



All Pakistani nationals were safe in Syria and had been advised to exercise caution. "We are closely monitoring the evolving situation in Syria"

*FO Spokesperson
Mumtaz Zahra*

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Founder of PTI has no future: Attaullah Tarar



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has said the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has no future, and ensuring protection of minorities' rights remains the government's foremost priority.

Speaking at a Christmas cake-cutting ceremony at the Bihar Colony church ground here on Sunday, he criticised the PTI's failed plans to storm Islamabad. He also declared that the country's economy was now on the right track and that any attempts at a civil disobedience movement would fail miserably.

He stressed that the PTI and its leader's politics of chaos and violence had been rejected by people, adding that the party had no interest in addressing public issues and had only promoted a culture of unrest and destruction. "The PTI's attempt to stage a sit-in in Islamabad failed badly, and now they are threatening a civil disobedience movement, which, like their past propaganda, will flop," he added.

Tarar also extended heartfelt Christmas wishes to the Christian community, pledging to stand with them in their joys and sorrows. "A magnificent Christmas tree will be installed in this area, and I will personally come to light it," he said, lauding the sacrifices and contributions of minorities in Pakistan's creation and progress. He highlighted the roles of notable figures such as

Haroon William, who sacrificed his life for the nation while serving in the Pakistan Army, and Cecil Chaudhry, who represented Pakistan internationally. "The Christian community has produced some of the world's best fighter pilots, and like all communities, they have contributed significantly to Pakistan's development," he added. The minister reaffirmed his commitment to raising his voice for minorities' rights and standing against any form of oppression or violence.

About the economic situation, Attaullah Tarar praised the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, stating that positive government policies had put the economy on the right track. "Foreign exchange reserves have increased, inflation is now below 4pc, and foreign investors are showing interest in Pakistan, which will reduce unemployment and boost exports," he noted. He also assured his constituency's residents of his dedication to their well-being, recalling that their votes had made him an MNA and a federal minister. "I always introduce myself as belonging to this constituency, home to 70,000 Christians," he shared.

Responding to a question about PTI's allegations, he dismissed them as baseless and called PTI's founder's actions shameful. "People want employment, electricity, and gas, not chaos and unrest," he said.

Regarding the National Action Plan, Tarar confirmed its implementation and criticised the KP government for its lack of seriousness in maintaining law and order. He concluded by appreciating the Pakistan Army's sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, reiterating the need for collective efforts to safeguard and develop the nation. APP

Daniyal Chaudhry strongly condemns PTI's human shield tactics against state

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry Sunday vehemently demanded accountability for the masterminds behind May 9 and November 26 incidents, strongly condemning the ruthless use of innocent Pakhtunkhwa's youth as human shields against the state.

In an Interview with a private news channel, Daniyal Chaudhry strongly condemned the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party for putting innocent lives at risk.

Chaudhry refuted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s allegations of widespread killings, emphasizing that no weapons were used. He slammed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for their actions, which have caused harm to innocent civilians.

Responding to a query, Daniyal stated that the authorities had designated the Sinjrani spot as the official location for the protest, providing all necessary facilities.

However, the protesters chose to disregard the law, creating chaos and instability in the area, he said, adding that they eventually launched an attack on Islamabad, which raised serious concerns about public safety and security.

According to Daniyal, the protesters' actions were unjustified and unacceptable and the authorities were forced to take measures to restore order and maintain stability in the capital city.

To another question about negotiation with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), he said that we have always been open to negotiations with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), but unfortunately, they have consistently backtracked on their stance.

"Furthermore, it is regrettable that they resort to politicizing tragic events, spreading misinformation to the international media and engaging in false propaganda that ultimately harms the country's image".



LAHORE: Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi called on PM Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

PM Shehbaz praises Mohsin Naqvi's principled stance on the Champions Trophy

PM urges people to play role in ensuring a corruption-free future

VOM Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with Federal Interior Minister and PCB Chairman Senator Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi to review progress on the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy. During the meeting, the PCB chairman briefed the prime minister on developments regarding the tournament.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif praised Naqvi's principled stance on the Champions Trophy and expressed full confidence in his leadership. "Your position on the Champions Trophy represents the voice of every Pakistani," said the prime minister, adding, "You have represented the sentiments of 240 million Pakistanis at the ICC. Pakistan's honor comes first, above everything else."

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi affirmed the board's readiness to host the tournament in Pakistan, assuring that all necessary preparations are underway. "We are fully committed to making the Champions Trophy a success for Pakistan and cricket," Mohsin Naqvi stated.

The interior minister expressed optimism, saying, "InshaAllah, we will have good news regarding the Champions Trophy soon."

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed the government's commitment to root out corruption at every level, urging the people to play their role in the government's quest for a corruption-free future.

"On this International Anti-Corruption Day, let us stand together, united in our resolve to build a Pakistan where public resources are utilized efficiently for the welfare of our people," the prime minister said in a message.

"Let us work together for a future where the rule of law prevails and where accountability is the bedrock for all", he said.

He said the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and other law enforcement agencies were working tirelessly to ensure that those who misuse power and rob the hard-earned public revenues face the consequences of their actions. "We recognize the hard work of our institutions and stand with them in this important task to root out corruption from society", he added.

