuing instructions to ensure that the management of the businesses pay their sales tax on services based on their actual sales, avoid tax evasion and underreporting, and submit their monthly

sales returns on time. According to a statement from KPRA's communication wing on Wednesday, the campaign aims at enhancing tax compliance in these sectors due to the increase in business activities in restaurants with the approach of winter and the onset of the wedding season in the region. Teams comprising KPRA officers, including assistant collectors and inspectors, have been tasked with visiting wedding halls and restaurants as part of this special drive to improve compliance through in-person visits and to provide on-the-spot support to management by addressing their issues directly. Director General KPRA, Fauzia Iqbal, highlighted in her statement that the timely payment of sales tax on services is essential for a financially self-reliant Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "We urge taxpayers and the business community to pay their taxes on time, submit their returns regularly, and play their role in the development of our country," she stated. To make tax compliance easier for wedding halls, KPRA has introduced a fixed tax regime alongside the percentage-based system. Under this new regime, wedding halls have been categorized based on their sizes, with a fixed tax applied to each category. This tax is to be collected from clients on a per-event basis and deposited directly into KPRA's account. Fauzia Iqbal emphasized that KPRA is committed to making the tax payment process simpler and more accessible. "Our teams are here to guide taxpayers and are actively reaching out to provide assistance," she assured.—APP

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Pakistan, Russia agree to enhance cooperation in maritime security

DNA

RAWALPINDI :Pakistan and Russia have agreed to strengthen mutual cooperation in maritime security and naval technology. An understanding to this effect was reached at a meeting between Naval Chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf and Deputy Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Colonel General Alexander V. Fomin in Islamabad on Wednesday. During the meeting, views were exchanged on professional matters of mutual interest, the regional maritime security situation, and bilateral naval cooperation. They also discussed various aspects of cooperation, in-

cluding bilateral training, visits of naval warships, and joint naval exercises between the two naval forces. Admiral Naveed Ashraf said Pakistan

values its relationship with the Russian Federation and seeks a long-term multifaceted partnership. The Deputy Minister of Defense of

the Russian Federation acknowledged Pakistan Navy's continuous efforts and high commitment to maritime security in the region.



Gandhara museum embraces digital media for preservation

"Seeing the rare artifacts and statues of Lord Buddha was like stepping into history," she reflected

PESHAWAR: The Gandhara Museum in Peshawar, home to an unparalleled collection of ancient Buddhist art, continues to captivate visitors, yet there is a growing sentiment that its treasures deserve a broader digital presence imperative for economic prosperity. This idea was articulated by Zar Lal, a sixth-grade student whose recent visit to the museum left her deeply inspired by the stories and artifacts that connect the region to its rich historical legacy. Zar Lal, accompanied by her parents, explored the museum's intricate displays, including biographical panels that

trace the life of Lord Buddha, founder of Buddhism. "Seeing the rare artifacts and statues of Lord Buddha was like stepping into history," she reflected. Her visit underscored the museum's vital role in preserving Gandhara art, which flourished between the 2nd century BC and the 6th century AD, making it a significant cultural hub in Southeast Asia. With over 30,000 rare antiquities showcased, the Peshawar Museum is renowned not just for its Buddhist sculptures but also for its architectural beauty, a blend of Mughal and British colonial styles. The museum has recently undergone extensive renovations, ensur-

ing that its historical integrity remains intact while enhancing visitor experience. However, amidst the celebration of its restoration, Zar Lal suggested that a digital outreach program could further elevate the museum's profile. "By showcasing these treasures abroad through digital media, we can attract more religious tourists and archaeology enthusiasts to Pakistan," she proposed. This sentiment reflects a growing recognition of the potential for digital platforms to broaden the museum's audience, making its treasures accessible to a global community. The Peshawar Museum's restoration was crucial after it suffered






damage from natural disasters. Now, its galleries, including the dedicated Buddha Gallery and the Buddha Savatta Gallery, draw visitors eager to engage with the artifacts that tell the story of Buddhism's early days. The main hall, built in 1906 in memory of Queen Victoria, stands as a testament to the museum's historical significance. Bakhtzada Khan, Assistant Director Archeology and Museums said that renovation work, carried out by the Directorate of Archeology and Museums, has transformed the museum into a vibrant destination for both local and international visitors, including

monks and diplomats. He said the building's colonial-era features have been meticulously preserved, allowing visitors to experience the unique architectural blend while learning about the region's cultural heritage. As night falls, the museum's colourful lighting illuminates the exterior, creating a magical ambience that attracts evening visitors. The galleries feature diverse artifacts, including ancient Waziristan tribal dresses, primitive cooking tools, and weapons used during the fight for independence, making it a rich tapestry of history.—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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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.....561116
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Chairman PMYP, Australian HC discuss youth affairs

The discussions also focused on the potential for cultural exchange programs between Australia and Pakistan, particularly in the areas of sports and education. Rana Mashhood proposed initiatives for mutual training in sports, aimed at enhancing skills and building partnerships

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, held a meeting with Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins to discuss various initiatives and collaborations aimed at empowering the youth of Pakistan. The meeting was attended by key officials including Khawaja Junaid, Focal Person for Sports, and Syeda Aamna Batool, Focal Person for International Relations for Prime Minister's Youth Programme. During the meeting, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan emphasized his long-standing commitment to youth affairs, having served in this domain since 2002. He highlighted the significant strides made by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) as the first political party to introduce a comprehensive youth policy, Rana Mashhood further elaborated on the achievements of the Prime Minister's Youth Loan Scheme, noting that approximately 186 billion rupees have been distributed among young entrepreneurs to foster economic development and self-sufficiency. The discussions also focused on the potential for cultural exchange programs between Australia and Pakistan, particularly in the areas of sports and education. Rana Mashhood proposed initiatives for mutual training in sports, aimed at enhancing skills and building partnerships. Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins expressed his admiration for the talent and potential of Pakistani youth, stating, "The youth of Pakistan are an asset to the nation." He also announced plans to introduce new scholarships for Pakistani students, reinforcing Australia's commitment to supporting education and skills development. Moreover, Commissioner Hawkins expressed a keen interest in enhancing cooperation in sports, particularly hockey, highlighting the importance of collaboration with the Prime Minister's Youth Programme to implement strategic initiatives in this field. The meeting concluded with both leaders expressing optimism about future collaborations that would empower Pakistani youth and foster closer ties between Australia and Pakistan.



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Expats to be given priority for Sector C-14 plots

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) decided that plots in Sector C-14 would be allocated through balloting with priority to overseas Pakistanis. During the 15th CDA Board meeting of the year, it was decided that the processing fees deposited by overseas Pakistanis for Neeloor Heights Housing Project would be fully refunded following cancellation of the project. The board approved the constitution of a seven-member committee which would scrutinize the cases submitted by the affected people of Islamabad in CDA. The board also decided to constitute a third-party validation (TPV) committee to review the committee's recommendations. Rehabilitation benefits will be granted to the affected on the recommendations of TPV committee. The board directed the Law Wing to submit recommendations to it for establishing and restoring the covered market. —APP

Dengue fatalities reach 11 with 141 new cases

RAWALPINDI: Dengue fever has claimed three more lives in Rawalpindi district making a total of 11 deaths so far this year. The deceased includes Haseeb Iqbal 50, from Rawalpindi Cantt, Nadia Naureen 32, from Taxila and Zakia Bibi 50, from Kalar Syedan. All three recent deaths occurred during the last seven days. The two among three died in two consecutive days in the Holy Family Hospital (HFH). According to the statistical information released by District Health Authority Rawalpindi here on Wednesday, 141 confirmed cases have been reported during the last 24 hours. The data shows that as many as 836 positive cases were reported during the last seven days with an average of 120 per day in the district. The report shows total 4427 confirmed cases have been reported since January 2024. —APP

Criminal arrested after exchange of fire

RAWALPINDI: The City Police of Rawalpindi arrested a criminal in injured condition after exchange of fire during snap checking near Nullah Lai late Tuesday night. A stolen motorcycle, 1500 grams of hashish and a pistol were recovered from the accused Muhammad Rafiq while his accomplice escaped, a police spokesman said on Wednesday. The two accused, who were riding on the motorcycle, were signalled by the police team but they started firing to run away. In the retaliatory fire by the police, Muhammad Rafiq was injured while his accomplice succeeded to run away. Upon receipt of the information about the incident, senior police officers reached the spot. Accused Muhammad Rafiq had been involved in several motorcycle theft and other cases, the spokesman said.—APP

Call for taking coping steps for improving capital's air quality

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam while taking serious notice of the rapidly worsening air quality in recent days in the capital city and its surrounding areas, has directed the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency to take necessary measures to cope with the issue in coordination with relevant official stakeholders including Islamabad Capital Territory Administration and Capital Development Authority. The deteriorating air quality of Islamabad on the onset of mid-October has particularly started worsened further, leaving the city's ambience murky with increasing pollution, dust and vehicular emissions raising alarm bells for smog risk, the PM's climate aide noted, according to a press statement issued here on Wednesday by the climate change & environmental co-ordination ministry. The poor air quality in Islamabad, like many urban areas, can be attributed to several factors. The main causes include vehicle emissions, industrial pollution, construction dust, burning of waste and crop residue. "Addressing these drivers of bad air quality in the city requires stringent enforcement of the relevant environmental regulations and fines. And, adoption of better waste management practices and public awareness campaigns to combat pollution effectively are essential to complement the air quality improving measures, Romina Khurshid Alam

urged the city dwellers to play their part by avoiding burning of waste and crop residue. She also urged the city's waste collection authorities to regularly collect the waste from designated points and dispose of it properly on environmentally sustainable and scientific manner to avoid its burning by the people in streets. Pak-EPA officials said that efforts are being taken to tackle the growing air pollution in the capital city for protection of public health from its hazardous impacts. In a press statement, they said that air quality monitoring is being conducted on regular basis through mobile station and low cost air quality monitoring sensors across the city. The data collection through the Pak-EPA's air quality monitoring network focuses on

key pollutants and environmental factors impacting public health, including Particulate Matter (PM2.5 and PM10), Carbon dioxide (CO2), temperature, and relative humidity. Findings obtained by AQI data showed that PM2.5 levels ranged between 55.25- 66.5 µg/m³, while PM10 ranged from 58-74.1 µg/m³. Carbon dioxide (CO2) levels in the air were recorded between 528.25- 577.5 ppm whereas the temperatures ranged from 27.25-30.5 °C, and relative humidity was between 36.5- 40.83%. "Calculated AQI values indicated that PM2.5 and PM10 levels were in the Moderate range, primarily affecting sensitive individuals, such as the elderly and those with respiratory conditions," senior Pak-EPA official said.

