



No sustainable development can take place till tragedies like Gaza are perpetuated by the developed world

Defence Minister
Khawaja Asif

PM Shehbaz reaches UN to attend UNGA inaugural session

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif reached the United Nations headquarters to attend the inaugural session of the 79th UN General Assembly (UNGA) on Tuesday. Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Special Assistant to the PM Tariq Fatemi, and Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Munir Akram accompanied the PM.

Pakistan Army to continue steadfast support, technical assistance to LEAs against terrorism: COAS



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Tuesday during his visit to Wana, South Waziristan District emphasized that Pakistan Army would continue to provide steadfast support and technical assistance to law enforcement agencies (LEAs), particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Police, to enhance their capacity. The Army Chief visited Wana, South Waziristan District, where he received a comprehensive briefing on the prevailing security situation, ongoing counter-terrorism operations, and development initiatives, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. The COAS paid heartfelt tribute to the security forces and law enforcement agencies (LEAs) who have made ultimate sacrifices in the line of duty. The COAS also acknowledged the pivotal role of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in maintaining peace and advancing various projects under the South Waziristan Integrated Development Plan. He underscored Pakistan Army's dedication towards leveraging its resources for the prosperity and development of the people of KP. During his interaction with officers and troops, the COAS appreciated the high level of preparedness and exceptional morale to counter hostile threats. He reaffirmed Pakistan Army's unwavering commitment to thwarting the nefarious designs of hostile forces and their facilitators. Furthermore, the COAS expressed gratitude for the tribal elders' invaluable support in combating terrorism and their unwavering backing of Pakistan Army. Upon arrival, the COAS honoured the martyred by laying wreath at the Shuhada Monument. The COAS was warmly received at Wana by Commander Peshawar Corps. PR



NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets President of Maldives Dr. Mohamed Muizzu on the Sidelines of 79th Session of United Nations General Assembly.

Durable peace in the world not possible without permanent resolution of Palestine, Kashmir disputes: Tarar

NEW YORK: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Tuesday that durable peace in the world was not possible without permanent resolution of Palestine and Kashmir issues. Talking to media outside the United Nations General Assembly, he said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had raised both issues at all international fora. He said on Palestine issue, the PM had stated that war crimes were being committed in the area, genocide of armless Palestinians was being committed and the world should take notice and bring the perpetrator Israel to justice. He said the Prime Minister had also made clear that Pakistan wanted restoration of pre-1967 borders in which Jerusalem should be the capital of Palestine. "We want immediate ceasefire in Gaza and accountability of the aggressor Israel for war crimes and genocide being committed in Palestine", he remarked. Tarar said that Pakistan had dispatched humanitarian aid through ships and C130s. Moreover Pakistan had offered to give admission to Palestinian medical students in Pakistani institutions, so that they could complete their education without any hindrance. He said the Kashmir issue would figure in the Prime Minister's engagements in the United



Nations. Besides, he said climate change was a major issue for Pakistan which contributed only 2 per cent of the gas emissions but had to bear the brunt of adverse effects of the climate change. He said the UN secretary general had himself visited Pakistan and himself saw the impact of climate change in Pakistan due to heavy floods. He further said that Pakistan had also badly suffered in the war against terrorism and it was still suffering in this war launched by the western powers. The minister said that after 2018 Pakistan was isolated on foreign policy affairs as Pakistan's friends both in East and West were unhappy. He said now the warmth in relations with all friendly countries was restored and cooperation was showing surge.

He said that talks with the International Monetary Fund had been concluded and final endorsement was due shortly. He said there was also good news about Pakistan's economy and the world should come and invest in Pakistan to take advantage of its huge potential. He said that Bloomberg had termed the Pakistan stock market as an emerging stock market and Moody's and Fitch had upgraded its rating. He said there was good news that inflation had fallen to 9.6 per cent whereas exports have increased by 14 per cent. Information technology exports have touched the 3.1 billion mark and remittances have also shown an upward trend. He said that the entire world could share in the economic revival of Pakistan. To a question, he said that during the PM's visit, meetings will be held with doctors, bankers and representatives from other walks of life. Elaborating on Pakistan's isolation in the past, he said that during the PTI rule on the one hand China-Pakistan Economic Corridor was shut down and on the other the US was accused of toppling its government and even friendly countries in the Middle East were not happy with the foreign policy of the then regime. APP

7th Session of Joint Ministerial Commission between Pakistan & Belarus held in Islamabad



ISLAMABAD: The 7th Session of the Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) between Pakistan and Belarus was hosted by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, and co-chaired by Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan along with the Belarusian Minister for Energy Aleksei Kushnarenko. Before the plenary session, both co-chairs Mir Jam Kamal Khan and Aleksei Kushnarenko met one-to-one with each other in order to discuss the things regarding JMC. The session began by the opening remarks of Humair Karim, Special Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs, who congratulated both countries on the commencement of the JMC. Following this, the podium was passed to Jam Kamal and Aleksei Kushnarenko for their welcome address. The JMC commenced with high spirits from both sides and concluded with fruitful Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and strong commitments for future collaboration. In his welcome speech, Minister for Commerce Mir Jam Kamal Khan said that on the behalf of Government of Pakistan he extends a warm welcome to Minister Kushnarenko and the Belarusian delegation. He added that our collaboration represents a pivotal opportunity to strengthen bilateral trade and economic ties. He highlighted that the current bilateral trade volume between both countries indicated that there is significant potential for growth, especially in sectors like textiles and automotive manufacturing. In addition, he stated that we want to invite Belarusian investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan under the Special Investment Facilitation Council. He was quite optimistic that these discussions will lead to concrete outcomes and a prosperous partnership for both nations. In his closing remarks he said "I am thankful to Alexey Kushnarenko and Belarusian delegation. This session marked significant progress in trade, industry, agriculture, and education. I look forward to the 8th session in Minsk in 2025 and express gratitude for everyone's contributions." Belarusian Minister of Energy Aleksei Kushnarenko emphasized that the joint ministerial commission represents a potential game changer for the economies of both countries. He expressed his commitment to ensuring Belarus's cooperation with Pakistan across all sectors, highlighting the significance of this partnership. Kushnarenko suggested that the establishment of joint working groups would be a positive step forward, facilitating deeper collaboration and focused efforts on mutual interests. He commended Pakistan for its efforts in organizing the session of the Joint Ministerial Commission, noting that such initiatives are essential for strengthening bilateral ties.