He highlighted that the 9th of December marked the International Anti-Corruption Day, a reminder of the global efforts to confront one of the greatest challenges facing our societies — corruption. "This year's theme "Uniting with Youth Against Corruption: Shaping Tomorrow's Integrity" rightly highlights the important role that our youth can play in the

fight against corruption. Our younger generation deserves a future where they can thrive free from corruption," he added.

Today, he said Pakistan joined the international community to renew its commitment to transparency, integrity, and accountability for now and for future generations.

He emphasized that corruption was a corrosive element that undermined economic development and destroys the social fabric of societies. "It robs nations of their potential and prevents people from enjoying the benefits of fair governance and equal opportunities. It also distorts public services, diverts resources meant for development, and perpetuates inequality that impacts the lives of ordinary citizens. Corruption is therefore a major reason for distrust between the governments and its citizens," he remarked.

However, he said the government alone could not win the fight against corruption. He said that it required the collective effort of every citizen, every community and every institution.

He also urged the media to play an active role in exposing malpractices. "This day demands active participation from all who believe in justice and integrity. Each one of us must take responsibility for building a transparent and accountable society," he added.

We are closely monitoring the evolving situation in Syria, says FO Spokesperson

Says Pakistan has always supported unity, sovereignty & territorial integrity of Syria & there is no change in our principled position

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch has said that we are closely monitoring the evolving situation in Syria.

In a statement issued on Sunday, FO spokesperson said that Pakistan has always supported unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria, and there is no change in our principled position. She said that Pakistani nationals are safe in Syria and have been advised to exercise caution. The Embassy of Pakistan in Syria is open for support and advice.

As of now Damascus Airport is closed. Our embassy remains in contact with stranded Pakistani nationals including Zaireen. It will facilitate their return once the airport opens. SABAH

CM reaches China on 8-day official visit

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif arrived in Beijing on her 8-day China visit.

She was accorded a warm reception at the Beijing airport upon her arrival. Six senior officials of the Communist Party of China were present at the airport to welcome her. Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi and his wife also welcomed her.

A high-level delegation of the Communist Party of China called on the CM. The head of the Chinese delegation, Lin Tao, thanked CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif and her delegation upon their arrival and welcomed them. The Chief Minister said, "Pak-China friendship is moving towards greater heights. We want to take Punjab to economic and financial heights with the cooperation of China. On behalf of the Punjab government and the people of Punjab, I would like to extend my gratitude to the people of China."

Deputy Director General of the Communist Party of China Lin Tao, Consular South Asian Affairs Mrs. Li Zhenyao, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Southeast Chen Zhenbo, South Asian



Affairs Attaché, Seng Guoyu and Miss Chen Yubo and Miss Zhou Chenyu accorded her a warm reception. Other officers of the Pakistan's embassy were also present at the airport. Senator Pervaz Rashid, Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister for Information and Culture Azma Zahid Bokhari, Provincial Ministers Bilal Akbar, Ashiq Kirmani and others accompanied her.

The official engagements of CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif's 8-day visit will commence tomorrow. She will pay a visit to hospitals, schools and other institutions in China.

Aroma of Rwandan coffee spread in PFOWA, MOFA Charity Bazaar's atmosphere

ISLAMABAD: The aroma of Rwandan coffee filled the air at the Foreign Office Charity Bazaar, organized by the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday.

High Commissioner Rwandan, Fatou Harerimana was present at the Rwandan stall at the PFOWA Charity Bazaar, welcoming diplomats and the public including students and youngsters with her smile. Aroma of Rwandan coffee spread in PFOWA, MOFA Charity Bazaar's atmosphereThe Rwandan ambassador's stall was constantly active with the echos, "Ma'am one more cup please". The ambassador along

with her staff continued to serve coffee to those who came to the stall whereas, diplomats and attendees enjoyed coffee sips.

Talking to APP, High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan Fatou Harerimana said that she was very happy with the popularity of Rwandan coffee at the PFOWA Charity Stall and she had no idea that the people of Pakistan would be so fond of their coffee.

She said that Rwandan coffee is popular all over the world and there are many consumers of Rwandan coffee, especially in Canada and the Northern world countries.Aroma of Rwandan coffee spread in PFOWA, MOFA Char-



ity Bazaar's atmosphereThe high commissioner said that Pakistan is a lively nation and since this morning, different groups of young people have been coming to stall and enjoying the coffee. "We would soon launch a campaign at the public and business level to introduce Rwandan coffee in Islamabad as the people of Pakistan are fond of Rwandan coffee", she highlighted.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan and Foreign Minister, Muhammad Ishaq Dar visited the Rwandan stall at the PFOWA, Bazaar and praised Rwandan Coffee. He indicated the need to further expand economic and trade relations between Pakistan and

Rwanda to strengthen bilateral relations.

He congratulated the Rwandan, High Commissioner of Rwanda, Fatima Harerimana for setting up such an excellent stall and expressed his full support for such activities in the future. The deputy prime minister said the bazaar provided a great opportunity for the people of Twins Cities to have a glimpse of the rich culture of different countries, including Rwanda through their food and beverages.

