



Islamabad POST

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Mahatir draws parallel between Kashmir & Palestine conflicts

Detailed News On Page-08

Li Keqiang: Ex-Chinese premier dies at 68

Detailed News On Page-08



Show respect, Verstappen urges fans

Detailed News On Page-06



Death toll hits 7326

Hostages release after ceasefire, heralds Hamas

Head of Hamas's political bureau Ismail Haneyya spoke with Head of the Egyptian Intelligence, Minister Abbas Kamel, and discussed with him, in a phone call

CENTRELINE REPORT

GAZA CITY: A Hamas official Friday linked the release of hostages held captive in Gaza to a ceasefire in Israel's punishing air war in the enclave, launched after a deadly rampage by Hamas fighters into southern Israel nearly three weeks ago. Israel says it is preparing a ground invasion, but has been urged by the US and Arab countries to delay an operation that would multiply the number of civilian casualties in the densely populated coastal strip and might ignite a wider conflict. The Russian newspaper Kommersant quoted a member of a Hamas delegation visiting Moscow as saying time was needed to locate all those who had been taken from Israel by various Palestinian factions in the Hamas attack on Oct. 7 that sparked the crisis. "They seized dozens of people, most of them civilians, and we need time to find them in the Gaza Strip and then release them," Abu Hamid said. He said Hamas, which has freed four hostages so far, had made clear since the first days of the war that it intended to release "civilian prisoners". But he said a "calm environment" was needed to complete this task, repeating an assertion - which Reuters could not verify - that the Israeli bombing had already killed 50 of the prisoners. Israel said on Friday military raids into Gaza were preparing "the next stage of the operation", amid fears that a ground invasion of the Palestinian enclave could spark a wider conflict and a media report of a missile hitting an Egyptian border town. Egypt's Al Qahera News, citing sources, said a missile struck a medical facility in the Egyptian Red Sea resort town of Taba near the Israeli border early on Friday, injuring six people. Al Qahera said the blast was related to

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Explosion hits US base in Syria following US strikes

NEWS DESK

DAMASCUS: A loud explosion was heard early on Friday at a US military base in the eastern Syrian province of Dayr al-Zawr, following US strikes on two military sites in the region. Citing sources, Lebanon's Al-Mayadeen news network reported the explosion at the base that houses US troops in the Conoco gas field. Sabereen News, a Telegram news channel associated with Iraqi anti-terror Popular Mobilization Units, also reported a rocket attack against the base. There are also reports about a drone attack against US military forces around Erbil airport in the north of Iraq. There were no immediate reports about possible casualties and the extent of damage caused. The reported attacks came after US forces carried out strikes against two military facilities in Syria's eastern province late on Thursday. In a statement, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin described the strikes as a "self-defence" which was carried out "at President Biden's direction." "These precision self-defense strikes are a response to a series of

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ARMED FORCES DAY OF ROMANIA



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Air Marshal Irfan Ahmed, of Pakistan Air Force, the Chargé d'Affaires of Romania Eduard PREDA, the Defence Attaché Col Cristian RADUCU and others cutting cake to celebrate Armed Forces Day of Romania. - DNA

US wants transparent polls in Pakistan

Talks to FM Jillnai; calls for an inclusive election



ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Acting Deputy Secretary of State and Under Secretary for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland on Friday spoke to caretaker Foreign Minister Jahl Abbas Jilani to discuss critical issues in the US-Pakistan partnership. Acting Deputy Secretary Nuland and Foreign Minister Jilani discussed matters of mutual interest in facilitating

Continued on Page 06

Cipher case hearing Imran Khan's pleas seeking bail rejected

Plea to cancel FIR also turned down

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday rejected pleas of former prime minister Imran Khan seeking bail and cancellation of the first information report (FIR) in the cipher case. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq announced the court order today which was reserved on October 16 after arguments were completed from both sides. During the last hearing, Khan's counsel, Sardar Latif Khosa, had contended that a FIR could not be registered against his client since the federal cabinet of the former prime minister declassified the cipher. He further stated that the ex-premier enjoyed immunity as provided in Article 248 of the Constitution that protects the president, governor, prime minister, federal minister, minister of state, chief minister and provincial minister for their "act done or purported to be done."

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'Total mockery of law' Imran's message on Nawaz's reliefs

PTI chief terms Nawaz Sharif's return to country as execution of London "agreement"

KHAYAM ABBASI

Rawalpindi: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has slammed the "complete collapse of our justice system" and termed Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif's return to the country as the execution of

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Difference of opinion hallmark of democracy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Friday that difference of opinion was a hallmark of democracy. Talking to media persons at the Parliament House after he met with the President Parliamentary Reporters Association Usman Khan and other journalists he said he belonged to the journalistic community. "I have always been a supporter of freedom of expression and I am still fully committed to it", he added. Stating that journalism and politics go hand in hand, he said he always had a respectful relationship with all the journalists. He opined that sometimes unpleasant things happen but it was a part of democratic culture. He said a press release was released yesterday which represented the viewpoint of the entire caretaker government.