Pakistan's first LLM to be developed

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Mobile Communications Limited (Jazz) announced the development of Pakistan's first Local Large Language Model (LLM) in collaboration with the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) and the National Information Technology Board (NITB). According to a news release, this strategic partnership marks a significant step towards indigenous AI development, combining the expertise of Jazz, NUST, and NITB to create an LLM that empowers government agencies, businesses, and individuals with advanced AI tools tailored specifically for the local context. The collaboration will establish a robust framework for developing a language model that reflects Pakistan's rich cultural and linguistic diversity. By equipping national entities with innovative AI applications, this initiative aims to enhance efficiency and productivity across various sectors. Speaking on the occasion, Minister of IT & Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said, "This partnership marks a pivotal moment for Pakistan's digital future, enabling us to preserve and promote our linguistic and cultural heritage through advanced AI. By bringing together the strengths of academia, industry, and government, we're not only building a platform that reflects Pakistan's unique perspective but also positioning ourselves to lead in emerging technologies. Initiatives like this are essential, not just for our technological aspirations but for safeguarding our sovereignty and advancing our global standing. At the government level, we will work to establish the necessary policies, resources, and frameworks to ensure this initiative's success over the years." Amir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz, said, "Innovation in AI and Large Language Models (LLMs) is critical for Pakistan's future, and we are committed to developing a locally relevant environment that meets the unique needs of our communities. Through partnerships like this with NUST and NITB, we can close the digital divide, empowering our teachers, doctors, and farmers by providing them with tools and information in their own languages. This collaboration is a national cause that will drive exponential progress in digital inclusion. In the coming months, we aim to have a functional model that will lay the foundation for a transformative AI framework in Pakistan." Rector NUST, Engr Javed Mehmood Bukhari, said, "NUST has the capacity to advance AI in Pakistan. We have extended our National Center of Artificial Intelligence (NCAI) labs to many other national universities. This collaboration with Jazz and NITB is key for establishing the infrastructure and mindset needed for AI adaptation nationwide. With our joint efforts, we are paving the way for a forward-looking digital identity framework, fostering an environment where technology serves the unique needs of our society."—APP

Gilani highlights parliamentarians' role in global peace, Justice

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Tuesday highlighted the crucial role of parliamentarians in promoting peace, democracy, and justice on a global scale. While addressing participants of the Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) gathered in Pakistan for the 45th PGA meeting, Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani praised the organization's four-decade legacy in advocating for human rights, international justice, and sustainable peace. He highlighted the significant impact PGA has had on shaping global policy and advancing grassroots initiatives aimed at fostering justice and equality worldwide. He said that the event highlights Pakistan's dedication to addressing pressing international challenges through parliamentary diplomacy. With a diverse membership of over 1,300 parliamentarians from 140 countries, the PGA epitomizes a united front in promoting democracy and fostering international cooperation. The Chairman underscored the alignment of Pakistan's values with those of the PGA, particularly in relation to climate change, good governance, and conflict resolution. He also acknowledged Naveed Qamar's leadership within the PGA and expressed his confidence in Qamar's ability to guide the organization in addressing complex global challenges, reinforcing the importance of inclusivity and diplomacy in achieving sustainable solutions.—APP

Export of footwear increases 9.58% in Jul-Sep

On a month-on-month basis, the exports of leather and canvas footwear decreased by 19.66 and 40 percent respectively

ISLAMABAD: The export of footwear from the country witnessed an increase of 9.58 percent during the first three months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the exports of the corresponding months of last year. The country exported footwear worth US\$ 45.136 million during July-September 2024-25 as opposed to the export of US\$ 41.192 million during July-September 2023-24, showing growth of 9.58 percent, according to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Among the footwear products, the exports of leather footwear witnessed

an increase of 8.71 percent, from US\$ 33.741 million to US\$ 36.681 million during the months under review. However, canvas footwear exports decreased by 26.37 percent by going down from US\$ 0.827 million last year to US\$ 0.609 million, the PBS data revealed. The exports of all other footwear rose by 18.45 percent to US\$ 7.846 million from US\$ 6.624 million in the same months last year. Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the footwear exports appreciated by 14.85 percent during the month of September 2024 as compared to the same month of last year. The footwear exports during September 2024 were recorded at \$14.851 million against the export of \$12.930 million in September 2023. During the period under review, the export of leather and all other footwear witnessed an increase of 18.81 and 3.37 percent respectively. In addition, the export of canvas footwear decreased by 33.18 percent, it added. On a month-on-month basis, the exports of footwear commodities however dipped by 19.69 percent during September 2024 as compared to the exports of \$18.492 million in August 2024, the PBS data revealed.—APP

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Briefs

Governor KP, Saudi envoy discuss bilateral relations

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi met with Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf Saeed Al-Malki, here on Thursday. Accompanying the Governor was Ahmad Karim Kundi, Parliamentary leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly. During the meeting, Governor Kundi praised the role of the Islamic Development Bank in the Chashma Lift Canal project and expressed gratitude to the Saudi government, the Ambassador, and the bank. He emphasized that this initiative is not only vital for Dera Ismail Khan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but is also a significant step towards Pakistan's overall development and prosperity. The Governor said that the project is expected to usher in an agricultural revolution in the region, opening new avenues for economic growth. —APP

Artist donates painting to PNCA

ISLAMABAD: A renowned artist, Tabinda Chenoy has generously donated a significant painting from her art collection to the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA). A significant painting from her latest collection has been added to the PNCA Gallery, enhancing the institution's growing repertoire of contemporary artwork. Alongside this contribution, Tabinda Chenoy has also donated a beautifully crafted book of her paintings titled "Between Dreams and Reality," which is now available at the PNCA Library for art enthusiasts, students, and scholars. "PNCA is deeply grateful to Tabinda Chenoy for her invaluable contribution. —APP

SECP engages to advance "Insured Pakistan" initiative

ISLAMABAD: After Balochistan and KPK, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), as part of its five-years strategic plan- Journey to an Insured Pakistan, concluded first round of its provincial outreach in Punjab and Sindh. High-level meetings were held with Excise and Taxation, Transport and Mass Transit, and Labour and Human Resource Department in Sindh. In Punjab, meetings were held with General Excise and Taxation department, and Crop Reporting Service. This outreach is meant to promote insurance and associated benefits in Pakistan, as outlined in SECP's five-year strategic plan for the insurance sector. The focus of the discussions centered on incorporating agricultural insurance into disaster risk financing strategies and national food security policies, introducing compulsory occupational health insurance, and strengthening the enforcement of mandatory group life. —APP

HRs protection cornerstone of constitution: Mohtasib

Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi referred to the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights as endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council and underlined the need to address the adverse human rights impact resulting from the business activities

ISLAMABAD: Wafaqi Mohtasib Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has said that Pakistan was among the few countries in the world which has unique distinction of establishing a dedicated insurance ombudsman institution which offers a sound oversight mechanism for judicious protection of the interests of various stakeholders. He was addressing an international webinar organized by the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) in co-operation with the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat on Wednesday. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi is the current President of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), which is a 47-member strong non-political, profes-

ICCI President for launching diplomatic offensive to boost exports

Qureshi emphasized the need to prioritize key sectors to boost Pakistan's economy, including, IT Services, value added agricultural produce, mineral, chemicals as well as the export of skilled labour to put the economic wheel in motion and thereby strengthen country's economy

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Nasir Mansoor Qureshi has impressed upon country's diplomatic corps and trade officials to embark on an aggressive trade diplomacy, highlighting the nation's exports in an engaging and impressive manner to capture the attention of foreign investors and propel economic recovery. In a statement issued here on Tuesday he said that Pakistan has set an ambitious target of boosting exports to \$100 billion by 2030 under its Vision 2030 and to achieve this goal relies heavily on the active role of Pakistani Embassies and Consulates worldwide to act as spirited Sales Promoters. Nasir Qureshi emphasized the need to prioritize key sectors to boost Pakistan's economy, including, IT, IT Services, value added agricultural produce, mineral, chemicals as well as the export of skilled labour to put the economic wheel in motion and thereby strengthen country's economy, adding that these sectors have immense potential to drive economic growth, increase exports and strengthen Pakistan's economy. He further said that by focusing on these areas, Pakistan can, diversify its export base, increase foreign exchange reserves,



create employment opportunities and stimulate economic recovery with effective support from government and stakeholders. ICC President further said that market research is vital to identify demand and trends, quality control measures must be implemented

to ensure consistency and reliability as well as trade agreements like FTAs and PTAs will expand market access. Nasir Mansoor Qureshi reaffirmed the organization's commitment to strengthening its role in promoting economic growth by planning to develop linkages

with Chambers of Commerce in friendly countries, promoting global collaborations and knowledge sharing. The organization will also host various events, including seminars, discussions, Business Opportunity Conferences and tourism summits, to

facilitate business-to-business connections and promoting Pakistan's export potential. These initiatives demonstrate ICCI's dedication to enhancing the business environment and driving economic progress, he concluded.

National youth contest on Water Challenges of Pakistan

The poster competition displayed the creativity of 62 students from 15 universities, with participants presenting innovative ideas on water related themes

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) in collaboration with the partner organizations including UNICEF, UNESCO, IWMI Pakistan, Islamic Relief, WaterAid, Muslim Hands and Riphah International University on Tuesday organized a national youth contest on "Water Challenges of Pakistan."

The event aimed at encouraging young minds of the country to engage with water-related challenges through creative posters, thought-provoking debates, and interactive water-themed UNESCO's board games, said a press release. Debate competition, poster competition, essay writing, documentary and water board games competitions were features of the event.

The debate competition featured 16 students from 08 schools, who passionately expressed their views on topics related to water conservation, wastewater management, climate change, and sustainable water management. Their insightful arguments highlighted the critical role of youth in shaping solutions for Pakistan's water challenges. The poster competition displayed the creativity of 62 students from 15 universities, with participants presenting innovative ideas on water related themes. Through visually compelling artwork, the students highlighted the importance of safeguarding water resources. Their posters reflected both creativity and a deep understanding of environmental challenges.