He said that the theme of the event was "Joining hands, joining hearts", which enhanced Socio-Cultural integration between the different countries.

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Lebanon ceasefire: Back to the future, but is it a better one?

YOSSI MEKELBERG

The ink has barely dried on the ceasefire agreement to end the war in Lebanon and both sides have already violated it, blaming each other for initiating these violations. These might be teething problems — after all, old habits die hard — or a way of sending early warnings that this time no hostile act will go unpunished. It has taken nearly 14 months of hostilities, thousands of people killed, many of them civilians, devastation, displacement, and suffering for both Israel and Lebanon — although Israel's war was with Hezbollah — to get back to exactly where the 2006 war ended and agree to almost the exact terms of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 that ended the war back then. Philosophically, it makes one contemplate the sorry state of humankind, as so much destruction and misery could have been avoided. Politically speaking, the questions that remain are whether this time the agreed 60-day ceasefire could turn into a permanent one, and whether this could also bring the war in Gaza to an end, or actually prolong it. Both sides were quick to declare victory and leave their options open. In reality, neither side is defeated, although of the two Hezbollah has suffered the heavier losses, with its top leadership killed, including long-time leader Hassan Nasrallah, and its military capabilities degraded. However, Israel cannot ignore the fact that for more than a year Hezbollah gained a strategic achievement in keeping northern Israel nearly empty and more than 60,000 of the region's inhabitants displaced, living in temporary accommodation and still not feeling safe enough to return to their homes. In Lebanon, it is estimated that roughly 1.4 million people have been uprooted by the conflict, and although thousands headed back home as soon as the ceasefire was announced, they did so for lack of an available alternative. Reflecting on the war, there is a general agreement that Nasrallah miscalculated Israel's vulnerability on Oct. 7, when the country was caught by surprise by the Hamas attack, and then joining on the following day a sort of war of attrition that was enough to eventually trigger Israel to respond on a large scale. While the lack of preparedness for the Hamas attack demonstrated a total perceptual and intelligence failure that led to operational disaster, in the case of Hezbollah, Israel had accurate intelligence on the location of its entire leadership and much of its missile arsenal, and possessed the military plans and capabilities to take much of it out. Both sides agreed to a ceasefire because of the political and military price of continuing the conflict. Hezbollah found itself in an inferior military position, and under severe domestic and international pressure. The Israeli government also responded to similar pressures, although in this case there was at least domestic counter-pressure to continue the war with Hezbollah until the elusive "total victory"; and as Netanyahu himself alluded to, the Israeli army needed time to regroup and to restock ammunition. UN Security Council Resolution 1701 was the right remedy back in 2006, and if adhered to still provides a recipe to keep the Israeli-Lebanese conflict quiet, as in principle it creates a buffer zone not between Israel and Lebanon, but between Israel and Hezbollah, through the deployment of Lebanese troops and UN peacekeepers to southern Lebanon, excluding both the Israeli army and Hezbollah from the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River. However, this, like any other agreement, is only as good as the commitment of all signatories to its terms, and this is far from being guaranteed. Unlike the situation in the years leading up to 2023, it is now for the US, France, and UNIFIL, as guarantors of this agreement, to hold the sides to account should they violate it. For Hezbollah to remain relevant in Lebanese politics, it must at least maintain the pretense of resistance to Israel and of being the "defender" of Lebanon. For Israel, there is a clear interest in maintaining a quiet border with Lebanon that enables the displaced to return, but at the same prevents Hezbollah from rearming or digging tunnels deep into Israel. UN Security Council Resolution 1701 also incorporates Resolution 1559, which states that all armed militias should be disarmed, a resolution which will be fulfilled only when Hezbollah dismantles its military capabilities, although in all probability this will not happen. It is also the case that in light of the fragile Lebanese political system and of Lebanon currently having a caretaker government with limited authority, questions remain over whether it would be able, despite being genuinely willing, to force Hezbollah to comply with the agreement. But there is also another aspect to this ceasefire agreement: How will it affect the war in Gaza? By Hezbollah's decoupling of the two fronts, Hamas has been put in an inferior position both militarily and politically in its negotiations with Israel. Moreover, with the ultranationalist-religious parties calling the shots within the Israeli government, there is no mood for any kind of compromise, especially as the end of the war in Lebanon would ease the pressure on both its regular army, but more importantly mainly on its reserve forces. The most likely scenario is that instead of a ceasefire with Hezbollah being a step toward ending the war in Gaza, and with it the end of the unimaginable suffering of millions of Palestinians, and of the hostages and their families, Israel is entrenching its presence in the enclave, and as was suggested by former Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, intends to ethnically cleanse the north of Gaza. Moreover, leaders of the settler movement in the West Bank have already been allowed to identify locations for building settlements.