Case against Fmr NAB chief dropped SJC 'issues' show-cause notice to Justice Naqvi

PBC Vice Chairman Haroon Rashid filed misconduct complaint against the SC judge after an audio leaks

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) has issued a show-cause notice to Justice Sayeed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi against the complaints registered against him. According to sources, the notice was issued after the SJC met under the chairmanship of Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa. Headed by CJP Isa, SJC also consists of two senior judges of the apex court - Justice Tariq Masood and Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan. The judge has been asked to submit his reply by November 10. CJP Isa had summoned the SJC meeting a day earlier to discuss complaints filed against superior court judges. This was the first meeting of the SJC under CJP Isa and was convened after a gap of over 3 years.

Continued on Page 06

Committee to identify handlers of Faizabad sit-in

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The federal government Friday informed the Supreme Court about the formation of a fact-finding committee to investigate the "role and directions" of all "concerned" officials in management and handling the Faizabad sit-in. The apex court was informed about the development in an implementation report submitted by Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan today. The report, submitted by the government, mentioned that the committee has been set up to

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ECP may set January 28 as the election date

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is considering to set January 28 as the date for the General Elections 2024, sources said on Friday. The top electoral body, commencing its preparations for upcoming elections, is expected to apprise the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) in writing within the next two days,

Continued on Page 06

Tessori discusses political landscape with President, PM

Tessori apprised the premier of the matters in line with the province's administrative affairs, the law and order situation, and the problems faced by the industrialists

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori held on Friday meetings separately with President Arif Alvi and Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar to discuss the political landscape. During his meeting with the president at President House, Tessori said: "In connection with the progress of Sindh, the cooperation from the federal government is commendable. The all-out efforts are underway to bring prosperity to Karachi again." Tessori apprised the premier of the matters in line with the province's administrative affairs, the law and order situation, and the problems faced by the industrialists. Caretaker interior



minister Sarfaraz Bugti and the Sindh governor discussed the matter in line with the matter of deporting the illegal immigrants. Tessori said that the deportation of illegal immigrants will help control the crime rate. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar

on Thursday announced that his government would challenge Supreme Court verdict concerning the trial of civilians in military courts. Speaking to a private television channel, he explained that the government intends to appeal the court's ruling, emphasizing that Parliament has the authority to amend laws. The interim PM said that as a concerned citizen, there is no shame in contributing to discussions about media-related issues, and he has raised concerns about the welfare of working journalists and the need for defined regulations. "I have previously addressed these issues in a press conference and stressed that my intent was not to offend anyone," he said, and added he is committed to maintaining the focus on these concerns.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday.

- Editor

REPATRIATION OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

3 DAYS

03

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Pakistan marks 76th 'black day' anniversary

The Government and people of Pakistan and the Kashmiri people are observing the 76th anniversary of the Indian troops' landing in Jammu and Kashmir as a 'Black Day'

DNA

ISLAMABAD : The President, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, in their special messages on the occasion, have reiterated Pakistan's unflinching moral, diplomatic and political support to the Kashmir Cause. They have also underscored the need to reverse India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 1947, which have triggered a process aimed at changing the demographic structure and political landscape of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The Foreign Minister has addressed letters to the President UN General Assembly, the President UN Security Council, the UN Secretary General, the UN High

Commissioner for Human Rights and the OIC Secretary General to apprise them of the latest situation in IIOJK. In these letters, the Foreign Minister has called for implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions to enable the people of Jammu and Kashmir to determine their own future. He has requested the international community to urge India to immediately release the political prisoners and dissenters, including Mr. Yasin Malik, for whom the Indian authorities have sought a death penalty. The Foreign Secretary briefed the Islamabad-based diplomatic missions on the situation in IIOJK. He also highlighted the legal, security and human rights dimensions of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. A 'Protest

Walk' was also held in Islamabad, this morning, along the Constitution Avenue up to the 'D-Chowk'. The walk was led by Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Mr. Murtaza Solangi. The officers and staff members of the Ministry participated in the walk.

A range of activities are being organized throughout the country to mark the 'Black Day', which include public rallies, seminars, webinars, panel discussions and photo exhibitions. With the active participation of Pakistani and Kashmiri Diaspora, Pakistan's diplomatic missions around the world are also arranging special events to raise global awareness about India's decades-long occupation of Jammu and Kashmir.



ISLAMABAD : Students and faculty members of the SHAHEED Benazir Bhutto University (Sbbu) Sheringal, Upper Dir Visiting Senate Museum At Parliament House.—DNA

Stakeholders working to ensure hygienic food : SFA

DNA

KARACHI : The Sindh Food Authority (SFA) in collaboration with stakeholders, has started working to ensure safe and hygienic seafood supply chain in Pakistan, especially in Sindh. This was told in a meeting held at the office of Secretary Livestock and Fisheries here on Friday, a statement stated.