The water board games competition engaged 16 students from 06 schools. The interactive games provided a fun yet educational experience, simulating real-world water challenges and decision-making scenarios. Participants displayed strategic thinking and teamwork, emphasizing the importance of informed water management practices. The three different panel of judges comprising experts of water research announced winners of all three competitions. In addition to these competitions, two national level competitions were also organized including Essay writing competition and Documentary making competitions. Followed by the competitions, a closing session was organized to announce the winners of these com-

petitions. Distinguished guests, including Mr. Itsuro Takahashi, WASH Manager at UNICEF, Mr. Raza Shah, Science Officer UNESCO Pakistan, Mr. Ihsanullah, Program officer Muslim Hands Pakistan, and Mr. Shah Zaib, Islamic Relief Pakistan attended the session. Dr. Hifza Rasheed, Director General Water Quality delivered the welcome remarks, emphasizing the objectives of National Youth Contest and importance of youth involvement in addressing Pakistan's water and climate challenges. In debate competition, 1st Position was clinched by Miss. Snabil Almas of, IMCG I9, 2nd position Syed Ibrahim Ali of Silver Oaks School & College and 3rd position Ms. Tayyaba Tahir of International Maarif School.—DNA

Chairman CDA reviews policy for open spaces

ISLAMABAD: Chief Commissioner Islamabad and Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa chaired a meeting on Wednesday. The meeting reviewed the policy for open spaces in Islamabad, the condition of graveyards in the city, and the Islamabad Beautification Plan. The meeting was attended by the relevant senior officers. It was decided to automate the procedure for allocating open spaces in Islamabad. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa instructed that a plan be presented for the allocation of open spaces according to categories. He directed improvements in the fee collection system for open spaces by adopting modern technology. He also instructed that a comprehensive system for open space allocation be developed by the Law, BCS, and DMA departments. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa stated that action should be taken against the permanent installation of structures in allocated open spaces. Additionally, he directed action against companies engaging in unauthorized advertising within the city. The Chairman further stated that the land allocated for the expansion of the Muslim graveyard in Sector H-11 should be developed. Similarly, the land allotted for the Christian graveyard in H-8/1 should be developed immediately. He added that no charges will be collected for burials in Islamabad's public graveyard. He also directed that burial-related services provided in the city be further improved.—DNA

Intangible Cultural Heritage Day marked

ISLAMABAD: International Day of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was celebrated at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Tuesday to highlight importance of preservation of history, traditions and civilization of old times. The day was celebrated through an event arranged under the auspices of PNCA, Lok Virsa, and UNESCO. The purpose of celebrating this day was to raise awareness about the importance of preserving ancient civilizations, cultures, heritage, and archaeology and introduce the younger generation to the history,

traditions, and civilizations of ancient times. A large number of students from various educational institutions in Islamabad, members of civil society, and individuals from different schools of thought participated in the event. A number of children not only watched unique displays of their elders' traditional games but also showed great interest. Various informative documentaries were shown to the children. Special films were presented on the historical significance and preservation of archaeological sites, including Mohenjo-daro, Buddhist remains of

Takht Bhai and Sara-Bahlol, Taxila, Lahore Fort, and Rottas Fort. A special documentary was also screened on Suri Jagek, the traditional meteorological knowledge of the Kalash community, based on ancient meteorological and astronomical observations. Falconry, an ancient and globally recognized sport where hunting birds are trained to hunt, was introduced to the attendees. A documentary on Nowruz was also shown, highlighting it as the New Year celebration in various cultures, especially in Central and South Asia.—APP

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NUST commences 'Convocation Week'

ISLAMABAD: As many as 4068 graduates from all NUST schools are receiving degrees in various disciplines during the annual Convocation Week being arranged by the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST). Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui graced the occasion as chief guest at the inaugural "Master Convocation Ceremony," and awarded medals to the distinction holders. During the convocation week, as many as 4068 graduates from all NUST schools are receiving UG, MS and PhD degrees in the seven core disciplines of Engineering and Technology, Computing and Information Technology, Life Sciences and Medicine, Arts and Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Business and Management. While delivering his convocation address, the federal minister extended his heartfelt felicitations to graduates, their parents and faculty. He said that this day marks the culmination of the students' academic journey and beginning of a new exciting phase. At this moment of celebration, he said, it is important to realise that these meritorious achievements of the graduates are the fruit of the unstinting support and guidance of their parents. Bestowing a few life lessons upon the graduates, he said that success is not just about personal achievements, it is about contributing to the collective progress of the nation. He also expressed his deep appreciation to the visionary leadership and seasoned faculty for developing NUST into a leader in higher education. Earlier in his welcome address, Lt Gen (Retd) Engr Javed Mahmood Bukhari, HI (M), Rector NUST, said that it is an important day not only for NUST as an institution but also for the graduating students, who stand at the threshold of their professional careers. He felicitated the students and their parents on their magnificent achievement of successfully graduating from one of the most rigorous and comprehensive knowledge ecosystems of the country. The Rector maintained that over the years NUST has been able to set up an ecosystem that any world-class 4th generation entrepreneurial university can aspire, praising NUST's esteemed faculty for bringing the university to where it proudly stands today.—

China's space endeavor

On a Tuesday morning, a press conference on the Shenzhou-19 crewed space-flight mission was held at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center. It was announced that China aims to launch the Shenzhou-19 crewed spaceship at 4:27 am on Wednesday, with preparations steadily progressing. The flight crew, consisting of three taikonauts, made their first public appearance. This marks the fourth manned mission during the application and development stage of China's space station, and the 33rd flight mission of China's manned space program. People could see that China's manned space program is advancing steadily according to its "Three-step Strategy," reflecting not only the dedication and ingenuity of Chinese scientists, but also humanity's collective yearning for space exploration. One of the main objectives of this mission is to complete an in-orbit rotation with the Shenzhou-18 trio and stay at the space station for approximately six months, during which various experiments will be conducted. During their stay, the Shenzhou 19 crew will receive visits from the Tianzhou-8 cargo ship and the Shenzhou-20 crewed spaceship. This demonstrates that China's Shenzhou manned system and Tianzhou cargo system can ensure reliable and stable round-trip transportation for personnel and supplies between Earth and the space, while the Tiangong space station is equipped with abundant resources and comprehensive facilities. The stable operation of these three components has created a complete closed loop, which indicates that future Chinese space missions will be frequent, with deeper explorations and greater achievements anticipated. "Will the next human to walk on the Moon speak English or Mandarin?" asked a recent commentary on the Australian website The Conversation. In fact, lunar exploration is both a competition and a collaboration, and China is creating an excellent platform for international cooperation. Just as a spokesperson for the Chinese manned space program stated at the press conference on Tuesday, the China Manned Space Agency welcomes its international counterparts to join in the flight missions of the country's space station. Since the inception of its manned space program, China has been engaging in international exchanges and cooperation. As of November 2023, China had signed over 150 inter-governmental space cooperation agreements with more than 50 countries and international organizations. The growth of China's space endeavors relies significantly on equal collaboration and inclusive mutual learning, which are essential components of its "international payload." China continues to promote its space achievements to benefit the world, especially developing countries. On one hand, with its lunar exploration and other space research programs, China has strengthened cooperation with developing countries in regions like Africa and Latin America, and supported the space capacity building of developing countries through various means. On the other hand, China consistently shares its achievements with the international community. For instance, China has distributed lunar samples to over 100 research teams, initiated multilateral projects such as the BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation and the Belt and Road Initiative Space Information Corridor. Medicinal plant seeds brought back from the Tiangong space station are being experimentally cultivated in Pakistan; the China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite aids in preserving the Amazon rainforest ecosystem; and the Fengyun meteorological satellites provide weather monitoring, forecasting, and disaster response services to over 120 countries and regions.

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The UNRWA ban

As part of the all-out war waged by Israel against the Palestinian people, the Israeli Knesset approved a couple of days ago, in both its second and third readings, a law banning the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). This move comes despite international warnings against such a step, which violates international laws and treaties. The bill passed with the support of 92 members, while only 10 opposed it. The law stipulates that "UNRWA will not be allowed to operate any representative offices, provide any services, or conduct any activities, whether directly or indirectly, within Israel." A statement from the Knesset announced that "the bill, introduced by Knesset member Boaz Bismuth, marks a precedent in halting UNRWA's activities in Israel, having now passed its second and third readings in the Knesset plenary session, and has been entered into Israel's law book." Under this law, the 1967 agreement that allowed UNRWA to operate in the occupied Palestinian territories will be nullified, effectively ending its activities. Additionally, any contact between Israeli officials and UNRWA staff will be prohibited. He noted that targeting UNRWA has become part of Israel's war objectives, threatening the stability of humanitarian conditions and obstructing international efforts to support civilians in Gaza. Since the beginning of Israel's extermination campaign against Gaza, Israel has targeted UNRWA institutions, bombing hundreds of them and killing hundreds of employees of the international organization. Israel has not stopped inciting against UNRWA for various reasons. The Islamic Jihad Movement described the legislation as "further evidence of the extermination war and criminal policies pursued by the occupying entity against the Palestinian people wherever they exist." Islamic Jihad also considers the law "an open insult to the UN, its institutions, and its resolutions, as well as a challenge to so-called international legitimacy and a violation of all international decisions." Fatah Movement stated that "the occupation system's illegal measures and decisions represent a blatant challenge to the UN, international law, and international legitimacy." Fatah further argued that the Knesset decision disregards all international resolutions and agreements, aiming to liquidate the historical rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right of return and compensation for Palestinian refugees. The Movement urged the international community to take decisive action against the occupation system's decisions and to revoke Israel's membership in international organizations, given its status as a state that flagrantly violates international law and the resolutions and agreements derived from it. Jordan's rejection of the Israeli decision was unequivocal. The spokesperson for the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sufian Qudah, stated that the approval of this law is part of a systematic campaign targeting UNRWA and "an extension of Israel's frantic efforts to politically assassinate the agency, further intensifying its aggressive war against the Palestinian people." Qudah affirmed that these Israeli actions and practices are "illegitimate and void" and that Israel's attempts to target UNRWA and its symbolism, which affirms the right of Palestinian refugees to return and compensation under international law, are doomed to fail.