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Subcontinent's peace dividend

Iqbal Latif

Imagine standing at the Khyber Pass today, a gateway that, for 5,000 years, funneled history's most fearsome warriors toward the wealth of the Indo-Gangetic plains. From Alexander's Greeks to Genghis Khan's Mongols, waves of invaders poured through, leaving devastation in their wake. For centuries, the annual plunder of Delhi was as predictable as the changing seasons — until Maharaja Ranjit Singh briefly controlled these passes in the 19th century. Today, a 77-year-old nation shoulders the responsibility that empires once failed to manage, standing as a bulwark against chaos. Pakistan's strategic importance isn't just geographic; it's genetic. The people of its borderlands are descendants of history's greatest warriors, bearing in their DNA the martial prowess of conquerors like Alexander, Mahmud Ghaznavi, and Ahmad Shah Abdali. These genetic legacies, shaped over millennia, now converge under a single modern nation-state tasked with an unprecedented challenge: channeling this warrior heritage into peace and stability. Pakistan's greatest achievement lies not merely in territorial control but in its transformation of warrior societies into modern citizens. Twenty distinct ethnic groups, each with a proud martial tradition, coexist within a federal framework. Unlike federations such as the USSR or Yugoslavia, which fractured along ethnic lines, Pakistan sustains unity in a region historically resistant to centralised authority. This cohesion is a feat unprecedented in history, achieved against monumental odds. Pakistan's \$10 billion military budget is often criticised, yet it represents extraordinary value when contextualised: Just \$45 per citizen. Less than

New York City's policing budget. A cost that secures what empires could not: peace in one of history's most volatile regions. But the true cost goes beyond dollars. Pakistani soldiers pay with their lives; border communities endure perpetual vigilance; the nation carries the psychological toll of its role as a frontline state. This budget sustains more than defence — it transforms millennia of violent history into a stable present. Without Pakistan, history's patterns would reassert themselves. The lawlessness contained at the Durand Line would creep toward the Wagah-Attari border, and the Indo-Gangetic plains would once again face incursions from the north. For 5,000 years, this was the norm. Pakistan interrupts this cycle, transforming ancient invasion routes into trade corridors and shielding the subcontinent from historical chaos. Pakistan is more than a nation; it is a living bulwark. Its 220 million people stand as custodians of peace in what was once history's busiest invasion route. Each generation inherits the responsibility of converting martial legacies into national defence and stability, a task no empire accomplished before. Today, Pakistan's historical burden is compounded by modern threats such as a volatile Afghanistan, terrorism, securing nuclear assets, maintaining internal stability, safeguarding trade routes, and curbing drug trafficking. The peace of today's Indo-Gangetic plains isn't accidental; it is Pakistan's gift to the subcontinent. For the first time in 5,000 years, Delhi's wealth is secure from northern raiders. This unprecedented peace is purchased with Pakistani blood and treasure, benefiting neighbouring nations at Pakistan's sole expense. Consider this: Every empire that ruled Delhi — from the Monghals to the British — grappled with invasions from the north. The British Raj drew the Durand Line as a buffer, recog-

nising the vulnerability of the plains. Pakistan not only guards this line but transforms the very warrior cultures that once fueled invasions into defenders of peace. The debate isn't about military spending versus peace but about choosing between stability and chaos. Pakistan's military budget is not excessive; it is the bare minimum required to manage a volatile region and maintain peace. Remove Pakistan from the equation, and history offers a clear forecast: the return of invasion and plunder to the Indo-Gangetic plains. Pakistan's military spending isn't just an investment in its own security; it is a contribution to subcontinental stability. The nation bears a burden that should logically be shared. Its success in channeling ancient martial traditions into forces for modern peace marks the first effective barrier against 5,000 years of historical vulnerability. Pakistan occupies one of the most strategically critical regions in world history: the crossroads of the world's deadliest invasion routes. For over 5,000 years, waves of invaders — Greeks, Mongols, Mughals, and more — have crisscrossed this land. None of the great dynasties, from the Guptas to Ashoka, succeeded in controlling the Khyber Pass until Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the 19th century. Today, this passage remains a vital link between South Asia and Central Asia, making Pakistan the gateway to the Sino-India Silk Road. Pakistan is not just a country — it is a federation of over 20 distinct ethnic groups, each with deep martial traditions. In a mere 77 years, this young nation has accomplished the Herculean task of uniting diverse warrior societies under a single flag. What empires could not achieve in centuries, Pakistan has done, turning fierce tribes into citizens of a modern state. This unity alone is a historic miracle, one that demands

The writer is an entrepreneur.

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

History of Pakistan

A complete code of Islamic laws was instituted, and the Federal Shariat Court, a court of Islamic law (Shar'ah), was set up in the 1980s; the primary purpose of this court is to ascertain whether laws passed by parliament are congruent with the precepts of Islam. The Shar'ah system operates alongside the more secular largely Anglo-Saxon system and legal tradition. The role of Islam in the political and cultural unification of Pakistan has been controversial. Some factions have argued that Islamic ideology is the only cement that can bind together the country's culturally diverse peoples. Opposing factions have argued that the insistence on Islamic ideology, in opposition to regional demands expressed in secu-