Pak-China agreed for working together to complete mega projects



According to the details Minister for Communications, Privatization & Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan reached Beijing where an hour long discussions and meeting was held with Chinese Minister for Transport Mr. Li Xiaopeng who welcomed him warmly and expressed deep interest in Joint Ventures and working together for these important projects. In the meeting Public Private Partnership and other financial modalities were came under discussion. It is mentionable that missing links of CPEC projects will be completed which include Motorway from Sukkhar to Haider Abad and Karachi. Similarly, railway project of ML-1 Seaport to Multan and to Lahore, Karakrum Highway Thakot to Raikot and Highway of Kaghan Naran, Jhal Khand and Babusar Top will also be constructed. Abdul Aleem Khan thanked China for its cooperation and expressed hope that this International Conference on Transport will merge more benefits and development for Pakistan. Transport Minister of China Mr. Li Xiaopeng assured full cooperation from his Department for Pakistan in future, as well.

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China will work together for the completion of ML-1, M-6 and M-9 projects in order to strengthen trade and economic cooperation between both the countries. While 2nd Phase of KKH and construction of Kaghan Naran, Jhal Khand, Babusar Top and Tunnel till Karakrum Highway will also be constructed. The consensus to this effect was developed in a meeting between Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan and Transport Minister of China Li Xiaopeng during International Transport Conference, which was held at Beijing. Both the ministers held a detail discussion and agreed on 4 mega projects to be completed in Pakistan, said a press release.

Pakistan condemns in strongest terms, Israel's latest military aggression against Lebanon

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has condemned in the strongest possible terms, Israel's latest military aggression against Lebanon, massacring hundreds of civilians. According to a statement issued by Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch on Tuesday, this act of aggression against the Republic of Lebanon is a grave violation of the UN Charter and international law. It is a dangerous escalation that has further endangered peace and security in an already volatile region. Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that Pakistan reaffirms its full support for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and stands in solidarity with the people of Lebanon and for their right to live in peace and security. "We call upon the international community to take urgent steps to hold Israel to account for its alarming adventurism in the region and its acts of aggression and genocide" Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said. SABAH

Dr Musadik meets with officials of China National Offshore Oil Corporation



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Dr Musadik Malik on Monday met with officials from the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), a leading player in oil and gas exploration. According to a news release, both sides agreed on a roadmap for future investments. The Vice President of CNOOC said that Pakistan remains a priority for the company in its global cooperation efforts. Dr Musadik underscored Pakistan's growing energy needs and expressed confidence that joint efforts with CNOOC would enhance exploration activities to help meet the country's increasing energy demands.

Govt working on power sector to provide affordable energy to consumers: Awais

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari on Tuesday said that government is working on power sector to provide affordable electricity to the consumers. The general consumers would hear a good news regarding cheap electricity in next few months, he said while talking to a private television channel. The discussion was also being made with Independent Power Producers to bring improvement in the energy prices, he said. In reply to a question about high prices of electricity in Pakistan, he said high interest rates and devaluation in currency was the reason behind high prices. He, however said that all possible measures are being taken to reduce the burden on power consumers. APP

Pakistan proactive player in global Climate Dialogue, Action: Romina

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pre-COP 29 Stakeholders Conference on Climate Diplomacy and Cooperation to Enhance Ambition and Enable Action was held in Islamabad. Romina Khurshid Alam, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to implementing the National Climate Action Plan, aiming to mitigate climate disaster risks through collective efforts. She recognized the crucial role of the media and civil society, particularly the Centre for Climate Diplomacy, in advocating for climate justice.

Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov talked about his country's preparation for successful and inclusive COP29. He emphasized about initiatives that have been launched by COP29 Presidency to focus global attention and



accelerate climate action, including COP29 Truce Appeal. Dr. Zafar Jaspal highlighted the significant threat climate change poses to



human security and the critical role of science diplomacy. Senator Sitara Ayaz and Director General of Environment, Farzana Altaf, identified challenges in

policy implementation and offered guidelines for environmental protection. Bilal Anwar, CEO of NDMRF, underscored the importance of advocating for climate justice and financing, while also highlighting the need for public-private partnerships to drive innovative climate adaptation solutions. Umair Mufakir NYCCC shared key elements of Pakistan's national climate action plan.

Anna Munawwar Awan, President of the Centre for Climate Diplomacy, extended gratitude to the attendees for their valuable contributions. She proposed publishing a national policy framework on climate adaptation and resilience based on the insights gathered during the Pre-COP 29 discussions. The hybrid conference, attended by over 100 foreign ambassadors and dignitaries, marked a significant step forward in strengthening Pakistan's role in global climate diplomacy.