The challenges facing the Russian economy

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The limited production capacity, exacerbated by a weak ruble and tighter Western sanctions, continues to constrain economic growth. Labor shortages have further complicated recovery efforts, as many skilled workers have left the country or shifted to other sectors less affected by sanctions. Consequently, businesses are struggling to maintain productivity, leading to increased operational costs and reduced competitiveness

THE Russian economy is currently grappling with a complex interplay of factors that have placed substantial strain on its overall stability and growth prospects. These factors include international sanctions, disrupted logistics, rising prices, inflation expectations and the difficulty of replacing banned imports with homegrown substitutes. Each of these challenges contributes to a precarious economic landscape, affecting both short-term growth and long-term sustainability. The imposition of international sanctions on Russia, particularly in the wake of its geopolitical actions, has severely restricted its access to global markets and financial systems. Sanctions targeting key sectors such as energy, finance and defense have resulted in a decline in foreign investment and technological transfer, essential for modernizing the Russian economy. This economic isolation has not only hampered Russia's growth prospects but has also forced it to seek alternative markets, particularly in Asia, to compensate for losses in the West. However, these efforts have been met with varying degrees of success, leading to a reliance on countries like China for trade and investment, which brings its own set of challenges and dependencies. Compounding the impact of sanctions are disrupted logistics and supply chain issues. The war in Ukraine and subsequent geopolitical tensions have led to significant disruptions in transportation networks and trade routes. These challenges have made it increasingly difficult for Russian businesses to import necessary raw materials and components, as well as to export their products efficiently. The result is a series of bottlenecks that have led to increased production costs and

delays in manufacturing. Consequently, industries reliant on timely deliveries, such as automotive and electronics, are particularly affected, leading to reduced output and a further strain on the economy. As the cost of imports has risen due to sanctions and logistical disruptions, the Russian economy is facing significant inflationary pressures. Rising prices for essential goods and services have led to a decline in consumer purchasing power, which in turn affects overall consumption. While the government has attempted to control inflation through various measures, including price controls on basic commodities, these strategies have had limited success. Inflation expectations remain high among consumers, creating a vicious cycle where businesses raise prices in anticipation of future cost increases, further exacerbating the economic challenges. One of the significant challenges faced by the Russian government is the difficulty in replacing banned imports with domestically produced substitutes. While there have been efforts to boost local production in response to sanctions, the transition has proven to be slower and more complex than anticipated. Many industries lack the necessary technology and expertise to produce high-quality alternatives to previously imported goods, leading to a decline in product quality and competitiveness. This situation is particularly evident in sectors such as consumer electronics, pharmaceuticals and machinery, where reliance on foreign technology has left a significant gap that domestic producers have struggled to fill. In the short term, the Russian government has employed various measures to conceal the challenges facing the economy. Initiatives to boost wages, consumption and production have resulted in several months of strong growth, creating an illusion of eco-

nomical resilience. However, recent GDP data and other economic indicators suggest that this growth is not sustainable. The data reveal emerging imbalances in supply and demand, indicating that the underlying challenges have not been adequately addressed. The limited production capacity, exacerbated by a weak ruble and tighter Western sanctions, continues to constrain economic growth. Labor shortages have further complicated recovery efforts, as many skilled workers have left the country or shifted to other sectors less affected by sanctions. Consequently, businesses are struggling to maintain productivity, leading to increased operational costs and reduced competitiveness. The Central Bank of Russia faces a challenging dilemma as it seeks to navigate these economic pressures. On one hand, it must control inflation to protect the purchasing power of consumers and stabilize the economy; on the other hand, easing monetary policy to encourage growth could exacerbate inflationary pressures. As a result, the central bank has been hesitant to implement aggressive measures to stimulate the economy, opting instead for a more cautious approach. This reluctance to lower interest rates has stifled investment and consumption, further contributing to the slowdown. Despite high levels of demand in certain sectors, business sentiment in Russia is deteriorating. The uncertainty created by international sanctions, ongoing geopolitical tensions and internal economic challenges has led to a cautious approach among investors and business leaders. Many are hesitant to commit to long-term investments, fearing that the current economic environment will not support sustainable growth. This pervasive uncertainty not only affects domestic investment but also discourages foreign businesses from engaging with Russian market.

Exchanges, mutual understanding of civilizations indispensable

Tao Jian

Extinguishing another's light does not make yours shine brighter; blocking another's path does not mean you will go further. Contemporary civilizations must adhere to the principle of mutual equality, recognizing and respecting the identity and rights of each civilization. For the Global South, it is imperative not only to oppose economic suppression, but also to reject the cultural denigration. For Western nations, the key lies in shedding arrogance, genuinely respecting others, and mitigating the schisms and harms that "Western centrism"...

TODAY'S world is experiencing a new period of turbulence and change, marked by a confluence of chaos and multiple crises. People are increasingly worried about the future of the world, and their intrinsic yearning for unity rather than division, and for cooperation rather than confrontation, is more intense than ever. It is alarming that the Cold War mentality persists, and that outdated theories like the "clash of civilizations" and "civilizational supremacy" have reemerged from time to time. The theory and practice of contemporary international relations have proven that the logic of the "clash of civilizations" not only fails to explain the root causes of international political and economic competition, but it also creates a "fast knot" in these already complex and contradictory relations. **Global civilizations in 'plural form' are viewed by some as 'singular':** The various civilizations created by human society are like a hundred gardens, each with its own differences and colors. It can be said that the civilizations of different countries and nationalities each carry their own light. Each civilization is rooted in its own soil of existence, embodying the extraordinary wisdom, spiritual pursuits, and values of its people, making them all uniquely valuable. Diversity is a basic feature of world civilization, and respect for this diversity is a prerequisite and foundation for civilizational exchanges and mutual understanding. However, the world's civilizations, which have always existed in a "plural form," have become "singular" in the eyes of some who adhere to Western-centrism, a view that regards Western history, culture, political system and economic model as the only criterion for civilization. It also denies the diversity of civilizations and believes that human civilization is monolithic, with only one form and a core of exclusivity. According to this view, any civilization that does not meet Western standard is deemed backward and ignorant, and must "evolve" to conform to "advanced Western civilization." For a long time, Western-centrism has dominated the international discourse system, often ignoring the achievements of other civilizations and artificially distorting and tearing apart the shared civilization of humanity. The Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) puts forward "four advocacies," the first of which is to promote the respect for the diversity of civilizations. The GCI aims to restore the true diversity of the world and its civilizations. It advocates for cooperation rather than confrontation, mutual understanding rather than exclusion, and a win-win mentality rather than a zero-sum

approach. It presents China's proposals for breaking away from the constraints of Western-centrism, fully respecting the diversity of human civilization, and building a more just, reasonable and harmonious world order. **Blocking others' paths won't get one farther:** Civilizations are equal. There is no such thing as a superior or inferior civilization; they differ only in identity and location. Every civilization is uniquely valuable and irreplaceable. It is through mutual reference, learning and absorption that different civilizations develop and improve. The West has branded itself as the "civilizational model," denying the essential equality of civilizations and believing itself to bear the "civilizing mission" toward non-Western civilizations. Some "powerful countries" often express overtly arrogant views steeped in "civilizational centrism" and "civilizational superiority." US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's assertion that "if you are not at the table in the international system, you're going to be on the menu" reveals a mentality in which the US and its Western allies are entitled to a spot at the table, while other countries are relegated to merely being on the menu. This attitude underscores the inherent "civilizational superiority" of the Western worldview. Extinguishing another's light does not make yours shine brighter; blocking another's path does not mean you will go further. Contemporary civilizations must adhere to the principle of mutual equality, recognizing and respecting the identity and rights of each civilization. For the Global South, it is imperative not only to oppose economic suppression, but also to reject the cultural denigration. For Western nations, the key lies in shedding arrogance, genuinely respecting others, and mitigating the schisms and harms that "Western centrism" has inflicted on human civilization. As emphasized in the GCI, it is essential to embrace a broad-minded understanding of different civilizations' values, avoid imposing one's own values and models on others, and refrain from ideological confrontations. Hence, the stance taken toward China's proposed GCI serves as a litmus test for whether Western nations have "true respect." **Civilizational differences should not be the root of conflict:** In the 1990s, US scholar Samuel P. Huntington proposed the "clash of civilizations" theory. He argued that the central axis of world politics in the future is likely to be the conflict between "the West and the Rest," asserting that future wars would be fought not between countries, but between cultures. His viewpoint posits that differences

entail conflict, and conflict inevitably leads to war. Furthermore, his idea reflects a Cold War mentality, replacing the "us versus them" dichotomy of the Cold War era with an opposition between "Western civilization versus non-Western civilization," thus binding civilization to warfare. This so-called "clash of civilizations" theory confuses and reverses the actual factors leading to conflict, inflating the impact of cultural and civilizational differences while overstating their heterogeneity and conflict potential. Cultural differences should not be seen as the root of global conflicts but should serve as a driving force for the advancement of human civilization. The theory of "clash of civilizations" only leads humanity to a dead end. In May, 2019, President Xi Jinping pointed out clearly at the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations held in Beijing that civilizations don't have to clash with each other; what is needed are eyes to see the beauty in all civilizations. We should keep our own civilizations dynamic and create conditions for other civilizations to flourish. The value of the GCI lies in its foundation of cultural diversity and harmonious coexistence, emphasizing mutual respect, equal dialogue and in-depth exchanges among different civilizations. Its goal is to achieve the progress of human civilization and the peaceful development of the world, transcending the narrow perspective and pessimistic expectations of the "clash of civilizations" theory. Diversity spurs interaction among civilizations, which in turn promotes mutual learning and further development. Interaction and mutual learning are essential requirements for the advancement of civilization. The GCI promotes the establishment of a global network for inter-civilization dialogue and cooperation, fostering global partnerships that align with the international community's shared desire for harmonious coexistence among diverse civilizations, resolving civilizational opposition, and enhancing mutual understanding and affection among peoples. Theoretically, the GCI articulates the direction of human civilization. Practically, it addresses how different civilizations can coexist, emphasizing all-dimensional and in-depth cooperation in cultural exchange. This provides strong momentum to promote an equitable and orderly multipolar world. - The author is a member of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and a professor at the University of International Relations.

Briefs

Parliament not empowered to make laws contrary...

FROM PAGE 01
All the laws would be made as per the Quran and Sunnah," the JUI-F chief said. He added that right to rule would be enjoyed by the people's representatives. He said that some 'irrelevant' people decide the fate of elections in Pakistan. The veteran politician was of the view that democracy is also under the Quran and Sunnah. Earlier, JUI-F chief said that he had no intention of joining the government. "I am unaware of any such proposal; strong resistance will be made against the 27th constitutional amendment," he added. Fazl noted that the 27th constitutional amendment is not simple. Commenting on broader political dynamics, he clarified that JUI-F opposes revenge-driven politics and cases targeting politicians. "We believe in political freedom and do not support restrictions on protests," he said.

Saudi investment in Pakistan..

FROM PAGE 01
strengthen bilateral relations not only for the benefit of the people of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia but the entire Muslim ummah. "When I come back, I will have good news for the people of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. With your valuable support, we will be able to carve our way forward and soon be able to make big announcements," he remarked. Minister Al-Falih said that as a follow-up of their Pakistan visit, both sides had "extensive" working-level meeting to elevate the bilateral relations to yet higher horizons in the fields of economy, finance, trade and people-to-people contacts. He said that some of the MoUs had resulted in exports from Pakistan in agriculture and other fields. He also expressed the Saudi government's willingness to import Pakistan's skilled workforce as he said the world was looking towards Saudi Arabia becoming a key driver in digital technology and artificial intelligence.