lar and cultural idiom, has alienated regional groups and eroded national unity. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was formed in 1968 by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, working with a number of liberal leftists who wanted Pakistan to disregard the idiom of religion in politics in favour of a program of rapid modernization of the country and the introduction of a socialist economy. The PPP emerged as the majority party in West Pakistan in the elections of 1970 (though the Awami League in East Pakistan won the largest number of legislative seats). Following the disruption of the ensuing war, which produced the independent country of Bangladesh from East Pakistan, Bhutto was called to form a government in 1972. The PPP was suppressed under the military

government of 1977–88 but returned to power in 1988–90 and 1993–96 under the leadership of Bhutto's daughter Benazir. In 2008, after the nine-year period of military rule, the party joined in a civilian coalition government. The Muslim League, formed in 1906 in what is now Bangladesh, had spearheaded the Pakistan independence movement under Mohammed Ali Jinnah. However, by the time of the military coup in 1958 it had endured many setbacks and much fragmentation, and in 1962 it splintered into two parts, the Conventionist Pakistan Muslim League and the Council Muslim League. In the elections of 1970 it almost disappeared as a political party, but it was resurrected in 1985 and became the most important component of the Islamic

Democratic Alliance, which took over Punjab's administration in 1988. Since then, Muslim League factions have been associated with powerful personalities (e.g., Nawaz Sharif and Pervez Musharraf). The Islamic Assembly (Jam'at-e-Islami), founded in 1941 by Abul Mawdudi (Maududi), commands a great deal of support among the urban lower-middle classes (as well as having great influence abroad). Two other religious parties, the Assembly of Islamic Clergy (Jam'at-e-Ulam-e-Islami) and the Assembly of Pakistani Clergy (Jam'at-e-Ulam-e-Pakistan), have strong centres of support, the former in Karachi and the latter in the rural areas of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

To be continued.....

Elton John guides off stage during 'Cold Heart' performance with Dua Lipa

Dua Lipa and Elton John last performed on song 'Cold Heart' at the Royal Albert Hall in October

Sir Elton John was recently escorted off stage after performing with Dua Lipa at the Royal Albert Hall. For the unversed, the performance of their iconic song Cold Heart took place in London on October 17, and the show will now be released on ITV on December 8, 2024. According to Daily Mail, due to his ongoing health issues and significant vision loss, Elton needed assistance getting on and off the stage during his duet with Dua, which left his fans heartbroken. Reportedly, the 29-year-old singer welcomed her mentor on stage with the words, "Give it up for a man who needs no introduction, Elton John."



Throughout most of the performance, Sir Elton remained seated due to his deteriorating eyesight. The concertgoers described the experience to the aforementioned outlet, saying, "The chemistry between Elton and Dua was really sweet and joyous to see, they have a lot of love for each other and to see that life was special." "It was bittersweet to see him struggling a little, and I didn't know the extent of his vision loss," they disclosed. Dua also took to her Instagram handle to share highlights from the show and express her heartfelt gratitude for the successful event.

US clears export of advanced AI chips to UAE under Microsoft deal

The US government has approved the export of advanced artificial intelligence chips to a Microsoft-operated facility in the United Arab Emirates as part of the company's highly-scrutinised partnership with Emirati AI firm G42, Axios reported on Saturday, citing two people familiar with the deal. Microsoft invested \$1.5 billion in G42 earlier this year, giving the US company a minority stake and a board seat. As part of the deal, G42 would use Microsoft's cloud services to run its AI applications. The deal, however, was scrutinised after US lawmakers raised concerns G42 could transfer powerful US AI technology to China. They asked for a US assessment of G42's ties to the Chinese Communist Party, military and government before the Microsoft deal advances. The US Commerce Department and G42 did not immediately respond to Reuters' requests for comment. Microsoft declined to comment on the report. US officials have said that AI systems could pose national security risks, including by



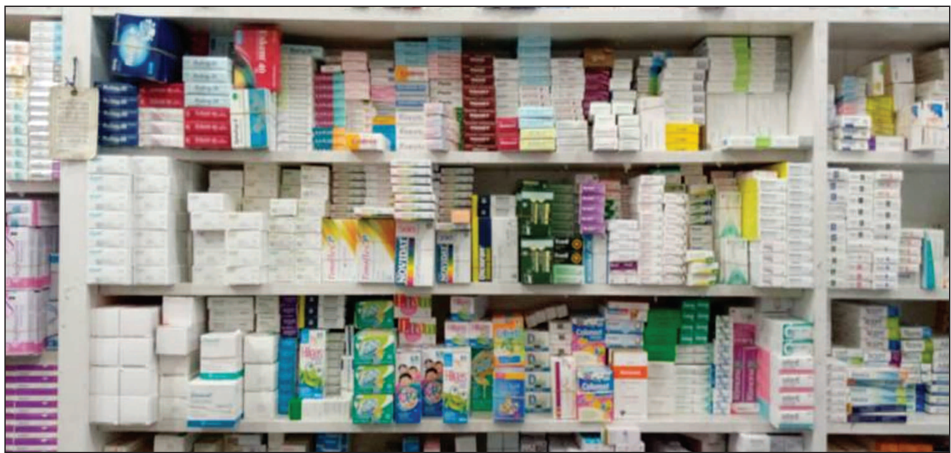
making it easier to engineer chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. The Biden administration in October required the makers of the largest AI systems to share details about them with the US government. G42 earlier this year said it was actively working with US partners and the UAE's government to comply with AI development and deployment standards, amid concerns about its ties to China. Abu Dhabi sovereign wealth fund Mubadala Investment Company, the UAE's ruling family and US private equity firm Silver Lake hold stakes in G42.