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Will Afghanistan learn from its past?

DR MUHAMMAD TARIQ

A country of stunning natural beauty, Afghanistan is the birthplace of men and women of exceptional brilliance. The Afghan women's contribution to nation-building is no less than that of Afghan men. While they upheld their traditional roles as mother, sister, and wife, when compulsions prompted them to step out of their homes, they valiantly defended their country. Making a flag out of the veil is a perpetual theme of Tappa, a genre of Pashto poetry.

Among the galaxies of women in the sky of Afghanistan, two stand head and shoulders above all: Nazo Tokhi and Malala of Maiwand. Tokhi was the mother of Afghan King Mirwais Khan from the Hotak tribe (a sub-tribe of Ghilzai from which Mullah Umar hailed). He drove the Iranians away from Kandahar, leading to the establishment of the Afghan Empire in Persia by his son, Mehmoed Khan. Besides being a poet of great literary merit, she fought battles and arbitrated between two warring tribes.

The second woman, Malala of Maiwand, was born 144 years after the death of Nazo Tokhi. Unlike Tokhi who was from a prominent family, Malala was born to a shepherd from the Nootzai tribe (of Hibatullah Akhunzada, the supreme leader of the Taliban). Her war cry in the battle, 'My sweet love', is believed to have led to the Afghans' victory against the British.

Making a flag out of the veil is a perpetual theme of Tappa, a genre of Pashto poetry

Her young death at the age of 19 in the Battle of Maiwand on July 27, 1880 carved her a place as the nation's sweetheart.

Well respected by Afghans, these two women are reverently called Ana, meaning 'grandmother'. The national anthem of Afghanistan, 'This is the Home of the Brave', speaks proudly of Afghanistan's glorious history and loudly about the invincibility of the Afghans.

Today's Afghanistan stays in the limelight not due to its stunning natural beauty and great past, shaped by its incredible women and extraordinary men, but due to negative news: denial of education to girls and banning women from the workplace, disdain for diversity, and concerns about sponsoring terrorism, etc.

Having celebrated three years of rule recently, the Afghan Taliban are grappling with myriads of problems, internally and externally. Some issues may not be in their hands, others may not appear on their priority list, and still others may run counter to their ideology. The challenges are enormous.

A few pertinent questions are: will the Afghan Taliban, in a reversal of Afghanistan's long past, continue to ignore the vibrant Afghan traditions deeply rooted in the country's history? Are they different from the Taliban of the 1990s, or are they just a repeat of the past? How long will they continue to ignore the nuances of the 21st century? Is holding back 50 per cent of the population out of the mainstream and denying fundamental rights of education to girls beyond the elementary level sustainable in the long run? Will they realize women's role in post-conflict nation-building? How long will Gen Z Taliban subscribe to the views of the old guard? Comparing the Afghanistan of 2024 to the Afghanistan of 2000, one would agree with Mark Twain that "History does not repeat itself, but it often rhymes". Despite many similarities between the two regimes, a detached point of view will show that after the August 15 takeover, the Taliban have trodden cautiously.

The cabinet now is relatively more pluralistic (though without a woman), with representation from different ethnic groups, including the Hazara community. The Afghan Taliban's outlook on sports (for men) is different this time: their leadership's jubilation over their team's victories in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup (played with the old republican flag) was a sharp departure from the previous sports-inimical regime.

Externally, they are more engaging and accessible to international media this time and seem to understand the power of social media. They understand the nuances of diplomacy and international cooperation. They are not as jingoistic as they used to be more than two decades earlier.

Keeping aside the conservative dimension of Afghan society, younger generation Afghans (including young Taliban) are not averse to new ideas. Afghanistan was one of the first Muslim countries to introduce reforms in the early 20s, especially in educational and cultural domains, under King Amanullah and Queen Soraya Tarzi. Denying girls the right to secondary and higher education and banning women from the workplace, a journey too far back in time to regression, is just not tenable.

There has been a growing realization among the Afghan Taliban, especially Gen Z Taliban, that they can't live in isolation. This realization is reflected in their present policies. Judging from Western perspectives, the Taliban's governance, democratic ideals, notions of pluralism, and women's rights record may not align with that of the Western world, but from Taliban standards, a tectonic shift is visible. Their earlier radical ideas have metamorphosed into more moderate beliefs, and the Taliban revolution appears to have reached its thermidor.

The exquisite voices of Nazo and Malala Anas cannot be relegated to the dustbin of history. The Taliban may have been successful in winning the guerrilla war, but in the battle of ideas in Afghanistan, which is more than a century old, pragmatism must win.

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Asghar Soomro

Vision for education

seeking ADB assistance for developing a mechanism to initiate a central education programme.

While the media's interpretation may have been speculative, the underlying suggestion – adapting best practices from successful international models – remains sound. In an increasingly interconnected world, there is considerable merit in drawing on global experiences and tailoring them to local needs.

Before delving into the merits and drawbacks of adopting the ULLAS scheme, it needs to be remembered that education is the sole domain of the provincial governments under Pakistan's constitutional framework. So this raises the question of why a federal official would be seeking ADB assistance for a programme that falls outside federal jurisdiction.