Kamala Harris warns of...

FROM PAGE 01
"We know who Donald Trump is," Harris said. She said the then-president sent an "armed mob" to the US Capitol to try to overturn his loss in the 2020 presidential election. "This is someone who is unstable, obsessed with revenge, consumed with grievance and out for unchecked power," Harris said during what her campaign called her closing argument before a tightly contested Nov. 5 election. More than 53 million Americans have already voted in the election, according to Election Hub at the University of Florida, in a battle that will decide who runs the world's richest and most powerful country for four years. Harris was flanked by American flags on stage and surrounded by blue and white banners that said "FREEDOM" with a well-lit White House behind her.

Pakistan hires law...

FROM PAGE 01
settled in Australia, who is also famous in the world as one of the leading lawyers in the oil and gas infrastructure sector. "We submitted with the secretariat of the France-based Court of Arbitration on October 18, 2024 details about the legal team that would represent Pakistan in the Arbitration Court proceedings," said the sources. Meanwhile, relevant authorities have briefed the law firms and one main counsel on the Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project and the reasons why Pakistan failed to materialise the trans-nations project. "Pakistan will now, with the consultation of legal team input, appoint one arbitrator. Likewise, one is to be appointed by Iran, and then both states would jointly nominate the third arbitrator. This is how the Court of Arbitration would be completed for proceeding on the case, added the sources.

17th CNS Amateur Golf Cup kicks off at Islamabad

Speaking at a press briefing, Pakistan Navy Commander North Commodore Saqib Ilyassaid that Pakistan Navy realises the importance of promoting sports like golf and hence considers holding and supporting a championship of this status an essential component of the whole process

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The 17th edition of Chief of Naval Staff Amateur Golf Cup will explode into action from Thursday (Today) with promising golfers of the country exhibiting their prowess in the premier activity here at Margalla Greens Golf Club (MGGC) Islamabad. Speaking at a press briefing, Pakistan Navy Commander North and Patron Pakistan Navy Golf (North) Commodore Saqib Ilyas, along with Administrator Margalla Greens Golf Club Commander (R) Majid Satti and Senior Manager Serena Hotels Sidra Zaheer, said that Pakistan Navy realises the importance of promoting sports like golf and hence considers holding and supporting a championship of this status an essential component of the whole process. Commodore Saqib Ilyas said that Pakistan Navy also encourages players, both, from within the service as well as outside, to take part in sports events and raise



the overall standard of sports at national and international levels. He highlighted this championship as an annual feature of both, Pakistan Golf Federation (PGF) and Pakistan Navy Sports calendar. The idea of the conduct of this championship was conceived in 2007 and

since then we have hosted this championship every year except 2020 when it could not be held due to the pandemic. Commodore Saqib Ilyas said that the event has become a platform for fostering healthy competition, providing a unique opportunity to showcase Pakistan's positive image to the world, while also promoting healthy activity within society, adding that last year, around 300 golfers from across Pakistan participated in the Chief of the Naval Staff Amateur Golf Cup, with Irtaza Hussain clinching the title and returning as the defending champion. The regular conduct of this event demonstrates the Pakistan Navy's commitment to promoting golf at both national and international levels. He said that the event will be played in four major categories including Men's, Ladies, seniors and juniors while Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf will be chief guest of the concluding ceremony of the championship will be held on 3rd November.

Boulter through to quarter-finals of Hong Kong Open

HONG KONG CITY: Katie Boulter continued to rediscover her form in the final weeks of her season as she reached the quarter-finals of the Hong Kong Open with a tough 7-6 (7), 6-4 win over Xiyu Wang of China. Boulter endured a challenging few months after Wimbledon, compiling a 6-8 record between July and mid-October while failing to win consecutive matches at

any event. But while many of Boulter's peers have already started their off-season, her decision to play an extended Asian swing has paid off. After reaching the semi-finals of the Tokyo WTA 500 event last week, Boulter has now strung together two solid performances in Hong Kong, a WTA 250 event, against lower ranked opposition. Wang, ranked No 100 in the

world, has been Boulter's only top 100 opponent in her five victories over the past two weeks but simply winning matches has allowed her to build her confidence and she has also gained a helpful number of points. "That was quite a match," said Boulter. "She's an incredible opponent, she never lets up. Full credit to her, she just keeps hitting and she's so talented. She made me work so hard today, which I'm not that happy about to be honest." This time, the victory required Boulter to navigate a marathon 78 minute opening set in which Boulter recovered from a break down at 2-4 to force a tie-break.

Wang is a tall, impressive 23-year-old who has been highly touted for a long time and possesses a massive left forehand. She refused to let Boulter go, eventually generating the first set point at 6-5 on Boulter's serve. Boulter saved the set point with a brilliant second serve down the T, forcing a return error from Wang before edging out the tiebreak on her second set point. Despite breaking serve early in the second set, Boulter was never comfortable but after relinquishing the break at 4-3 with a double fault after a lengthy service game, Boulter steadied herself and took the final two games of the match. "I'm honestly, just a little bit too stubborn with myself to let myself go," said Boulter. "I wish I could relax a little bit but I just wanted to keep fighting and keep doing the best that I could. She played some incredible tennis. A lot of power, a lot of finesse in her strokes. I just had to stay there as much as I possibly could. I'm proud of myself today." In her penultimate tournament of the season, Boulter, the second seed, will face either the No 7 seed Varvara Gracheva or Anastasia Zakharova for a place in the semi-finals. - Agencies



Naqvi satisfaction with construction work at Karachi stadium

Naqvi advised the officials of several improvements to the work

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief Mohsin Naqvi expressed satisfaction with the construction work here at National Bank Cricket Stadium. On early Wednesday, Naqvi made his first visit to the stadium where construction work started back in August this year. Naqvi was briefed by Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) officials. The pillar work for the new building has been completed. PCB boss Naqvi advised the officials of several improvements to the work. The prominent suggestion was about the digital screen. "Digital scoreboard should be installed at an elevated position, ensuring that fans can enjoy an uninterrupted view of the match," he suggested. Meanwhile, he emphasised giving better viewing experience to the fans who will come to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy next year. The chairman also instructed that parking facilities should be situated closer to the stadium for easier access, further enhancing convenience for attendees on match days.

Saud Shakeel shines, enters ICC top 10 Test batters

Shakeel jumped to seventh position

WEB DESK

DUBAI: Pakistan's vice-captain in Test cricket, Saud Shakeel made significant stride, entering the top 10 Test batters' list in ICC Test rankings. As per the International Cricket Council (ICC) rankings, Shakeel has made it to the top 10, reaching the seventh spot after a remarkable leap of 20 spots. His impressive performance in the recent Test series against England on home turf was pivotal in this achievement. Pakistan celebrated a memorable victory by outclassing England in the third Test, claiming the three-match series 2-1. The national side took a substantial first-innings lead of 77 runs on a pitch favouring spinners. Shakeel's highest rating is 724, with a career-best of 728 achieved against Australia in Melbourne in 2023. Meanwhile, Englishman Joe Root is leading the ranking in the Test batters' rankings. Followed by New Zealand's Kane Williamson at the second position, while India's Yashas-



vijaiswal has climbed up one spot to claim third place. Meanwhile, Pakistan's former skipper Babar Azam has improved his rankings, moving from 19th to 18th position. In addition, Pakistan's Test bowler Noman Ali has entered the ICC's top 10 Test bowlers, rising eight places to ninth. Shaheen Shah Afridi, however, dropped from 14th to 15th. South Africa's Kagiso Rabada is the top Test bowler after moving up three places, with India's Jasprit Bumrah in third. However, India's star batter Virat Kohli has faced a setback, dropping to rank 14th.

Mulder joins run-fest as SA declare at 575-6

Bangladesh made 38-4 on day two of their second test on Wednesday

CHITTAGONG: South Africa declared their first innings at a daunting 575-6 thanks to Tony de Zorzi's 177 and Wiaan Mulder's unbeaten 105, before the tourists reduced Bangladesh to 38-4 on day two of their second test on Wednesday. Mominul Haque was batting on six with Najmul Hossain Shanto unbeaten on four with Bangladesh trailing by 537 runs when poor light brought play to a close early. Mulder endured nervy moments and dived into the crease to avoid being run out before his first century in tests, but he got there in the next over with a big six down the ground off spinner Tajjul Islam and raised his arms aloft. With De Zorzi and Tristan Stubbs also getting their maiden centuries, it marked only the second time in test history that three batsmen had done so in the same innings. Gerry Gomez, Robert Christiani and Clyde Walcott were the first trio, when the West Indies faced India in 1948. After South Africa's stand-in captain Aiden Markram called time on

their innings, Kagiso Rabada gave them the ideal start by removing Shadman Islam for a duck and Zakir Hasan for two before Mahmudul Hasan Joy fell to Dane Paterson

for 10. Nightwatchman Hasan Mahmud was castled by Keshav Maharaj for three, leaving Bangladesh in deep trouble. Earlier, De Zorzi picked up from where he



left off after notching up his century on Tuesday, as South Africa accumulated runs with ease having resumed at 307-2 on a batting-friendly track at the Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium. He reached his 150 with a lofted boundary off Tajjul and followed it up with another immediately, as the hosts came under pressure early on another hot, humid day on the southeastern coast of Bangladesh. Bedingham was equally aggressive at the other end and hit a quick-fire 59 but was bowled out by Tajjul, who then trapped De Zorzi and removed Kyle Verreynne for a duck shortly before lunch to claim his 14th five-wicket haul. It was expensive, however, as he finished with 5-198. Senuran Muthusamy made an unbeaten 68 as he combined well with Mulder in another 100-run stand in the afternoon session and help the Proteas go past 500 runs in tests for the first time since 2020. South Africa are 1-0 up in the two-match series after their seven-wicket victory in Dhaka. - Agencies

Pakistan, Vietnam pledge...

FROM PAGE 01
PM Shehbaz also extended an invitation for PM Pham to visit Pakistan, marking a step toward greater diplomatic and economic collaboration between the two nations. This meeting follows recent Memorandums of Understanding between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, enhancing their scope of partnership to \$2.8 billion—underlining regional push for stronger economic alliances.

India, China complete troops...