Over 90% of medical stores lack essential pharmacist oversight in Pakistan

KARACHI: An alarming revelation was made about the risk to public health as 95% of pharmacies, medical stores, and half of the hospitals in the country were operating without qualified pharmacists. The disclosure was made during the Medication Safety Conference in Karachi where various experts and industry professionals underscored the key issue plaguing the country's health sector. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Executive Officer of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (Drap), Asim Rauf, said the necessary technical expertise possessed by qualified pharmacists. "Doctors are not trained to identify medication errors, whereas pharmacists are equipped to prevent harm from drug misuse," he said, adding: "No hospital or pharmacy should run without pharmacists, and we are working to ensure safer medication practices in line with the World Health Organ-

isation (WHO) recommendations." The official further also urged healthcare professionals to report adverse drug reactions to strengthen pharmacovigilance systems and prevent unexplained deaths linked to medication errors. Addressing the event, Alkhidmat Pharmacy Services Director Jamshed Ahmed, while lamenting the condition of pharmacies in the country, said: "The remaining 95% [pharmacies] are operated like grocery stores by untrained staff who often dispense the wrong medicines, leading to fatal outcomes". Pointing out the issue posed by errors due to handwritten prescriptions by doctors, former director of Pharmacy Services at Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH), Abdul Latif Shaikh remarked that untrained staff dispensing unrecognisable prescriptions results in wrong medications being given to patients which leads

to fatalities. He also highlighted the importance of safe raw materials for drug manufacturing and encouraged error reporting without fear of prosecution to improve patient safety. Decrying that a large number of pharmacists leave the profession due to various reasons, Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PPMA) Representative Shaikh Kaiser Waheed urged the parents to encourage their children to contribute towards the profession. With the conference featuring senior physicians including Professor Abdul Malik and Dr Azeemuddin who discussed the importance of involving pharmacists in improving patient outcomes, the participants called for mandatory staffing of pharmacies and hospitals with trained pharmacists is critical to reducing medication errors and saving lives.



DPM Dar, Turkish FM discuss unfolding situation in Syria

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Sunday held telephone conversation with the Foreign Minister of Türkiye, Hakan Fidan on the unfolding situation in Syria.

During the conversation, the deputy PM shared the details of the efforts by the Government of Pakistan for the safety and security of its nationals in Syria. They also discussed possible cooperation between the two countries for the safety of the Pakistan nationals, a press release issued by the Foreign Office said.

AJK govt takes back controversial presidential ordinance following massive protest

After govt's decision, Joint Public Action Committee announces to end sit-ins & protests at entry points across Kashmir against the ordinance

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government on Sunday withdrew the controversial presidential ordinance related to the ban on protest and rallies.

A notification in this regard was also issued by the AJK government. The ordinance was withdrawn as the negotiations between the AJK government and Joint Awami Action Committee remained successful.

A ban was imposed to hold protest and rallies without prior approval of the government.

A mammoth long march was started by the Awami Action Committee after failure of negotiations with the government. The protest was launched against the ordinance in several cities of AJK.

The AJK government imposed ban on protest and rallies a month ago. The controversial ordinance was later declared null and void by the AJK Supreme Court.

After the government's decision, the Joint Public Action Committee announced the end of sit-ins and protests at entry points across Kashmir against the ordinance.

On Sunday, the government released the leaders and activists arrested under this ordinance. Jammu Kashmir National Awami Party leader Sardar Liaquat Hayat and his associates have been released from Rawlakot on Sunday morning.

It merits mentioning here that earlier in May this year, a police sub-inspector was shot dead while several cops were injured as protest demonstrations against high electricity bills turned violent in AJK. The enraged mob had pelted stones and opened fire on the police in Mirpur. A police sub-inspector named Adnan Qureshi was shot dead by the protesters while three other cops sustained injuries. SABAH



ISLAMABAD: Girls watching handmade items on a stall in Winter Left Christmas Market at sector F-8, in the Federal Capital. ONLINE

Corruption undermines public trust, drains vital resources & hampers socio-economic development: President Zardari

Says Pakistan reaffirms its commitment to eradicate corruption by enforcing strict accountability measures & promoting transparency in governance

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has said that corruption undermines public trust, drains vital resources, and hampers socio-economic development.

This was stated by President Asif Ali Zardari in his message on the Occasion of International Anti-Corruption Day being observed today (Monday).

President Asif Ali Zardari said that today we are commemorating International Anti-Corruption Day to raise awareness about the pervasive and destructive effects of corruption. This day serves as a reminder of the collective responsibility of all nations to fight corruption, promote transparency, and uphold accountability. The observance highlights the commitment of member countries of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), including Pakistan, in their ongoing efforts to eliminate this menace.