The meeting focused on quality assurance, regulatory framework, export potential, collaboration, training, capacity building, public awareness and formation of a technical committee. The goal is to improve safety and quality of fish products for domestic consumption and export. The Secretary Livestock, Director General Sindh Food Authority and MD Karachi Fisheries and Harbour discussed the importance of inter-agency collaboration, information sharing and joint inspections. The potential for expanding Pakistan's fish and seafood exports was highlighted, with a focus on meeting international market demands. A technical committee was also formed among stakeholders to resolve technical and legal issues. The Secretary Livestock Dr Hafeez Sayal, DG Sindh Food Authority Agha Fakhar Hussain, MD Karachi Fisheries and Harbour and others also attended the meeting.

Govt sticks to illegal immigrant evacuation deadline

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti has reiterated that the government will not extend the date set for evacuation of the illegal immigrants. The minister said the government had devised a final plan for the foreigners living here illegally and now they had two days in hand to leave Pakistan. He said the geo-fencing and geo-mapping of the illegal settlers had been completed. He said following the document regime, the government was supporting those landing in Pakistan with proper documentation. He said people would not be allowed to enter Pakistan without visa. Under the one document regime, the minister said a passport office would be inaugurated in Qila Abdullah tomorrow (Saturday). As for the crackdown on smuggling, the minister

said the government had controlled smuggling in Balochistan and not hit any business activity. On Thursday, addressing a press conference in Islamabad, he said to evacuate such foreigners the temporary camps had been set up where provincial governments would provide them food and medical facilities. He said the provincial governments would bear all expenses of these camps. He said illegal residents would be repatriated to their countries from the holding centres. Utmost respect of children, women and elders would be maintained at the centres, he said, adding after Nov 1, no compromise would be made on the illegal residents.

Bugti also ruled out the possibility of an extension to the deadline, saying there were no current proposals for such an extension. Bugti, while briefing the Senate Standing Commit-

tee on Interior, emphasised that the government's intent to take action against unauthorised residents had been misconstrued. Earlier on Oct 3, the caretaker government had announced that law-enforcement agencies would repatriate all individuals living illegally in Pakistan after the deadline's expiration. At that time, Bugti had indicated that approximately 1.73 million unregistered Afghans were residing in the country. State media had previously reported that the decision to remove 1.1 million foreigners living unlawfully was prompted by the revelation of their involvement in terrorist activities and illegal practices like smuggling. This announcement had faced criticism from various quarters, with many questioning whether it primarily targeted Afghan refugees.



People utilize opportunity for vote registration

DNA

DERA ISMAIL KHAN : District Election Commissioner (DEC) Abdul Rauf Khan Friday said the deadline for voter registration and information update had been extended upto October 28. In this regard, he urged the general public to utilise this opportunity to ensure their registration, transfers, exclusions, and vote accuracy by October 28. He expressed these views while addressing on the occasion of an election awareness session held at a Government school.

He urged youth to support efforts of the Election Commission towards vote registration, adding voting held great significance for any state or democratic nation. The DEC enlightened the participants about various stages of the election process and highlighted the importance of women's inclusion and role in making elections credible.

He also stressed significance of increasing voter turnout and highlighted the importance of women's inclusion and role in making elections credible, as there was still a significant difference of over 68,000 between the registration of men and women.

An emergency exercise held at Sukkur Airport

DNA

SUKKUR : The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority organized an annual full-scale emergency exercise at Begum Nusrat Bhutto Airport in Sukkur to deal with any emergency situation. Civil aviation, airport security force, air force, airport staff, 1122 service, medical, and other related agencies

participated in the exercise here on Friday. During the occasion, a fire broke out and passengers were rescued from it. The exercise was supervised by Airport Manager Hamadur Rehman and other fire officers.

The Divisional Commissioner Sukkur, Samiuddin Siddiqui, and other revenue officers visited the emergency exercise at Begum Nusrat Bhutto Airport and

appreciated the performance of the personnel of rescue and law enforcement agencies.

Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) officials said that airports are very important for any city and it is the responsibility of the relevant organizations to ensure their security. These exercises build a close relationship and cooperation between institutions.



ISLAMABAD : Governor Sindh, Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.—DNA

President orders COVID-affected student's university accommodation

He said that there was no reason for the university to deviate from the HEC's policy and recommendations, stating that instead of rectifying its maladministration

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday asked Air University to reconsider the case of granting one additional year to its student for completing her degree which as she was unable to complete the remaining courses due to suffering from COVID-19.

He expressed displeasure that the university did not timely process her case, despite the fact that Higher Education Commission (HEC)'s Policy and University Regulations provided for remedies to resolve such issues by granting

extension. He said that there was no reason for the university to deviate from the HEC's policy and recommendations, stating that instead of rectifying its maladministration, the university submitted a representation before the President without realizing its implications in respect of public exchequer and wastage of study timeline of its student. He advised the Air University to not let the student's devotion, hard work, and money go waste and take measures to help and guide students, especially in the case of women. The president gave these directions while deciding

upon a representation filed by Air University against the order of the Wafaqi Mohtasib directing it to place Ms Iqra Munir's case before the University Functional Committee (UFC) and reconsider it for allowing her one more year to complete her BS degree.