FROM PAGE 01
There was no immediate comment from Beijing on the troops pull-back. The mostly undemarcated border of about 4,000 km (2,500 miles) that runs along the Himalayas has been a source of tension between the world's two most populous nations for decades and led to a brief but bloody war in 1962. Four years ago, 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers were killed during border clashes. The two sides then stopped patrolling several points on the border in Ladakh to avoid new confrontations, while moving tens of thousands of new troops and military equipment closer to the freezing mountainous region. They later pulled back troops from five face-off points but the last such withdrawal took place over two years ago.

1 terrorist killed in Zhub IBO

FROM PAGE 01
Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from them. Sanitization operation is being conducted to neutralize any other Kharji present in the area. Security forces of Pakistan, in step with the nation, remain determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan.

Chinese envoy miffed at CPEC...

FROM PAGE 01
Pakistan side could further strengthen the security measures to protect Chinese personnel, institutions and projects. "Pakistan should severely punish the perpetrators and crack down on all anti-China terrorist groups," said the ambassador during his second unusual intervention. "Security is the biggest concern for China and a constraint to CPEC in Pakistan." Ambassador Jiang remarks came after Deputy Prime Minister Dar said in his speech that "Chinese are very clear no matter how lucrative an investment is anywhere if the security issue is there they do not send Chinese personnel. Your country is the only exception. This is what the Chinese leadership told the Prime Minister of Pakistan in my presence".

PM Shehbaz extends...

FROM PAGE 01
The prime minister praised Pakistan's cultural diversity, emphasizing that it strengthens the national fabric and enriches the nation's shared culture. Recognizing the Hindu community's valuable role in Pakistan's development, Prime Minister Sharif expressed admiration for their contributions to the socio-economic and political spheres. "The diversity of faiths in Pakistan is a true source of resilience and unity among our people," he noted. Prime Minister Sharif reflected on Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision for Pakistan as an inclusive nation where all citizens, regardless of religion, race, or caste, enjoy equal rights and freedom. He reaffirmed his government's commitment to these principles, ensuring every community in Pakistan is afforded equal opportunities. "May this festival of lights bring peace and prosperity to your lives and foster stronger bonds of unity and brotherhood among people of all faiths in our country," he concluded, underscoring the shared commitment to national progress and mutual respect among Pakistan's diverse communities.

Briefs

KSE-100 sheds 577 points amid volatile session at PSX

KARACHI: The benchmark KSE-100 index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned bearish on Wednesday, shedding more than 500 points. The KSE-100 index shed 577.52 points, or 0.64 percent to close at 90,286.57 points, from the previous day's closing of 90,864.09 points. A total of 614.56 million shares were traded at the PSX as compared to the turnover of 602.81 million shares during the previous trading day. The price of shares stood at Rs27.34 billion, as against Rs28.2 billion on the last trading day. As many as 446 scrips were active in the stock market, of which 158 recorded gains and 235 declined, while the share price of 53 companies remained unchanged. Analysts at Topline Securities said that the dip in the Pakistan Stock Exchange was primarily driven by investors engaging in profit-taking to lock in recent gains. "The PSX witnessed a turbulent trading session today, with the KSE-100 index oscillating between an impressive high of 1,008 points and a low of 860 points," as per the analysts. "A key factor influencing today's market behaviour was the heightened anticipation surrounding the T-bill auction, with investors closely monitoring its outcome.—APP

Gold price ups by Rs.2,900 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.2,900 and was sold at Rs.287,900 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs.285,000 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.2,486 to Rs.24,342 from Rs. 223,980, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs.3,350 and Rs.2,872.08 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$29 to \$2,784 from \$2,755, the Association reported.—APP

Rupee largely stable against US dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani rupee remained largely stable against the US dollar, depreciating 0.02% in the inter-bank market on Wednesday. At close, the currency settled at 277.79, a loss of Re0.05 against the greenback. On Tuesday, the rupee had settled at 277.74, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). Internationally, the US dollar hovered close to a three-month peak on Wednesday in a big week for macroeconomic data that could reveal the path for US monetary policy. The Australian dollar edged closer to a three-month trough after some stickiness in inflation suggested a Reserve Bank of Australia interest rate cut is unlikely this year.—APP

Saudi to host meeting of new group pushing for Palestinian state

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia is on Wednesday expected to open the first meeting of a new "international alliance" to press for the establishment of a Palestinian state, state media said. The "International Alliance to Implement the Two-State Solution" was unveiled last month on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, Saudi state media reported at the time, bringing together Arab and Islamic countries and European countries. This week's meeting in Riyadh is expected to last for two days and feature sessions on humanitarian access, the embattled UN agency for Palestinian refugees and incentives to promote a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, diplomats said.—APP

US concerned on 'horrifying' Israeli strike in Gaza killed kids

The State Department also reiterated its alarm over the Israeli parliament's passage Monday of a law to ban the UN agency responsible for aiding Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, a step that defied appeals by Western nations

NEW YORK: The United States on Tuesday voiced concern about a "horrifying" Israeli strike in Gaza that killed a large number of children and said it was asking its ally for answers. "We are deeply concerned by the loss of civilian life in this incident. This was a horrifying incident with a horrifying result," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller told reporters, pointing to "reports of two dozen children killed" in the bombing that

destroyed the five-story block in Beit Lahia. "We have reached out to the government of Israel to ask what happened here," Miller said. Miller stopped short of announcing any immediate actions against Israel, which relies on US military and diplomatic support, but reiterated a US call for a negotiated end to the Gaza war that began with the Hamas attack on Israel of October 7, 2023. The "tragic cost to civilians" in the latest strike "is an

other reminder of why we need to see into this war," Miller said. "We are a year into the government of Israel's military campaign in Gaza and Israel has decimated Hamas's military capabilities, it has decimated Hamas leadership, it has through its military action ensured that Hamas cannot repeat the attacks of October 7," Miller said. The State Department also reiterated its alarm over the Israeli parliament's passage Monday of

a law to ban the UN agency responsible for aiding Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, a step that defied appeals by Western nations. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in a letter earlier this month warned Israel that the United States could withhold military assistance without improvements in humanitarian aid into Gaza. Blinken "made clear that we were opposed to the passage of this legislation,

and he made clear that there could be legal and policy implications to the implementation of that legislation," Miller said. Asked about a bid by Norway for the International Court of Justice to clarify Israel's aid obligations, Miller said of Israel, "They certainly have a legal obligation to allow humanitarian assistance in and not to erect roadblocks to humanitarian assistance to people in Gaza."—Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Italian Ambassador Marilina Armellini called on the Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain.—APP

Iran appoints first Baluch governor in restive province

TEHRAN: Iran's government on Wednesday appointed the first governor from the Baluch minority in the country's restive southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan. "Mansour Bijar was chosen as the governor of Sistan-Baluchistan," government spokeswoman Fatemeh MoHajjjerani said after a cabinet meeting. Bijar, 50, hails from the Baluch community, a mainly Sunni Muslim ethnic group in a majority Shiite country. His appointment follows an attack in Sistan-Baluchistan that killed at least 10 policemen, later claimed by the Sunni jihadist group Jaish Al-Adl (Army of Justice). Sistan-Baluchistan straddles the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan, and is one of the Islamic republic's most impoverished provinces. It has long been a flashpoint for cross-border attacks by separatists and Sunni extremists, and clashes between security forces and armed groups are common. Jaish Al-Adl, which was formed in 2012 by Baluch separatists, is considered a "terrorist organization" by both Iran and the United States. In September, Iran appointed the first Sunni governor for Kurdistan province since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. In August, President Masoud Pezeshkian named Abdolkarim Hosseinzadeh, a politician from the Sunni minority, as his vice president for rural development. Lawmakers later blocked his appointment, with one of them, Mehrdad Lahouti, saying parliament had voted in favor of keeping Hosseinzadeh in the legislature due to "capabilities and experience." But they agreed to his resignation on Wednesday in a subsequent vote. The parliament did not provide further details on the reason for the change. Also last week, the government named Mohammad Reza Mavalizadeh as the first Arab governor for southwestern Khuzestan province, which has a large Arab minority. Sunnis account for about 10 percent of Iran's population. Shiite Islam is the official state religion.—APP

Texas woman dies after miscarriage delay under abortion ban

TEXAS: Josseli Barnica, a 28-year-old immigrant from Honduras residing in Texas, tragically passed away after developing a fatal infection during a miscarriage in September 2021. Hospital records showed that Barnica was 17 weeks into her pregnancy when she experienced complications that led to an "in progress" miscarriage. Despite her condition, doctors at HCA Houston Healthcare Northwest reportedly did not expedite delivery or empty her uterus, citing Texas's restrictive abortion laws that require a fetal heartbeat to cease before intervention. According to foreign media, a nonprofit news organization, Barnica's husband recalled that doctors said terminating the pregnancy would be a "crime." For 40 hours, Barnica waited in the hospital with her uterus exposed to infection while the medical team monitored the fetus's heartbeat. Ultimately, she delivered after the heartbeat ceased, but she later died from sepsis, a bacterial infection that medical experts say could have been prevented with earlier care. Barnica's family, including her husband and young daughter, are now grappling with the sudden loss. ProPublica investigated Barnica's case, consulting over a dozen medical experts who described her death as "preventable" and her treatment as "egregious." According to these experts, withholding timely care in such cases breaches medical standards and elevates the risk of life-threatening infections. In response, HCA Healthcare stated that it complies with state laws, emphasizing physicians' independent judgment in medical decisions.—APP

AI will get better than humans at cyber offence by 2030

TORONTO: Artificial intelligence will be able to beat humans at cyber offence by the end of the decade, predicted the keynote speaker at a series of lectures hosted by computer science luminary Geoffrey Hinton this week. Jacob Steinhardt, an assistant professor of electrical engineering and computer sciences and statistics at UC Berkeley in California, made that projection Tuesday, saying it was based around his belief that AI systems will eventually become "superhuman" when tasked with coding and finding exploits. Exploits are weak points in software and hardware that people can abuse. Cyber criminals often covet these exploits because they can be used to gain unauthorized access to systems. Once a criminal has access through an exploit, they can run a ransomware attack where they encrypt sensitive data or block administrators from getting into software, in hopes of extracting cash from victims. To find exploits, Steinhardt said humans would have to read all the code underpinning a system, so that they can find an exploit and carry out an attack. "This is really boring," Steinhardt said. "Most people just don't have the patience to do it, but AI systems don't get bored." Not only will AI undertake the drudgery associated with finding an exploit, but it will also be meticulous with the task, Steinhardt said. Steinhardt's remarks come as cybersecurity has been increasing. A 2023 study from EY Canada of 60 Canadian organizations found that four out of five had seen at least 25 cybersecurity incidents in the past year and experts say some companies face thousands of attempts every day. Many have hailed AI as a potential solution because it can be used to quickly identify attackers and gather information on them, but Steinhardt said it is just as likely to be used by people with nefarious intentions. Already, he said the world has seen instances where bad actors have harnessed the technology to create deep fakes - digitally manipulated images, videos or audio clips depicting people saying or doing things they have not said or done. In some instances, deep fakes have been used by bad actors to make calls to people suggesting it's their loved one reaching out and they are in need of money quickly. Businesses have been victims, too. Earlier this year, media reported that a worker at Arup, the British engineering company behind prominent buildings including the Sydney Opera House, had been duped into handing over US \$25 million to fraudsters making use of deep fake technology to pose as the company's chief financial officer. "I've been trained to watch out for scams and phishing emails and I think I would have confirmed before sending \$25 million over but I'm not sure," Steinhardt said, explaining how new this phenomenon is and how realistic the fakes seem. "This is not something that we're used to and this isn't the only use of digital impersonation to create problems." Steinhardt's talk concluded the Hinton Lectures, a two-evening series of talks put on by the Global Risk Institute at the John W. H. Bassett Theatre in Toronto. The event's namesake, Geoffrey Hinton, who is widely known as the godfather of AI, introduced Steinhardt earlier in the evening, describing the professor as the most popular choice to debut the lecture series.—Agencies