A National Education Task Force, headed by the prime minister and comprising 19 members, has been constituted to address national education issues. Yet, it is likely that none of these members have children studying in the very public schools for which they are tasked with formulating policies. Isn't this somewhat ironic? This disconnect between the ruling elite and the public education system may well be one of the contributing factors behind the persistent decline in the quality of education, as those in power often have little direct stake in the system they are meant to improve.

The PTI-led federal government had tried to introduce a Single National Curriculum. Education being a devolved subject to the provinces

under the constitution, does the federal government have the authority to take such initiatives? To clarify this matter, I sought the legal opinion of Barrister Zamir Ghumro, senator and former advocate general of Sindh. He explained, "The subject of education as well as higher education falls under provincial jurisdiction. Only standards in higher education are to be regulated by the Council of Common Interests (CCI) ...so any initiative on education should come from provinces, not the federal government."

As for the ULLAS scheme, its success will only become clear upon completion of its five-year period by 2027. For now, our discussion remains limited to its key features. With the ambitious goal of educating 50 million individuals aged 15 years and older, the schemes cover not only traditional foundational literacy and numeracy but also critical life skills such as financial literacy, digital literacy, healthcare and awareness, childcare and education, family welfare and vocational skill development.

Implementation relies on registered volunteers through an online platform, although training, orientation and workshops of volunteers are organized face-to-face. Registered volunteers will have access to online learning materials.

There is no doubt that if implemented in letter and spirit, the scheme holds significant potential to positively impact both individuals and communities. Pakistan too stands in dire need of a similar

robust programme to empower its disadvantaged and rural communities, enabling them to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the digital era.

While these skills are undoubtedly essential for survival in the modern era, the ULLAS scheme seems heavily focused on a market-oriented model of education, which largely prepares individuals as commodities to be sold in the labour market. Such a narrow approach lacks the broader, transformative vision needed to challenge pre-existing social and economic structures.

By moulding individuals to fit into predetermined roles, the scheme overlooks the pressing need to address deep-rooted inequalities tied to caste, gender, class, and ethnicity. For developing countries like India and Pakistan, any new education model must aspire to accomplish a higher and nobler purpose – one rooted in social justice.

This will require empowering individuals to challenge social, economic and political structures that perpetuate inequality and maintain the status quo. In this sense, education must not only equip individuals with adequate skills for the workforce but also play a key role in humanizing society, enabling individuals to understand both themselves and their society. It should foster the potential to transform both the individual and society at large.

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Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

Today in History

Pakistan

The British conceded separate electorates in the Government of India Act of 1909 which confirmed the Muslim League's position as an All-India party. Attempt for Hindu Muslim Unity The visible trend of the two major communities progressing in opposite directions caused deep concern to leaders of All-India stature. They struggled to bring the Congress and the Muslim League on one platform. Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948) was the leading figure among them. After the annulment of the partition of Bengal and the European Powers' aggressive designs against the Ottoman Empire and North Africa, the Muslims were receptive to the idea of collaboration with the Hindus against the British rulers.

The Congress Muslim League rapprochement was achieved at the Lucknow sessions of the two parties in 1916 and a joint scheme of reforms was adopted. In the Lucknow pact. As the scheme was commonly referred to, the Congress accepted the principle of separate electorates, and the Muslims, in return for 'weight age' to the Muslims of the Muslim minor-

ity provinces, agreed to surrender their thin majorities in the Punjab and Bengal. The post Lucknow Pact period witnessed Hindu Muslim amity and the two parties came to hold their annual sessions in the same city and passed resolutions of identical contents.

The Hindu Muslim unity reached its climax during the Khilafat and the Non-cooperation Movements. The Muslims, under the leadership of the Ali Brothers, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali, launched the historic Khilafat Movement after the First World War to protect the Ottoman Empire from dismemberment. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) linked the issue of Swaraj (self-government) with the Khilafat issue to associate the Hindus with the Movement. The ensuing Movement was the first countrywide popular movement.

Although the Movement failed in achieving its objectives, it had a far-reaching impact on the Muslims of South Asia. After a long time, they took united action on a purely Islamic issue which momentarily forged soli-

darity among them. It also produced a class of Muslim leaders experienced in organizing and mobilizing the public. This experience was of immense value to the Muslims later during the Pakistan Movement. The collapse of the Khilafat Movement was followed by a period of bitter Hindu Muslim antagonism. The Hindus organized two highly anti Muslim movements, the Shudhi and the Sangathan. The former movement was designed to convert Muslims to Hinduism and the latter was meant to create solidarity among the Hindus in the event of communal conflict. In retaliation, the Muslims sponsored the Tabligh and Tanzim organizations to counter the impact of the Shudhi and the Sangathan. In the 1920s, the frequency of communal riots was unprecedented. Several Hindu-Muslim unity conferences were held to remove the causes of conflict, but, it seemed nothing could mitigate the intensity of communalism. In the light of this situation, the Muslims revised their constitutional demands.

They now wanted preservation of their numerical majorities in the Punjab and

Bengal, separation of Sindh from Bombay, constitution of Balochistan as a separate province and introduction of constitutional reforms in the North-West Frontier Province.

It was partly to press these demands that one section of the All-India Muslim League cooperated with the statutory commission sent by the British Government under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon in 1927.

The other section of the League, which boycotted the Simon Commission for its all-White character, cooperated with the Nehru Committee, appointed by the All-Parties Conference, to draft a constitution for India. The Nehru Report had an extremely anti-Muslim bias and the Congress leadership's refusal to amend it disillusioned even the moderate Muslims.