As per details, Iqra Munir (the complainant) had filed a complaint before the Wafaqi Mohtasib alleging that she was a student of Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Psychology Programme in one of the colleges affiliated with the Air University. According to her, due to Covid pandemic, she could not complete her degree in

2020. She approached the university to allow her for completion of her degree but she was advised to contact HEC for grant of an additional year to complete her studies. Later, HEC advised that the competent authority of the University to reconsider her case for extension keeping in view her medical history and the provisions already available in HEC Policy and University Regulations. However, after a lapse of one year she was not given the extension. Feeling aggrieved, she approached the Wafaqi Mohtasib, who passed the order in her favour. The university then filed a

representation before the President against the order of the Mohtasib. The president rejected the representation and observed that the university did not follow the recommendations of the HEC and did not put the case before the UFC, who was competent to make a decision in this regard. He said that the student fell ill due to COVID-19 and had been running from pillar to post to get some time to complete her degree. He said that HEC's Policy Guidelines provided that the maximum time limit to complete her degree was 6 years, which was further extendable for one year with the approval of the Statutory Bodies.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DIVISION
RAWALPINDI

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders based on item rates/percentage rate for the following work is hereby invited from the approved Contractors/Firms registered with Punjab Revenue Authority. Tender request should be accompanied with original copies of P.E.C License for 2023-24 and copy of C.N.I.C. The tender will not be issued to the Contractor's / Firm representative without authority letter on judicial paper from the Contractor / Firm along with registered partnership deed, attested power of Attorney on stamp paper in the name of undersigned. Proper tender forms may be obtained from the Head Clerk of this office on any working day during office time after receipt / deposit of Tender fee on 32-A Challan which is not refundable.

The tender forms will be issued upto 20-11-2023 from the following offices:-

- > Superintending Engineer PHE Circle Rawalpindi
- > Executive Engineer PHE Division Rawalpindi
- > Deputy Commissioner Office Rawalpindi
- > Director (Development & Finance), Commissioner office, Rawalpindi

The issued tenders will be received in the Commissioner office Rawalpindi on 21-11-2023 upto 02.00 P.M & will be opened on same date at 02:30 P.M in the presence of Tender Opening Committee and the contractors or their authorized representative who may care to be present at that time.

Postal tenders, conditional tenders and tenders without deposit at call (CDR) from any scheduled bank equal to 5% (Five percent) earnest money / bid security of the DNIT cost) will not be entertained. The tenders will be processed according to the instructions contained in Government of the Punjab Finance Department Notification No. RO (Tech) FDI-2183 (IV) (P) dated 06.04.2005.

The procuring agency may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid or proposal.

S.#	NAME OF SCHEME	Bid Price (Rs. In Millions)	T.S No.	Bid Security (Rs. In Millions)	Time Limit	Tender Fee
1	Solarization of Tube Wells for Rehabilitation and Augmentation of Rural WSS Village Thatta Khali and Dhoke Durab Tehsil Taxila District Rawalpindi.	6.586	S.E PHE Circle Rawalpindi No. 841/S dated 18-05-2023	0.329	06 Months	Rs.5,000/-

NOTE

- T.S estimate and specification are available in the office of undersigned.
- In case of total tendered amount is less than 5% of the approved Bid Cost, the lowest bidder will have to deposit Additional Performance Security equal to the amount below Bid cost within 15 days of issuance of notice for deposit of Additional Performance Security as per Finance Department Notification No. RO (Tech) FD-1-2/83(VI)(P) dated 06-04-2005. In case of failure the tender will be cancelled with the forfeiture of Earnest money without any further notice.
- Some work charges are required on daily wages basis for the supervision of development schemes.

(Imran Munir)
Executive Engineer
Public Health Engg. Division,
Rawalpindi
(Ph: # 051-9290870)

IPL 9031

National Days and Armed Forces Days

OCTOBER

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

Hotels & Restaurants



Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



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PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

National Foundation Day of Korea celebrated in Islamabad

DOAM, Korean embassy commemorate 40 years of diplomatic ties with photographic exhibition

DNA

ISLAMABAD, The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Islamabad has celebrated the National Foundation Day and the Armed Forces Day of Korea as well as the 40th Anniversary of diplomatic relations between Korea and Pakistan.

The National Foundation Day ceremony was held at the residence of the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea and attended by the Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed, as the Chief Guest while Murtaza Solangi, the Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting, and Kamran Tessori, the Governor of Sindh.

Addressing the audience, the ambassador of the Republic of Korea said that Pakistan is channeling all its vigor towards national progress. Korea, with its wealth of experience and technological advancement, stands ready to support and partake in Pakistan's endeavors. He mentioned that Korea is committed to fostering a partnership that reaps mutual benefits, ensuring our combined strengths produce greater results. The Korean embassy, too, is dedicated to this shared vision. He mentioned that he seeks continued support and goodwill as they embark on this new 40-year chapter of collaboration between Korea and Pakistan.