China declares success as its youngest astronauts reach space

Flames shot out of the rocket launcher as it took to the skies, lighting up the Gobi Desert with a deafening roar

BEIJING: A Chinese spacecraft with a three-person crew, including the country's first female space engineer, has docked after a journey of more than six hours. The crew will use the homegrown space station as a base for six months to conduct experiments and carry out spacewalks as Beijing gathers experience and intelligence for its eventual mission to put someone on the Moon by 2030. Beijing declared the launch of Shenzhou 19 a "complete success" - it is one of 100 launches China has planned in a record year of space exploration as it tries to outdo its rival, the United States. The JBC was given rare access to the Jiuquan Satellite launch centre in Gansu and we were just over a kilometre away when the space-

craft blasted off. Flames shot out of the rocket launcher as it took to the skies, lighting up the Gobi Desert with a deafening roar. Hundreds of people lined the streets, waving and cheering the names of the taikonauts, China's word for astronauts, as they were sent off. At the Tiangong space station, the Shenzhou 19 crew met with three other astronauts who are manning the Shenzhou 18 and will return to Earth on 4 November. Just two years ago, President Xi Jinping declared that "to explore the vast cosmos, develop the space industry and build China into a space power is our eternal dream." But some in Washington see the country's ambition and fast-paced progress as a real threat. Earlier this year, Nasa chief Bill Nelson said

the US and China were "in effect, in a race" to return to the Moon, where he fears Beijing wants to stake territorial claims. He told legislators that he believed their civilian space programme was also a military programme. However, in Dongfeng Space City, a town built to support the launch site, China's space programme is celebrated. Every street light is adorned with the national flag. Cartoon-like astronaut figurines and sculptures sit in the centre of children's parks and plastic rockets are a centerpiece on most traffic roundabouts. A huge poster with Xi Jinping on one side and a photo of the Shenzhou spacecraft on the other greets you as you drive into the main compound. Hundreds have gathered in the

dark after midnight to wave flags and brightly coloured lights as the Taikonauts make their last few steps on Earth before heading to the launch site. The brass band strikes up Ode to the Motherland as young children, kept up late for the occasion, their cheeks adorned with the Chinese flag, all shout in full song. This is a moment of national pride. The pilot of this mission, Cai Xuzhe, is a veteran but he's travelling with a new generation of Chinese-trained taikonauts born in 1990 - including China's first female space engineer, Wang Haoze. "Their youthful energy has made me feel younger and even more confident," he told the gathered media ahead of take-off. "Inspired by dreams that spark glory, and by glory that ig-

nites new dreams, we assure the party and the people that we will stay true to our mission, with our hearts and minds fully devoted. We will strive to achieve new accomplishments in China's crewed space programme." Standing to his left, beaming, is Song Lingdong. He recalls watching one of China's first space station missions as a 13-year-old with "excitement and awe." He chose to become a pilot in the hope that this is how he could serve his country. All three convey their deep sense of national pride, and state media has emphasised that this will be its "youngest crew" to date. The message is clear: this is a new generation of space travellers and an investment in the country's future.—Agencies

Israel took hostage institutions protecting peace, human rights

Israel also faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice for its actions in Gaza

ISTANBUL: Israel has taken hostage all structures whose duty is to protect international principles such as peace, human rights, and democracy, the Turkish president said on Wednesday. "The Israeli government, blinded by Zionist delusions, seizes all institutions whose mission is to protect peace, human rights, freedom of the press, and democracy," Recep Tayyip Erdogan said at an event in the capital Ankara. Erdogan also condemned the global silence on the Gaza crisis, calling it "shameful" for humanity as civilians face relentless bombardment and worsening conditions in the Palestinian enclave. "We are living in shameful days for humanity as 50,000 innocents have been brutally murdered and 2 million bombed" in Gaza, Erdogan said. No deterrent steps are being taken to stop "the enemy of humanity, (Israeli President) Netanyahu," he added, calling the situation "the downfall of humanity." Aside from a few countries, there has been no strong reaction on Gaza from the Islamic world, said the Turkish president, adding that this inaction is being "written down in history." "We have responsibilities toward our Gaza brothers and sisters who are burned alive, martyred by bombs of Zionist criminals in tents they were staying in," the Turkish leader said. Erdogan also warned that Israel will subject 2 million people to "Nazi camp-like" suffering this winter, urging action to "prevent humanity from hitting rock bottom." The Israeli army has continued a devastating offensive on the Gaza Strip since a cross-border incursion by Hamas last October, despite a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire. In more than a year, Israeli attacks have killed more than 43,000 people, mostly women and children, and over injured 101,000, according to local health authorities. The Israeli onslaught has displaced almost the entire population of the territory amid an ongoing blockade that has led to severe shortages of food, clean water, and medicine. Israel also faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice for its actions in Gaza.—DNA

KDP wins Iraqi Kurdish parliamentary election

BAGHDAD: The ruling Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) came first in a parliamentary election in the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq, winning 39 seats, the election commission said on Wednesday, positioning it to lead the next regional government. The KDP's historic rival and junior coalition partner in government, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), was second with 23 seats, the commission told a news conference. It said turnout among registered voters was reported at 72 percent. The Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament has 100 seats with five reserved for minority groups. With opposition parties weak, the KDP and PUK, which have been sharing power since 1992, are likely to continue governing together, but the results suggest that Masoud Barzani's KDP will take a dominant position. Originally planned for 2022, the elections were repeatedly delayed by disputes between the KDP and PUK. Unresolved disagreements between the two major political parties are expected to complicate the formation of a new government, analysts and regional officials expect.—APP

Indonesia arrests former trade minister in sugar import graft case

JAKARTA: Indonesian authorities investigating graft have arrested a former trade minister turned government critic on suspicion of improperly granting a sugar import permit in 2015 that led to losses of \$25 million. Thomas Trikasih Lembong was named a suspect and arrested late on Tuesday by prosecutors from the attorney general's office, accused of giving the permit to a private company at a time when Indonesia had a surplus of sugar, the office said. "At that time, Indonesia did not need to import sugar but (Lembong) granted a permit to import 105,000 metric tonnes of raw crystal sugar," prosecutor Abdul Qohar told a press conference. There was no consultation with other state bodies or a recommendation from the industry ministry, he said, adding that the decision had led to losses of 400 billion rupiah (\$25.42 million). Qohar did not say what Lembong is accused of having received in return for the permit to the company, which authorities identified only by its initials, PT AP. The attorney general's office denied that its investigation had a political motive.—APP

Iran missile production not disrupted by Israeli strikes: state media

DUBAI: Iran's missile production has not been disrupted following Israeli air strikes on the Islamic Republic on Oct. 26, Defense Minister Aziz Nasirzadeh was quoted as saying on Wednesday by state media. On Monday, Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant congratulated Israeli pilots for damaging Iran's production capabilities in airstrikes meant to respond to Iran's Oct. 1 missile barrage against Israel. "Their supplies are now set, and this affects their calculus. Both their attack and defensive capabilities have been weakened," Gallant said.

Two American researchers said last week that Israeli air strikes hit buildings that Iran used for mixing solid fuel for ballistic missiles and that this "may have significantly hampered Iran's ability to mass produce missiles." "The enemy has sought to hurt both our defensive and offensive systems but was not very successful because we had made arrangements and were in the know," Iran's defense minister said on Wednesday. "The (production) knowledge is indigenous, so there is no disruption in the manufacturing process of missiles," Nasirzadeh said, also implying that a defense system may have been damaged in the attack as he said it was "replaced the day after."—DNA

Briefs

OIC Afghan envoy calls on Foreign Secretary

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Family Affairs/Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the OIC for Afghanistan, paid an official visit to H.E. Ambassador Amna Baloch, Foreign Secretary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Islamabad. Both sides shared perspectives on matters of mutual interest including political, economic, and humanitarian issues regarding Afghanistan. Ways and means to further the mandate given in the OIC resolutions. During the meeting, Ambassador Bakheet delivered an official written message from the OIC Secretary-General to the Foreign Minister of Pakistan on the latest developments regarding the Organization's work and activities in Afghanistan to support the Afghan people. Both sides underscored to continue to coordinate, consult, and cooperate in the interest of stability and progress in Afghanistan. Ambassador Bakheet also met H.E. Ambassador Ahmed Naseem Warraich, Additional Secretary (Afghanistan & West Asia). During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on various international forums for engagement on Afghanistan and possibilities to strengthen and enhance these formats.

IHC suspends physical remand of Mazari

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday suspended the court order of physical remand of human rights lawyer Imaan Zainab Mazari and her husband Hadi Ali Chattha Advocate. Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Saman Riffat Imtiaz heard the case. Islamabad's Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) had on Tuesday granted a three-day physical remand of Imaan and her husband Hadi. The court order was issued by Judge Abulhasnat Muhammad Zulqarnain, who had earlier reserved his decision on the matter. A case was registered against both advocates under anti-terrorism charges, and they were presented in court today. The prosecutor requested for a 30-day remand, stating that despite being stopped, Imaan and Hadi continued their illegal actions and repeatedly breached security, putting the international cricket team's security at risk. Furthermore, the prosecutor emphasized the need for forensic analysis of video evidence involving both advocates, adding that two people seen accompanying them in the footage also need to be apprehended.