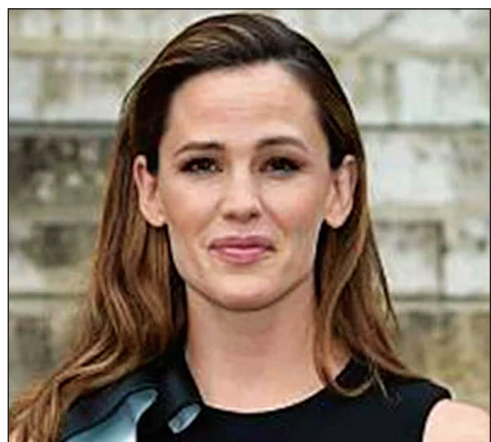
Several leaders and thinkers, having insight into the Hindu-Muslim question proposed separation of Muslim India. However, the most lucid exposition of the inner feeling of the Muslim community was given by Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938).

To be continued....

Showbiz

Jennifer Garner channels timeless parisian style with \$3K Dior tote

Jennifer Garner and John Miller's rekindled romance thrives after long break



Jennifer Garner was the epitome of Parisian chic as she stepped out in style during Paris Fashion Week on Tuesday. The Hollywood star turned heads, showcasing her fashion prowess with a stunning navy Dior tote bag worth \$3,050.

Garner wowed in an elegant navy ensemble, pairing a sophisticated buttoned jacket with tailored trousers for a sleek, polished look.

Completing her outfit with black heeled boots and dark shades, the Daredevil actress exuded confidence as her brunette hair was swept into a sleek low bun. Sipping on a takeaway coffee, Jennifer appeared in high spirits, graciously waving to onlookers as she departed her hotel, blending into the Paris fashion scene with her timeless style.

Jennifer Garner's stylish Parisian outing follows new reports about her long-term romance with businessman Miller.

According to sources, the 13 Going on 30 star is deeply in love with Miller, with the couple spending last weekend together while her ex-husband, Ben Affleck, took care of their children, Finn and Samuel. Their eldest, Violet, is now a freshman at Yale University. "They are serious," an insider revealed to People. "He's a co-parent too, and understands her priorities."

The source added that their relationship is "fun and easy-going" and that Garner is "very happy" with Miller.

Miller, an attorney and CEO of CaliBurger and its parent company CaliGroup, first connected with Garner in 2018, shortly after her divorce from Affleck was finalized.

Though the couple briefly split in 2020, with Garner confirming she was single in March 2021, they rekindled their romance in 2022.

Tech

Mark Zuckerberg to unveil latest upgrades, gadgets at Meta Connect 2024

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg plans to unveil new artificial intelligence features, smart glasses and "mixed reality" goggles at the company's Meta Connect event, scheduled to be held on Wednesday and Thursday this week. The two-day event will feature the 40-year-old tech billionaire, showing off his latest upgrades for his growing tech empire — which includes social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Messenger — ahead of Christmas.

These AI gadgets include Meta Quest headsets and smart glasses, featuring new upgrades to Meta's AI systems.

Meta calls it "a two-day event featuring the technologies of the future", according to the US Sun. According to the US Sun, the event is also aimed at developers and will feature an important keynote during which Zuckerberg will announce the gadgets and upgrades. Additionally, this keynote will be livestreamed from the heart of California's Silicon Valley. About the Meta Connect keynote, Meta said: "Join Meta Founder and

Meta CEO gives users a hint at what they may expect from his company's two-day AI event

CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, as he shares the latest developments in mixed reality, AI and wearables. "Hear how Meta is building towards the next computing platforms and get a first look at new products and features that will deliver the future of human connection." What to expect from Meta Connect 2024? At last year's Meta Connect, Zuckerberg showcased new AI Personas for WhatsApp and Instagram. This year's event may feature similar AI chatbot capabilities.

Additionally, the next-gen versions of the company's major gadgets are likely to be unveiled at the two-day event, including the more affordable Meta Quest 3S headset. However, a release date for the Meta Quest 4 has not been announced yet.

Health

Rethinking Pain Relief: The Surprising Truth About Dopamine and Placebos

Researchers have shown that dopamine does not directly cause the development of positive treatment expectations or placebo analgesia in pain management. The study used a double-blind, placebo-controlled trial with medications that alter dopamine levels, finding no significant influence of dopamine on the effectiveness of placebo treatments. These findings suggest the need for a more nuanced understanding of the neurobiological basis of placebo effects and could guide future research toward optimizing medical treatments. New findings argue against a direct causal role for dopamine during the experience of a treatment effect in the establishment of positive treatment expectations and placebo analgesia in healthy volunteers. This is according to a research study published September 24th in the open-access journal PLOS Biology by Ulrike Bingel from University

Hospital Essen, Germany, and colleagues. Dopamine-based reward and learning mechanisms have been suggested to contribute to placebo effects.

However, the exact role of the brain messenger molecule dopamine in their generation and maintenance is still unclear. To fill this knowledge gap, Bingel and colleagues examined the causal role of dopamine in expecting positive treatment effects, as well as the magnitude and duration of their effects on pain.

To this end, they used an established placebo pain relief paradigm in combination with two opposing medications to change dopamine levels in the brain, i.e., the dopamine antagonist sulpiride, the dopamine precursor L-dopa, and an inactive pill with no medication as control, which were applied in an experimental, double-blind, random-

ized, placebo-controlled trial involving 168 healthy volunteers. The study medication successfully altered dopaminergic tone during the conditioning procedure. Contrary to the hypothesis, the medication did not modulate the formation of positive treatment expectation and placebo analgesia tested one day later. Placebo analgesia was no longer detectable on day eight after conditioning. Overall, the data provided strong evidence against a direct dopaminergic influence on the generation and maintenance of placebo effects.