The Envoy further stated that since 1983, the bond between both countries has deepened and diversified, spanning areas from politics and economy to culture and collaborative development. He said "As we reflect upon our shared journey, it is essential to not only value our past accomplishments but also to set our sights on a future filled with bright new promises. Our aspiration should not be limited to the current status of 'friendship and cooperation', but should aim to elevate it further, creating a bond that stands strong through time and



challenges". An exhibition showcasing '40 Years of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Korea and Pakistan' was organized on Friday by the Department of Archeology and Museum (DOAM) in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea. In the opening session, notable speakers were Park Kijun, the Korean Ambassador, a representative from the National Heritage and Culture Division

in Islamabad, the Executive Director of the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation (KCHF), and Dr. Abdul Azeem, the Director General of DOAM. The exhibition's purpose was to commemorate the 40-year diplomatic relationship between Pakistan and the Republic of Korea. During his address, the Joint Secretary of the National Heritage and Culture Division emphasized that the longstanding friendship and

cooperation between Pakistan and South Korea, developed over four decades, had resulted in substantial advancements in their bilateral relations. He highlighted that Pakistan and Korea both had a shared interest in ensuring a peaceful and prosperous South Asia and had worked together in various multilateral forums. He stressed the broad spectrum of cooperation between Pakistan and Korea, encompassing areas

such as cultural heritage. He mentioned that Buddhism, with its diverse tapestry of traditions and life teachings, was introduced to the ancient Baekje Kingdom, originating from present-day Pakistan, by Monk Maranatha nearly 1,500 years ago. He said that for 40 years Pakistan and Korea developed deep cultural connections. Buddhism was routed to Korea in the 5th, and 6th centuries from Gandhara. So both countries

have long term and deep relations since centuries, he added. Ambassador Park Kijun, in his speech, highlighted the vast potential for mutually beneficial collaboration in diverse fields. He said that this special exhibition promises, to bring the cultural heritage of Pakistan and Korea together. Director General DOAM said that this exhibition presents pictures of historical sites and monuments in Pakistan and Korea.

Kitchen items' prices eases by 0.33 percent

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed decrease of 0.33 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on October 26, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 277.11 points as compared to 278.04 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review

witnessed an increase of 29.65 percent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, decreased by 0.25 percent and went down to 283.77 points from last week's 284.47 points. The SPI for consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 declined by 0.31 percent, 0.33 percent, 0.36 percent and 0.33 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 14 (27.45%)

items increased, 17 (33.33%) items decreased and 20 (39.22%) items remained stable. The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW) included chicken (10.19%), onions (4.4%), rice irri-6/9 (3.84%), bananas (3.64%), gur (3.4%), pulse masoor (2.36%), sugar (2.22%), and mustard oil (2.17%). The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week (wow) basis, included tomatoes (20.81%), potatoes (3.33%), eggs (1.63%), salt powdered (0.91%), garlic (0.77%), tea prepared (0.67%), bread plain (0.56%) and

mutton (0.28%). On a Year-on-Year (YoY) basis, the items that witnessed decrease in prices included, tomatoes (31.90%), onions (24.88%), pulse gram (5.82%), mustard oil (4.16%) and vegetable ghee 1 kg (0.92%). The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on YoY basis included gas charges for q1 (108.38%), cigarettes (94.46%), chilies powder (84.11%), rice basmati broken (78.51%), wheat flour (77.49%), sugar (63.22%), rice irri-6/9 (62.83%), gents sponge chappal (58.05%), gur (57.73%) and salt powdered (54.84%).—APP

Occupied Kashmir – An unending saga of cruelties

ISLAMABAD: By using illegal weapons and pellet guns, torturing in custody, molesting women and killing youth by Indian occupational forces in illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), Modi regime has resorted to unending cruelties against Kashmiri people. But, despite use of lethal and inhuman dirty tactics, no colonial power in the world could crush freedom struggle of the suppressed people as witnessed in IOJK where even use of lethal weapons and pellet guns could shatter the courage of people struggling for right to self-determination. The use of pellet guns by Indian occupation forces in Jammu and Kashmir is a continued and clear violation of human rights and humanitarian law. The Indian government and puppet administration of IOJK must direct Indian Army and police to immediately stop using pellet guns as any further use of such weapons, causing extensive, arbitrary deaths and grievous wounds, would be callous and criminal. The indiscriminate use of pellet guns since July 09, 2016, against the protesting people in the aftermath of martyrdom of Kashmiri youth icon Burhan Wani, had killed dozens of civilians with hundreds wounded with scars on their faces and in many cases losing their eye sight. Stone pelting does not give police the right to shoot at peaceful protestors indiscriminately as force is only used when the mob goes unruly endangering other people's lives. But, in case when people march around peacefully for a just right, showering pellets on them is brutal as well as inhumane. The force is only used when it is unavoidable and proportionate to the crowd's actions. Proportionality, necessity and calibration are key principles governing the use of force within national and international law. But, Indian occupational forces, know no law – national or international or mercy when it deals with innocent Kashmiris. Pellet guns were first introduced in Kashmir in 2010 for crowd control as a "non-lethal" alternative to other deadlier weapons. Nevertheless, in 2010, 14-year-old Irshad Ahmad Parry and 20-year-old Mudisar Nazir lost their lives to pellet gun injuries. These boys were two of several victims who have been killed by pellet guns since 2010, yet these guns are considered the better option, a "non-lethal" choice to control crowds. It is reported that at least 92 people have lost their eyesight and at least 1,500 people have sustained serious injuries from pellet guns since 2010. The Indian government led by fascist Modi is violating the UN Basic Principles on Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials. In Kashmir, restraint is not being exercised, injury is not being minimized and medical assistance is not ensured. The use of Pellet guns is not a proportional response to current protests as far too much harm has been inflicted, particularly involving people's eyesight, far too many bystanders, including children, have been injured and medical assistance comes only at the risk of being arrested and prosecuted. When the police are involved in crowd control efforts, they must distinguish between violent protestors, peaceful protestors and bystanders. The pellet guns are used indiscriminately and even the inspector general of the Jammu and Kashmir police acknowledged that pellets do not have a predictable trajectory.—DNA