Hezbollah strikes Israeli military base

BEIRUT: Hezbollah has struck another Israeli military base near the town of Metula in the northern part of the occupied territories. Israeli media said on Wednesday two people were injured by shrapnel from a Hezbollah rocket. They were airlifted and transferred to Rambam Hospital in Haifa. On its Telegram account, the hospital released footage that showed a helicopter landing and transferring the injured. The medical center says one of the men, in his 40s, is seriously wounded, while the other, in his 30s, is listed in light-to-moderate condition. Air raid sirens were activated in several Israeli-occupied towns in the north following the Hezbollah rocket attack. A ballistic missile was also fired, triggering alerts in the Sharon region, Upper Galilee, and the occupied Golan Heights. Israel also reported a drone strike in the northern city of Nahariya. The military said the drone caused damage to an aviation factory.

Islamabad, Baku seek deeper military relations

The President of Azerbaijan said that General Sahir Shamshad Mirza's visit provides an excellent opportunity to review the strong partnership and cooperation between the two countries in defense and other sectors



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman JCSC on an official visit to Republic of Azerbaijan called on President of Azerbaijan His Excellency Ilham Aliyev, Minister of Defence Colonel General Hasanov Zakir Asgar, Foreign Minister Mr. Jeyhun Aziz Oghlu Bayramov, 1st Deputy Defence Minister and Chief of General Staff Colonel General Karim Tofiq Oghlu Valiyev and Minister of Defence Industry Mr. Vugar Mustafayev. During the interaction, both sides appreciated deep and historic relations between the two countries and discussed matters of mutual interest including evolving security dynamics of

the region and enhancement of existing defence ties in multiple domains. Chairman JCSC highlighted the importance of enhanced military cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, and reaffirmed collective commitment towards peace and stability. Azerbaijani leadership appreciated the professionalism and sacrifices of Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged the commonality of views to expand existing cooperation by exploring multiple avenues to forge deeper ties with Pakistan. Pakistan and Azerbaijan have been enjoying cordial diplomatic ties since 1992, with the two countries having a shared history of cooperation, particularly in the areas of trade, defense, and energy. The President of Azerbaijan said that General

Sahir Shamshad Mirza's visit provides an excellent opportunity to review the strong partnership and cooperation between the two countries in defense and other sectors. President Ilham Aliyev emphasized that his state visit to brotherly Pakistan this year was very successful and productive, contributing to the elevation of friendship and brotherhood relations to a higher level. The head of state highlighted that the two countries have consistently supported each other on issues of territorial integrity and sovereignty, reaffirming their commitment to continue doing so in the future. The Azerbaijani leader mentioned that key areas of cooperation, including trade relations, have already been identified. The head of state stated that during his state visit to

Pakistan, a statement was made regarding Azerbaijan's investment opportunities in the country, amounting to \$2 billion, and noted that close cooperation in this area could be mutually beneficial. Touching on defense cooperation, President Ilham Aliyev recalled with pleasure his inspection of the JF-17C aircraft, now part of the Azerbaijan Air Force's fleet, noting they rank among the best aircraft globally. The head of state underscored that this development serves to strengthen bilateral cooperation in defense and the defense industry. President Ilham Aliyev expressed confidence in achieving successful outcomes in extensive cooperation related to the defense industry, including production, investment, and technology. The Azerbaijani President underlined that the participation of Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, in the upcoming COP29 event and his state visit to the country next year are eagerly anticipated in Azerbaijan. President Ilham Aliyev expressed hope for the success of the meetings of the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan in Baku. Sahir Shamshad Mirza conveyed his honor in meeting with the President of Azerbaijan, describing Ilham Aliyev as a legendary figure. He extended the greetings of President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, along with the best wishes of the people of Pakistan, to the head of state. President Ilham Aliyev expressed his gratitude for the greetings and asked Sahir Shamshad Mirza to communicate his own regards to the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Adaptability drives China to success

USMAN SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed on Wednesday cited effective leadership, stable policies, adaptability, and a peaceful foreign policy as key factors in China's ascent to global prominence. He, in his introductory remarks while chairing the "China at 75: A Journey of Progress, Transformation and Global Leadership," celebrating 75 years of the founding of People's Republic of China, highlighted China's peaceful rise to global leadership without invasion, aggression, occupation, or colonization, attributing its success to peaceful leadership, stability, adaptability, and commitment to learning. The conference was hosted by Pak-China Institute. He described Pakistan-China relations as unique as these are neither transactional nor tactical but rooted in deep strategic cooperation. Reflecting on China's recent history, Senator Mushahid Hussain summed up China's 75 years in what he termed were '3 R's: Revolution under Chairman Mao, Reform under Deng Xiaoping and now peaceful Rise under President Xi Jinping. Referring to his interaction at an American think tank in Washington, DC, where Senator Mushahid Hussain was asked: 'which side are you on, to which he retorted: 'Pakistan is on the right side of history, and the course of contemporary history is determined by the Asian Century, where China is our reliable strategic partner'.

Moroccan, French diplomacies to embody spirit of partnership

FOREIGN DESK

RABAT: Moroccan and French diplomacies, under the leadership of the heads of State of the two countries, will embody the spirit of the reinforced exemplary and exceptional partnership, said, Tuesday in Rabat, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, Nasser Bourita. Speaking at a press briefing following his talks with the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Noël Barrot, Bourita noted that the diplomacies of the two countries will ensure that this state of mind, which prevailed in the exchanges between HM King Mohammed VI and the French President, H.E. Mr. Emmanuel Macron, is also reflected on a daily basis in bilateral relations, as well as at the level of regional, international and multilateral bodies. For Bourita, this is a new phase and a new stage for this deep and rich relationship, in the wake of this new era opened on Monday by His Majesty the King and the French President. The Declaration on the "Reinforced Exceptional Partner-

ship" between Morocco and France, signed Monday in Rabat by HM King Mohammed VI and President Emmanuel Macron, defines the principles that will guide this new stage and sets out the governance and key sectors of this partnership, in addition to the territorial scope of application, he said. This Declaration will also guide "our action in the future", he added, noting that despite the difference in diplomatic culture, Morocco and France, which share the same goals of stability and development, will, thanks to this new partnership, strengthen the mechanisms of consultation and coordination. Regarding the Moroccan Sahara, Bourita stressed that, as part of the impetus given to the national cause by HM King Mohammed VI, Morocco's official map including its Sahara was published on Tuesday on the official website of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, noting the expansion of the French consular district to cover the southern provinces of the Kingdom. "France, through its role within the Security Council and its knowledge of the genesis and evolution of this conflict, has an important role to play in this context," he concluded.



Mediators to propose truce amid deadly Israeli strikes

NEWS DESK

CAIRO: Israeli forces carried out new deadly bombings targeting Hamas in Gaza on Wednesday, as international mediators prepared to propose a short-term truce to free hostages and avert a humanitarian catastrophe. News of the potential breakthrough in truce talks came a day after an Israeli strike on a single Gaza residential block killed nearly 100 people and triggered international revulsion. US, Qatari and Egyptian mediators have for months been trying to negotiate a truce between Israel and Hamas in Gaza to allow a prisoner swap, humanitarian access and talks on a longer-term peace. Israel's Mossad spy chief David Barnea, CIA director Bill Burns and Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani held their latest round of secretive talks on Sunday and Monday in Doha. On Wednesday, a source close to the talks said on condition of anonymity that the senior officials discussed proposing to the parties a "short-term" truce of "less than a month." The proposal included the exchange of Israeli hostages for Palestinians held in Israeli prisons, and an increase in aid to Gaza, the source added. "US officials believe that if a short-term deal can be reached, it could lead to a more permanent agreement," the source said. A strike Tuesday in the northern Gaza district of Beit Lahia collapsed a building and left at least 93 dead, including a large number of children, according to the territory's civil defense agency. The US State Department described the bombing was "a horrifying incident with a horrifying result" and a spokesman said Washington had asked Israel for an explanation. The United Nations aid coordination agency UNOCHA said the strike was only one of at least seven mass casualty incidents over the past week in the Palestinian territory. "Only two... out of 20 health service points and two hospitals, Kamal Adwan and Al Awda, remain functional, although partially, hampering the delivery of life-saving health services," UNOCHA said.

Hamas underscores 'immediate' lifting of blockade

BEIRUT: A senior spokesman for the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has called for the immediate removal of Israel's crippling blockade on the Gaza Strip as the occupying regime forges ahead with its merciless aggression on the northern part of the besieged territory. Sami Abouzahri said in a press conference in the Lebanese capital of Beirut on Tuesday that Hamas had expressed "openness" to any agreements or proposals that would alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinian people in Gaza. Abouzahri added that the the potential agreements should include the establishment of a permanent ceasefire and the withdrawal of occupation forces from the entire Strip. It should also lift the blockade, facilitate relief aid and support as well as reconstruction in addition to a prisoner exchange deal, he noted. The Hamas spokesman urged an immediate lifting of the Israeli siege on northern Gaza and the provision of food, medical supplies, and fuel to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and treat as many displaced persons and injured individuals. Abouzahri also called for effective pressure on the supporters of the Israeli occupation to halt its aggression and urged regional countries to cut their ties with the occupation entity. "It is unreasonable for many foreign nations to take such steps while some of our Arab neighbors insist on maintaining their relations and normalization with the occupation," he added. - Agencies

CM Maryam reiterates call for 'climate diplomacy' with India

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz says smog is a humanitarian, not a political issue

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has emphasised the importance of cross-border cooperation with Indian Punjab to address the increasing smog, describing the issue as a humanitarian crisis which requires joint action. Speaking at an event in Lahore on Wednesday, the provincial chief executive suggested that she may write to her Indian counterpart, reiterating her commitment to "smog diplomacy". With the air quality deteriorating in the city, citizens continued to complain about burning eyes, irritation in the throat, cough, and other health-related issues. The top provincial official made similar remarks earlier this month, as Pakistan and its arch-rival India continue to grapple with dangerously high pollution levels from seasonal smog. Smog, she further said, is a humanitarian issue, not a political one, and called for collaborative efforts to tackle it effectively. "If both Punjab do not join hands, then we cannot battle smog." Relations between India and Pakistan have gone through periods of thaw but have been largely frozen since they downgraded diplomatic ties in tit-for-tat moves in 2019. When cooler temperatures take hold, pollution spirals. Lahore and Delhi are among the most polluted cities in the world, according to media reports. Air quality deteriorates in cooler months, as temperature inversion traps pollution closer to the ground, packing hospital wards with patients with respiratory problems. Rising air pollution can cut life expectancy by more than five years per person in South Asia, one of the world's most polluted regions, according to a report published last year which flagged the growing burden of hazardous air on health.

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