The results suggest that, while dopamine is evidently not necessary for establishing placebo analgesia, certain dopamine-dependent dimensions of reward processing which are more linked to active agency and motivational aspects may still interact with the pain experience. In addition,

the results contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the neurobiology underpinning placebo analgesia, which aids the characterization of the intricate interplay between cognition, neurochemistry, and treatment outcome.

According to the authors, further exploration of the neurochemical mechanisms underlying placebo analgesia remains paramount in the quest to exploit these effects for optimal treatment outcomes. In particular, future efforts to advance the understanding of dopaminergic mechanisms for modulating treatment response in pain must consider the undoubtedly complex involvement of dopaminergic neurotransmission in pain and its modulation. The authors add, "Our research is driven by the motivation to target the underlying mechanisms of placebo effects to make active medical treatments more effective."



Steering Committee decides to finalize NEV policy

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Tuesday chaired the maiden meeting of the Steering Committee on Electric Vehicles that decided to finalize the National Electric Vehicle (NEV) within one month.

The policy is aimed at promoting local manufacturing and early adoption of EV including new energy vehicles (NEVs) to ensure a sustainable transport system in the country.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Minister for Energy Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari, Secretary Industries and Production Saif Anjum, and senior officers from relevant ministries and departments, said a news release.

Chairing the meeting, the minister stressed that the new policy should promote energy efficiency and transition to clean technologies in the automotive sector. During the meeting, all the stakeholders presented their proposals. The next meeting is scheduled to be held next week. DNA

JI to hold countrywide protests against high power cost on Sept 29: Hafiz Naeem

LAHORE: Emir Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Hafiz Naeem Rehman on Tuesday said that the party will hold countrywide protest demonstrations against increase electricity costs and the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) on September 29.

Addressing a press conference in Lahore, he said that IPP have received Rs 2,000 to 2,400 billion annually since 2000 while the salaries class was burdened with fuel price adjustments and TV taxes in electricity bills. On the other hand, Hafiz Naeem Rehman said that landlords and IPPs enjoy tax exemptions.

The current system cannot be overlooked as it was struggle for rights of 250 million people and for personal gain, he added.

The JI leader also recalled the 13-day sit-in held in Rawalpindi during which the government agreed to demands in front of the nation but failed to fulfill its promise of conducting a forensic audit of IPPs. "Today is the 46th day, and nothing has been done," he said, reiterating the plan for mass protests on Sept 29. Hafiz Naeem further mentioned that their membership campaign continues to gain momentum, and sit-ins are planned on major highways. He urged the government to refrain from actions that might disrupt democratic processes and vowed to escalate the "Give Rights to the People" movement into a new phase of resistance.

He also noted support from traders and stated that a referendum will be held from October 23 to 27 to decide whether people should continue paying electricity bills, given the substantial payments already made under capacity charges. The JI chief warned that the referendum will be historic and could lead to further action, including a wheel-jam strike or even a million march, possibly escalating into a long march towards Islamabad if the government does not address IPP issues. INP



ISLAMABAD: The Chairperson Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Rubina Khalid, called on the President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

No sustainable development can take place till tragedies like Gaza are perpetuated by the developed world: Khawaja Asif

Says we must bridge the North-South divide & prevent an East-West fragmentation of the digital space

NEW YORK: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that no sustainable development can take place till tragedies like Gaza are perpetuated by the developed world. Addressing the UN's Summit of the Future in New York, Khawaja Asif called for ensuring global economic equity by improving the representation of developing countries in international financial institutions, reviewing the sovereign debt architecture to make it more equitable and adopting an equitable international tax regime.

He said reforming the World Trade Organization will serve as a vehicle for export expansion and development, through preferential treatment for developing countries and avoidance of new environmental protectionism. The Defence Minister said the adoption of the United Nation's Pact for the Future is an expression of the international community's collective determination to respond to global challenges, and called for upholding the commitments made in the game-changing document.

Khawaja Asif said that the adoption of the "Pact for the Future" is an expression of our collective determination to respond to the global challenges of security and development that threaten the present and future generations. He said that for the over 100 developing coun-



tries, the Pact offers an opportunity to revitalise development and to reform the unequal international financial and economic system. He said that the Pact will be transformative only if we translate the commitments undertaken into concrete action. He said that to bridge the \$4 trillion SDG financing gap, we must:

- Fulfill the longstanding ODA commitments;
- implement the Secretary General's SDG Stimulus proposal;
- rechannel 50% of the unused 2021 allocation of SDRs;
- Deliver a bigger, better and more ambi-

tious IDA by ensuring a robust \$100 billion replenishment in December this year;

- enlarge lending by the multilateral development banks; and
 - lower borrowing costs for developing countries.
 - improve the representation of developing countries in international financial institutions;
 - review the sovereign debt architecture to make it more equitable;
 - adopt an equitable international tax regime; and
 - reform the WTO to serve as a vehicle for export expansion and development, through preferential treatment for developing countries and avoidance of new environmental protectionism.
- Khawaja Asif said that the UN, by virtue of its universal membership and mandate, remains an indispensable platform to propel and monitor implementation of these commitments. Khawaja Asif said that bridging the digital divide is key for an equitable future. Pakistan welcomes the outcomes of the Global Digital Compact in this regard. We must bridge the North-South divide and prevent an East-West fragmentation of the digital space. We must ensure equitable data governance. And, we must capture and control the power of Artificial Intelligence, Khawaja Asif said. SABAH

PM Shehbaz felicitates Dr. Harini Amarasuriya on assuming office as the new PM of Sri Lanka

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has felicitated Dr. Harini Amarasuriya on assuming office as the new Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. In a statement on social media platform X, PM Shehbaz Sharif wished her all the success. PM Shehbaz Sharif also expressed the confidence that the multi-faceted cooperation between Pakistan and Sri Lanka will grow during her tenure.