PO organizes seminar to elevate innovation, create IP awareness

ISLAMABAD: Intellectual Property Organization (IPO) Pakistan organized a training seminar on Technology Search and the Development of Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISCs) in Pakistan in collaboration with WIPO, HEC and NUST, the other day. Highlighting key points, Chairman IPO Farukh Amil lamented the lack of attention given to the intellectual property (IP) and IPO in Pakistan, said a press release issued here Friday. He stressed the need for a paradigm shift, with IPO actively promoting research and product development to bolster the country's innovation landscape. Amil pointed out that Pakistan often operates in silos, where academia, industry, and research institutions work independently. Bridging these divides is vital to accelerate technological advancements and innovation, he added. Additionally, Chairman Amil underscored the importance of agri-tech in combating climate change, emphasizing the role of technology in sustainable agricultural practices and food security. He praised the collaboration between IPO-Pakistan, HEC, and the development of 48 TISCs at HEC-recognized institutions. These partnerships aim to enhance research commercialization and intellectual property protection. Chairman Amil expressed his commitment to fostering an environment for research-driven innovation and intellectual property protection in collaboration with TISCs and ORICs.—APP

Nadeem inaugurates MRI machine at PIMS

He directed the hospital management to initiate a clinical audit system within their hospital to take measures to ensure the quality of service of the hospital. Dr Nadeem Jan said, "I will not compromise on giving relief to the people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Friday inaugurated the MRI machine at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS). Addressing the inauguration ceremony, he said that health sector reform was his top agenda and mission. He added without reforms, improvement and development in the health sector was not possible. Dr. Nadeem Jan said that he received

complaints that the MRI machine at the hospital was out of order for the last four years and patients had to go to private hospitals for MRI. "On which I had given a deadline to the administration to make MRI functional by today," the minister added. He said that although the machine had become functional but he directed the hospital management to take action against the responsible for the delay. "There will be no compromise on merit, transparency and

reforms. I will ensure the implementation of this agenda," he added. He said that all doctors, paramedical staff and management of the hospital had been instructed to maintain good behavior towards patients, behave with courtesy, work with dedication and passion, and ensure the provision of excellent medical facilities. He directed the hospital management to initiate a clinical audit system within their hospital to take measures

to ensure the quality of service of the hospital. Dr Nadeem Jan said, "I will not compromise on giving relief to the people." He said that Pakistan Nursing Council, Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) was taking many steps to promote merit and transparency. The minister said that health should be non-political, adding "We all have to play our key role for betterment of the country."

Briefs

CDA plans to develop Festival Square in F-9 Park

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has planned to develop Festival Square in F-9 Park which would not only provide food outlets but also folk musicians to the residents of the federal capital. "The authority has asked the interested well-established food brands and firms to submit their applications to become a part of this Festival Square till November 01 on the official @ CDAthecapital," an official in the CDA told media here on Friday. He said that the Festival Square will feature food trucks, street performers, folk musicians and handicraft stalls. The CDA has asked that only well-established brands with at least experience of five years would be preferred. The official informed that the authority has allocated a quota for establishing stalls in the Festival Square including 40 percent for men, 55 percent for women and five percent for Trans-genders.

He said the authority intends to develop state-of-the-art facilities in F-9 Park by providing more recreational opportunities to the residents of the capital as all available resources would be utilized to create a model park of the city, which is spread over an area of 750 acres. The official said that in pursuance with the directions of Chairman CDA Capt @ Anwar ul Haq, the concerned official directed to ensure a proper lighting system in the park particularly along the jogging and walking tracks, kids play and other areas. He said the CDA chief has also directed to depute more security guards within the park, in addition to the guards deputed at entry gates, so that the visitors could be provided a safe and secure environment. The official said the authority has also installed more light poles, plantation of more shady and fruit trees particularly along the natural stream flowing through the park in addition to the cleanliness of the stream.—DNA

ECP initiates consultation on voluntary ESG

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) on Friday issued draft guidelines on ESG disclosures for consultation as part of its Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Regulatory Roadmap issued in June 2022. The guidelines have been prepared to encourage listed companies to enhance their ESG disclosures in a fair and transparent manner on voluntary basis, said a news release issued here. Since the guidelines are non-mandatory in nature, non-listed companies may also seek guidance from the draft guidelines for embarking on their journey towards adoption of ESG standards. The draft guidelines cover a wide range of topics under the E, S and G pillars including the recommended metrics related to climate change, Green House Gases emissions, energy usage, gender diversity, executive compensation, non-discrimination, health and safety, board diversity, incentivized pay and internal controls etc. Under the draft guidelines, the companies have the liberty to disclose their ESG performance by issuing a separate sustainability report, integrating it with the company's annual report or publishing it online on their website. The SECP is committed to promoting sustainable and responsible business practices in Pakistan and issuance of the draft ESG guidelines is a significant step forward in this direction. By improving ESG disclosures, the SECP aims to improve transparency in company's operations, promote sustainable business practices to reduce impact on environment and help investors make more informed investment decisions.