President Asif Ali Zardari said that corruption undermines public trust, drains vital resources, and hampers socio-economic development. Today, Pakistan reaffirms its commitment to eradicate corruption by enforcing strict accountability measures and promoting transparency in governance. Over the years, Pakistan has taken significant steps



to align with international anti-corruption frameworks, including the UNCAC, and has implemented a robust accountability regime. However, there is still much to be done, and we must continue to make all efforts to eradicate the habit of corruption from our society. President Asif Ali Zardari said that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), as the apex anti-corruption agency, plays a central role in investigating and prosecuting corruption cases, as well as in raising public awareness about its harmful effects. NAB has

another vital role to reduce corruption through prevention. Despite NAB's important role, the fight against corruption cannot be won by one agency alone. The challenge is vast, and its complexity requires all organs of the state to make strenuous endeavours to reduce corruption and pay attention to all root causes of corruption.

President Asif Ali Zardari said in line with this year's theme of International Anti-Corruption Day "Uniting with Youth Against Corruption: Shaping Tomorrow's Integrity", it is essential that every segment of society, particularly youth, civil society, and citizens join forces to eliminate corruption. They must actively participate in anti-corruption efforts, help promote a culture of accountability, and offer suggestions to improve the anti-corruption framework. A change in our collective behaviour is also needed to create a culture, where corruption is no longer tolerated at any level.

President Asif Ali Zardari said together, we can ensure that resources intended for public welfare are used for their rightful purpose and that all citizens benefit from transparent, effective governance. We should create an environment of integrity and transparency and work for a future in which character-building becomes paramount in our society, President Asif Ali Zardari concluded.

CNTAC and BOI sign MoU to establish of textile Industry Park in Pakistan



BEIJING: China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC) and Pakistan's Board of Investment (BOI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) at the 2024 China Textile Conference in Keqiao, Shaoxing.

At present, China's textile industry is at an important juncture of change and transformation. How to take "science and technology, fashion and green" as the guide, constantly cultivate new productivity, and create the future of the industry and the future industry has become a new issue in front of the industry.

According to a report carried by China Economic Net (CEN), Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi addressed the conference and said that signing a landmark MoU between Pakistan's Board of Investment and CNTAC.

The robust framework for developing textile parks in Pakistan would enhance bilateral trade, foster technology transfer, and enhance capacity. Focusing on four core topics "Innovation Environment, Materials, Artificial Intelligence, and Production Processes," the guests discussed leading trends in industry innovation, aiming to promote the transformation and optimization of the global textile supply chain.

"Secretary Board of Investment and I along with Pakistani leading textile industry representatives attended the annual China Textile Conference organized by China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC) in Shaoxing City.

Pakistan was given this exclusive privilege for the first time as the only foreign participant. We highlighted why investing in Pakistan's textile & apparel sector was a mutually beneficial proposition", the Ambassador added, noting that Secretary BOI signed an MoU with the Vice President of CNTAC on cooperation in the field of textiles and apparel including the establishment of parks in this important sector in Pakistan. "Grateful to Shandong Ruyi Group for its support".

"The textile sector is the backbone of our economy, a major contributor to our exports. As the second-largest global supplier of cotton cloth, and the fifth-largest exporter of cotton offers unmatched potential for collaboration. Combining strategic location, skilled workforce, and vertical integration, Pakistan is uniquely positioned as an ideal partner for Chinese enterprises," Hashmi stated. DNA

ITP hosts speech competition to raise traffic safety awareness



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) organized a speech competition at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries auditorium hall under the title "If We Ask, There Will Be Complaints".

DIG Law & Order Shakir Hussain Dawar, and DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza attended the event as chief guest, while Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Muhammad Saifraz Virk and students from various educational institutions in Islamabad participated in the speech competition. During the competition, the students highlighted road safety through their speeches, covering topics such as the dangers

of wheelee riding, the benefits of wearing seat belts while driving, the dangers of speeding and using mobile phones while driving, and raising awareness about other traffic laws.

At the occasion, DIG Law & Order Shakir Hussain Dawar said that Islamabad Traffic Police is making every effort to promote organized and safe driving in the city. He further emphasized that the purpose of the speech competition is to raise awareness among students about traffic laws.

At the end of the competition, prizes were distributed among the students who achieved prominent positions.

Ashrafi opposes Maulana Fazlur's stance on madrasa registration issue

ISLAMABAD: In a recent statement, Allama Tahir Ashrafi, the Chief of the Pakistan Ulama Council, strongly opposed Maulana Fazlur Rehman's stance regarding the registration and regulation of madrasas in Pakistan.

Ashrafi emphasized that madrasas are educational institutions and should therefore be affiliated with the Ministry of Education, rather than with the Ministry of Industries, as proposed by Rehman.

Ashrafi pointed out that a unanimous agreement had been reached in 2019 regarding the registration of madrasas after numerous meetings and extensive deliberations. Key figures, including Shafqat Mahmood, played pivotal roles in ensuring that all aspects of madrasa registration were thoroughly considered. He stressed that this agreement took a long time to reach and urged that political agendas should not be allowed to interfere with the future of madrasas.

Highlighting that 18,000 madrasas have already been registered under this framework, Ashrafi warned that constant changes in the system would lead to confusion and political manipulation. He expressed concerns that the future of millions of students studying in madrasas should not be jeopardized by political disagreements.