Zardari underlines importance of newspapers in supporting democracy, human rights

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday called on newspapers to champion democratic values, raise awareness of socio-economic issues, and promote tolerance, interfaith harmony, patriotism, and respect for human rights.

The president, in his message on the National Newspaper Readership Day being observed on Wednesday (September 25), urged newspapers to play their role in promoting moral, ethical, and democratic values in the society.

He further asked the newspapers to educate the people about socio-economic issues as well as promote tolerance, inter-faith harmony, patriotism, civic responsibility, and respect for human rights.

Extending heartfelt congratulations to the All-Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) on the National Newspaper Readership Day, Zardari emphasized that newspapers were vital for raising political awareness, informing citizens about their rights and responsibilities, and aiding them in making informed decisions.

"In today's fast-paced digital age, where misinformation and fake news can go viral rapidly, the role of newspapers has become even more critical. Newspapers need to provide accurate and well-researched news to discourage fake news by using modern information technology. Their role in promoting facts over sensationalism is essential to counter the spread of false information," he stressed.

A responsible press, President Zardari said, "upholds the highest standards of accuracy, fairness and balance in reporting news. A responsible press not only provides a platform for marginalized voices to be heard but also generates healthy discussion among the stakeholders on important issues. It is, therefore, imperative that the press must play a constructive role in guiding and educating the people on important issues."

The president said on the day, it was vital to reaffirm support for a free and responsible press, which was essential for the proper functioning of democracy and for influencing public opinion on both national and international matters. APP

CM Maryam Directs to Complete Codal Formalities to Establish PERA

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed to complete the legal process for the establishment of Punjab Enforcement & Regulatory Authority (PERA) as soon as possible. In a special meeting presided over by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a detailed briefing was given about progress being made on the establishment of Punjab Enforcement Regulatory Authority.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "Our determination to save the people of Punjab from inflation is unwavering. The establishment of a competent authority is indispensable for the elimination of artificial inflation and hoarding. We are introducing structural reforms in every sector. Encroachments cannot be allowed in streets and markets."

It was apprised during the briefing that Punjab Enforcement Regulatory Authorities will be established at the provincial, divisional, district and tehsil levels. A District Enforcement Regulatory Board will be established in every board.

The Sub-Divisional Enforcement Officer at the Tehsil level will ensure the enforcement of the law. The Hearing Officer will hear the appeal at the Tehsil level and give a decision. The Punjab Enforcement Regulatory Authority will play an effective role to curb inflation.

In the tehsils, 40 officials including Enforcement Officers will monitor the prices of consumer goods and undertake stern action in this regard. Undertaking effective action against profiteers will be made possible on receiving public complaints. The Enforcement Officer will continue to take action for the permanent removal of illegal encroachments at the tehsil level. A timeline will be set for decision at the tehsil level at the four appellate forums. Streets and markets will be widened by removing movable encroachments.

Senator Pervez Rasheed, Senior Minister Maryam Aurangzeb, Chief Secretary, Chairman P&D, IGP, Home Secretary, CCPO and other relevant officials were also present.

Pakistan invites Belarus to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has invited Belarusian investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan through the Special Investment Facilitation Council, assuring them of a secure investment environment.

The invitation to this effect came at a meeting between Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema and Belarusian Minister for Energy Aleksei Kushnarenko in Islamabad on Tuesday.

On this occasion, Ahad Cheema expressed his gratitude to Minister Kushnarenko for participating in the 7th Session of the Joint Ministerial Commission, emphasizing Pakistan's commitment to implementing the decisions made during the session.

The Minister highlighted the advantages of Belarusian agricultural technology for Pakistan's agriculture-dependent economy and welcomed the Belarusian delegation's assurance of full support in this sector.

The Belarusian delegates offered electric buses to Pakistan. Minister Ahad Cheema responded positively, expressing keen interest in the project, which aligns with Pakistan's goals for sustainable transport solutions.

Rana Mashhood declares Balochistan's rising star Shahzaib a national hero

QUETTA: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP), Rana Mashhood has declared Balochistan's rising star athlete Shahzaib Rind as national hero.

"Every Pakistani is pride of Shahzaib's victory in World Karate Champion."

These views were expressed by him on Tuesday while addressing a ceremony held at Balochistan University of Information Technology Engineering and Management Sciences (BUITEMS) in connection with acknowledging the national heroes.

Rana Mashhood while lauding the victory of Shahzaib Rind said that the youth of Balochistan are so talented to represent Pakistan globally. He said, "Shahzaib is Pakistan's hero as his tireless efforts brought title of World Karate Champion to Pakistan." The youth of Balochistan has immense talent, if they get a chance, they can represent Pakistan in the world.

"I visited Balochistan before and met the youth, and I was impressed by these youths, he said lauding that the girl who made the logo of the National Volunteer Corps belongs to Quetta's Sariab Road, which is yet another big achievement for the province.