Indonesian Embassy promotes cultural linkages with Pak



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indonesian Cultural Troupe from West Sumatra Province concluded its trips in Pakistan by performing in The National University of Modern Languages (NUML) and Iqra University. The performance is part of cultural program of the Indonesian Embassy to deepen cultural connections between people of Indonesia and Pakistani. Consisting seven performers, the Troupe entertained audiences with several traditional dances showcasing the unique culture of the only matriarchal community in Indonesia. Among the pecu-

liarities of the dances were the fusion of firmness of martial arts works and graceful movements. Traditional musical instruments and flutes played during the event made performance more unique. One talented Pakistani dancer recipient of the 2023 Indonesian Arts and Culture Scholarship (BSBI) also joined the performance. "We warmly welcome this cultural performance to take place in NUML as it reminds me connected-similarities in the poems made by famous poets of two countries, Allama Muhammad Iqbal from Pakistan and Chirail Anwar from Indonesia," explained Prof. Dr. Jamil Asgor Jammil, Dean of Languages NUML in his welcom-



ing speech. The similar sentiment was also expressed by the academic community in the Iqra University on the following day. "By this performance, we know that the good impression about Indonesia is not only from Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. This dance is very elegant. The dancers neatly cover their body and their movements are also very polite," commented Dr. Jasim Tariq, Assistant Professor Business Administration Department, Iqra University, who just returned from the Umrah. In his remarks Indonesian Ambassador Adam Tugio stated that this performance by Syofyani Dancing Group was only one small part of huge diversity of Indonesian, an

archipelago that has hundreds of tribes and local languages, living in 38 provinces with their own respective uniqueness. The envoy further encouraged Pakistani students to apply for fully funded scholarships provided by the Indonesia government to get first hand experience of unique culture of the Archipelago and simultaneously to witness the cultural fusion as reflected in customs and cuisines. "Currently, Pakistani students are the largest recipients of educational scholarships from the Indonesian Government," he added while pointing out the similarities between various words in Urdu and Indonesian. Brig. Shehzad Munir, Director General of NUML and Engr. Khizer Zaki,

Director for Student Affairs, Iqra University while expressing his admiration to the unique cultural dance from Indonesia, thanked the Indonesian Embassy for its initiative and expressed interest for furthering academic cooperation including student exchanges in various fields. Universities are among the important partners in bolstering the people-to-people relations between Indonesia and Pakistan. Apart from showcasing Indonesian cultural arts, the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad has also organised Online Internship Program (OIP) to introduce modern Indonesia through series of public lectures by experts from universities and think tanks in Indonesia.

Power distribution work starts for Gwadar Free Zone North

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Power distribution work has commenced for providing 5 Mega Watts (MW) of electricity to Gwadar Free Zone North by erecting power poles and laying electricity wires in two phases simultaneously. It will take two months to complete the work, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. In the first phase, the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) has started installing power infrastructure from the grid station to the perimeter walls of Gwadar Free Zone North. In the second phase, local company SIGMA Engineering Ltd has started laying the electricity distribution system from the walls of Gwadar Free Zone to the buildings of various industrial sites. SIGMA Engineering Ltd has been outsourced by China Communications Construction Company (CCCC) Limited, a GPO official told Gwadar Pro. "After completion of the entire project, the per unit power tariff charged to factories will be around Rs 57 according to the government rate prescribed for industries. Currently, generator-based electricity is being provided to all operational factories in Gwadar Free Zone North temporarily.

Bilawal condoles the demise of Chinese ex-Premier

DNA

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party and former Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the news of the demise of the former Chinese Prime Minister, Li Keqiang. Chairman Bilawal in a condolence message said that Premier Li Keqiang gave great importance to the strengthening of bilateral ties and cooperation between Pakistan and China. It was the collective vision of the Pakistani and Chinese leaderships during the 2008-2013 PPP government under the guidance of President Zardari that led to the realization of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Premier Li Keqiang will be remembered by the Pakistani people as a great friend of Pakistan, Chairman Bilawal said.

People are negatively impacted by taxes and inflation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Friday that the people are suffering from runaway inflation and heavy taxes, which should be given relief as soon as possible.