Furthermore, he noted that 10 out of the 15 madrasa boards have distanced themselves from the proposed changes. Ashrafi reiterated his stance, stating that if any madrasa wishes to affiliate with the Ministry of Industries, it is free to do so. However, the overall system should remain linked with the Ministry of Education, where it rightfully belongs.

This latest development has brought the issue of madrasa registration back into the political spotlight, with Ashrafi stressing the importance of stability and consistency for the sake of the students and the future of the madrasa system in Pakistan. APP

Ministry of Law Organizes Qualifying Test for Appointment of Members in the Appellate Tribunal Inland Revenue (ATIR)

ISLAMABAD: On the directions of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, the Ministry of Law and Justice on Sunday organised a Qualifying Skills Test for appointment of Members in the Appellate Tribunal Inland Revenue (ATIR) against 20 vacant posts.

To ensure that the test process was transparent, fair, competitive and held in a secure environment, the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) was selected as a venue. As a result, the test was conducted today by the NUST at its Islamabad Examination Centre. It is pointed out that In June 2024 the Ministry of Law and Justice invited the applications from interested candidates to fill these vacancies. Approximately 300 applicants applied, and after thorough scrutiny under a revised procedure, 262 applicants were shortlisted to participate in the test. The ATIR is a quasi-judicial forum that hears appeals against the orders passed by the Regional Commissioners/Commissioners of Inland Revenue Services (IRS). The Tribunal plays a critical role in ensuring effective tax recovery and resolution of disputes, directly influencing national revenue generation.

Israel shells north Gaza hospital, disrupting service, doctors say

CAIRO: Palestinian health officials said on Sunday that Israeli forces had shelled the Kamal Adwan Hospital in the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya, damaging electricity and oxygen pumps and disrupting urgent surgeries. Hussam Abu Safiya, director of the hospital, one of only three barely operational on the northern edge of the enclave, said the facility was hit by around 100 tank shells and bombs, wounding several of the medical staff and patients.

"The situation is extremely dangerous. We have patients in the intensive care unit and others awaiting surgeries. Access to the operating rooms is only possible after restoring electricity and oxygen supply," Abu Safiya said in a statement. The hospital is treating 112 wounded people, including six in the intensive care unit, he said.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military about Abu Safiya's account.

The health ministry of Hamas-run Gaza said a doctor was killed with his family in an Israeli airstrike near the Kamal Adwan Hospital on Saturday night.

Residents said the military blew up clusters of houses in the northern Gaza areas of Jabalia, Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun, where Israeli forces have operated since October.

Broad Israeli airstrikes killed at least six Palestinians in the central and southern Gaza Strip on Sunday, medics said.

Palestinians say Israel's operations on the northern edge of the enclave are part of a plan to clear people out through forced evacuations and bombardments to create a buffer zone. The Israeli military denies this, saying it is fighting Hamas. The war in Gaza has been raging for over 14 months, with much of the enclave laid to waste and more than 44,000 Palestinians killed, according to Gaza health authorities, as Israeli forces continue their drive to wipe out Hamas and rescue hostages taken by the militant group.

The deadliest Israeli-Palestinian violence in decades began when Hamas stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people and taking more than 250 hostages back to Gaza. INP

Under instructions from PM Shehbaz, the 1st batch of relief assistance for flood affected people in Malaysia arrive in Kuala Lumpur

Relief consignment was handed over by HC Syed Ahsan Raza Shah to Malaysian authorities

KUALA LUMPUR: Under instructions from Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the first consignment of humanitarian aid for people of Malaysia has successfully landed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which flew from Islamabad International Airport on Sunday via a chartered flight, carrying 40 tons of relief items by GoP/Pak NDMA.

The relief consignment consisted of tents, blankets, quilts, sleeping bags, mats and life jackets. Upon arrival, the consignment received by representatives of Pakistan Embassy in Malaysia and Malaysian National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA). The Government of Pakistan remains steadfast in its commitment to providing humanitarian assistance to the flood affectees of Malaysia.

The consignment was handed over by High Commissioner Syed Ahsan Raza Shah to Malaysian authorities. This consignment consisted of a total



volume of 40 tons loaded with essential supplies such as tents, blankets, quilts, sleeping bags, mats and life jackets for flood affectees in Malaysia. The second consignment of

equal volume is scheduled to depart in next week further reinforcing Pakistan's steadfast commitment to assisting flood-hit Malaysia. The current monsoon season in

Malaysia has brought heavy rainfall and flash floods to 09 eastern states, affecting 137,410 people across 38 districts. As a result, 40,922 families have sought refuge in 633 evacuation centers. Nine lives have been lost. The persistent rainfall is expected to continue until February 2025.

On November 30, 2024, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, called Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim, to express condolences for the recent flood-related losses. PM Pakistan offered assistance and announced the immediate dispatch of humanitarian assistance. PM Ibrahim expressed his gratitude. Having faced its own share of natural disasters, Pakistan deeply understands the challenges and hardships such calamities bring. This shared understanding and empathy drive Pakistan's efforts to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Malaysia in its recovery journey. SABAH