Just like Arshad Nadeem, Balochistan's rising star Shahzaib Rind would be invited to Prime Minister House as soon as the Prime Minister Mohammad Shehbaz Sharif returns to Pakistan from his official visit to the USA. Chairman Youth Program noted that 3 Danish schools are being opened in Balochistan to promote education.

Earlier, Shahzeb Rind while addressing the event said that the world title is an honour not only for Pakistan but for Balochistan as he started his career from a small club. He said that he was lucky that he played in such a big league in America. It was my dream that I could open the way for the youth. INP

Senate Committee directs PWD to transfer possession of Constantia Lodge

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works convened on Tuesday at the Parliament House under the chairmanship of Senator Nasir Mehmood. Participants included Senators Bilal Ahmed Khan, Muhammad Aslam Abro, Raja Nasir Abbass, Saifullah Sarwar Khan Nyazee, Husna Bano, Saifullah Abro, and Senator Hidayatullah Khan. Senior officials of related departments were also in attendance.

The committee addressed agenda items, examining the jurisdiction, mechanisms, and processes for implementing the Building Code of Pakistan 2021, including the Seismic Provisions of 2007 and environmental protection measures nationwide. It was noted that the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) oversees the building code and that notifications are issued by the Ministry of Science and Technology. The code establishes minimum standards for building safety, structural integrity, and sustainability. Provinces can modify specific provisions to address regional characteristics, such as seismic risks and climate conditions. Local planning departments evaluate submitted plans for compliance with structural and environmental standards, often involving expert consultants.

Senator Bilal Ahmed raised concerns that the involvement of consultants and contractors could lead to fraud and urged the need for clearly specified authorizations. It was revealed that approximately 90% of buildings do not conform to approved structures. The committee highlighted that while the

Building Code of Pakistan 2022 provides a framework for safe, sustainable, and environmentally responsible construction, it lacks the authority to approve building plans or monitor construction; these powers rest with local departments. The committee emphasized that the building code should reflect geographic needs and preserve national heritage, directing that the Capital Development Authority (CDA) be called to provide a briefing on building construction approvals.

In another agenda item, the committee reviewed the status of efforts to reclaim Pakistan Public Works Department (PWD) land at Kashmir Point, Murree, which has been illegally occupied by the District Administration. The PWD reported that a meeting with the Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) clarified that the land is in PWD's possession, requiring demarcation for resolution. The committee was informed that legal actions regarding claims by the heirs of the land's original founder are being vigorously pursued. The chairman directed the PWD to facilitate the demarcation process and transfer possession of the Constatia Lodge to the ministry, as well as to resolve all related issues.

The committee also received a detailed presentation on the Skyline Apartment project, the new Islamabad airport, and the Sky Garden housing scheme, including updates on the mobilization advance recovered from a defunct contractor. The Skyline Apartments project is planned on 225 kanals of land, consisting of 30 blocks and 3,945 apartments, with

the FGE Housing Authority and joint venture partners holding respective shares of 90% and 10%. The total project cost is estimated at PKR 27.61 billion, with construction costs at PKR 23.78 billion. Work has been stalled since April 2023 due to unprecedented price hikes, leading to a default by the contractor. Committees have been formed to revive the project and reassess pricing.

A briefing on the Sky Garden housing scheme indicated that a land-sharing joint venture agreement was signed between FGEHA and M/S Commoners Sky Garden (CSG) for approximately 11,000 kanals. The project, initiated in 2019, was halted due to a NAB inquiry regarding land encroachment. Following advocacy from FGEHA, NAB issued an NOC, allowing development to proceed on a clear 1,986 kanals of land in Mouza Karthar for the first phase. The committee also discussed the mobilization advance of PKR 716,243,408 owed to M/S HRK, with PKR 14,380,721 recovered in interim payment certificates, leaving a net outstanding balance of PKR 701,862,687. Additionally, the committee reviewed the contractor's assets, totaling PKR 637,495,606.

Regarding actions taken by FGEHA, it was reported that the case has been referred to the FIA. Liquidation of the performance security bond is in process with United Insurance Company Limited, and legal action is being initiated against UICL. The committee directed that the Deputy Commissioner of Murree and the Commissioner of Rawalpindi be summoned for an update on the matter. SABAH



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan, H.E. Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam called on Chairman Federal Board of Revenue, Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial at FBR Headquarters.

Formation of the constitutional court is compulsory & his party will ensure its formation come what may: Bilawal

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has categorically said that the formation of the constitutional court is compulsory and his party will ensure its formation come what may.

Addressing the Sindh High Court Bar Association on Tuesday, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that 19th constitutional amendment was introduced under duress "following a threat from the Supreme Court". "The judicial reforms would be undertaken in line with the Charter of Democracy (COD) come what may," he vowed. Bilawal Bhutto continued that the parliament had replaced the judges' appointment procedure with a globally recognised law via 18th amendment. "In the United States, entire parliament decides on the appointment of judges that

is why martial law is never imposed in the US," he added.

Terming the ex-premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's death sentence a "judicial murder", Bilawal Bhutto said that it was "necessary and also our compulsion" to establish a constitutional court so no other prime minister could be executed and justice would be served to the people. He came down hard on military rulers and said that her mother Benazir Bhutto had seen the military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq's era in which all political workers went through brutal torture.

The politico recalled: "Shaheed Benazir knew that our system was broken. At that time, [former chief justice] Iftikhar Chaudhry was not a revolutionary but a PCO judge."