Apart from these problems, the salaried class is also facing other problems that need to be solved; otherwise, the country will suffer further social and economic losses, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that expenses are continuously increasing while salaries are not increasing accordingly, so it is difficult for many to work in government and private institutions where working was once considered an honour.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the expenses of the employees are not being met because of low salaries, due to which they are worried, which affects their performance, which is also damaging the businesses they work for. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the employees who have alternatives available are leaving their jobs and turn-

ing to agriculture and the property sector, which is affecting government institutions and private companies, and those who have no option are left to face the problems. Those earning a salary of half a million now have to pay 18 percent tax, while one million salary earners have to pay more than 26 percent tax, while those getting salaries in the thousands have to take out loans or sell household goods for essential expenses. The business leader noted that people also have to pay 16 to 18 percent sales tax, a petroleum levy, and a heavy tax on everything, including electricity, gas, and mobiles. Besides, people have to pay fees for private

schools, private hospitals, private security, private transport, and even water, which is sad. Those who are paying taxes get nothing in return, and subsidies worth billions are given to those who do not pay taxes at all. The elite is saving four thousand billion rupees in taxes and is getting annual benefits worth billions of rupees, he observed. More than 23 million children do not go to school, and forty percent of the children suffer from malnutrition, but the expenditure of the government is increasing. Due to these conditions, besides the workers, experts are also trying to find jobs abroad in search of a better future.

Ghana can help Pakistan in trade economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ghana's Consul General Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt and Vice Consul and well-known businessman Omar Shahid Butt met Vice President FPCCI & Chairman Capital Office, Islamabad Mr. Amin Ullah Baig at Islamabad. In the meeting, they discussed the promotion of bilateral, economic, and trade relations. Mr. Amin Ullah Baig, Vice President of FPCCI and chairman of Capital Office said that Ghana is an important African country that can help Pakistan find space in the \$4 trillion African market. Pakistan enjoys cordial relations with all the African States and is equally keen to build up trade & economic relations with Ghana. Pakistan and Ghana are steady trading partners and over the years, the market of Ghana has proved to be a good destination, especially for Pakistani exports. We need to maintain a consistent rise in exports to Ghana to be able to take that to at least 500 million dollars. We can easily take the level of Pakistan exports to Ghana up to 500 million by acquiring the desired share in the market of Ghana. Mr. Amin Ullah Baig, Vice President of FPCCI and chairman of Capital Office further said that there are huge trade opportunities between Pakistan and the African nation. This should be taken advantage of along with establishing relations of brotherhood between the peoples of the two countries. Pakistan has made a lot of progress in various sectors including IT, and agriculture, and can cooperate with Ghana in these areas. Vice President of FPCCI also called for establishing close relations between the national chambers of the two countries and said that the business community of the two countries should play its role. They should actively promote trade relations so that the economies of the two countries could improve as well as increase employment opportunities. Furthermore, he stated that Pakistan looks forward to promoting bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, and multilateral sectors with African countries, including Ghana, under economic diplomacy.

Pak athlete wins gold medal at 4th Hangzhou Asian Para Games

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani star athlete Haider Ali has made the nation proud by clinching first position and winning a gold medal in the men's discus throw F37 event at the ongoing 4th Hangzhou Asian Para Games. Haider displayed exceptional strength and skill, throwing the discus an impressive 51.53 meters, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. He is an accomplished Pakistani para-athlete who made history at the 2008 Summer Paralympics in Beijing, China, winning Pakistan's first ever Paralympic medal - a silver. On September 3, 2021, he became Pakistan's first gold medalist at the Paralympics. Speaking after his victory, Haider expressed

gratitude to his coaches, teammates and Pakistani sports authorities for their unwavering support. He hoped his achievement would inspire fellow Pakistani para-athletes to strive for excellence and overcome challenges. He emphasized the warm hospitality of the Chinese people, who embraced participants from various countries. He mentioned the friendly and welcoming nature of Chinese volunteers and staff, who helped create a positive, encouraging environment. Pakistani officials and athletes at the 4th Hangzhou Asian Para Games Haider's journey has been marked by dedication, hard work and perseverance. His success at the 4th Hangzhou Asian Para

Games is a testament to the potential and talent in the Pakistani sports community. It serves as inspiration to other athletes and demonstrates Pakistan's commitment to inclusivity and para-sports. The ongoing games have witnessed participation of 11 talented Pakistani athletes showcasing skills in athletics, archery, badminton, table tennis and wheelchair tennis. The 4th Hangzhou Asian Para Games, running from October 22 to 28, is a multi-sport event for athletes with disabilities across Asia. With nearly 5,200 participants from 44 countries, including around 3,100 athletes, it is the largest event of its kind.—DNA

Kitchen items' prices eases by 0.33 percent

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed decrease of 0.33 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on October 26, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 277.11 points as compared to 278.04 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 29.65 percent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.—APP

President directs varsity to consider granting extension to female student


DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has asked Air University to reconsider the case of granting one additional year to its female student for completing her degree as she was unable to complete the remaining courses of her BS degree due to suffering from COVID-19. He expressed displeasure that the University did not timely process her case, despite the fact that Higher Education Commission (HEC)'s Policy and University Regulations provided for remedies to resolve such issues by granting extension. He said that there was no reason for the University to deviate from HEC's policy and recommendations, stating that instead of rectifying its maladministration, the University submitted a

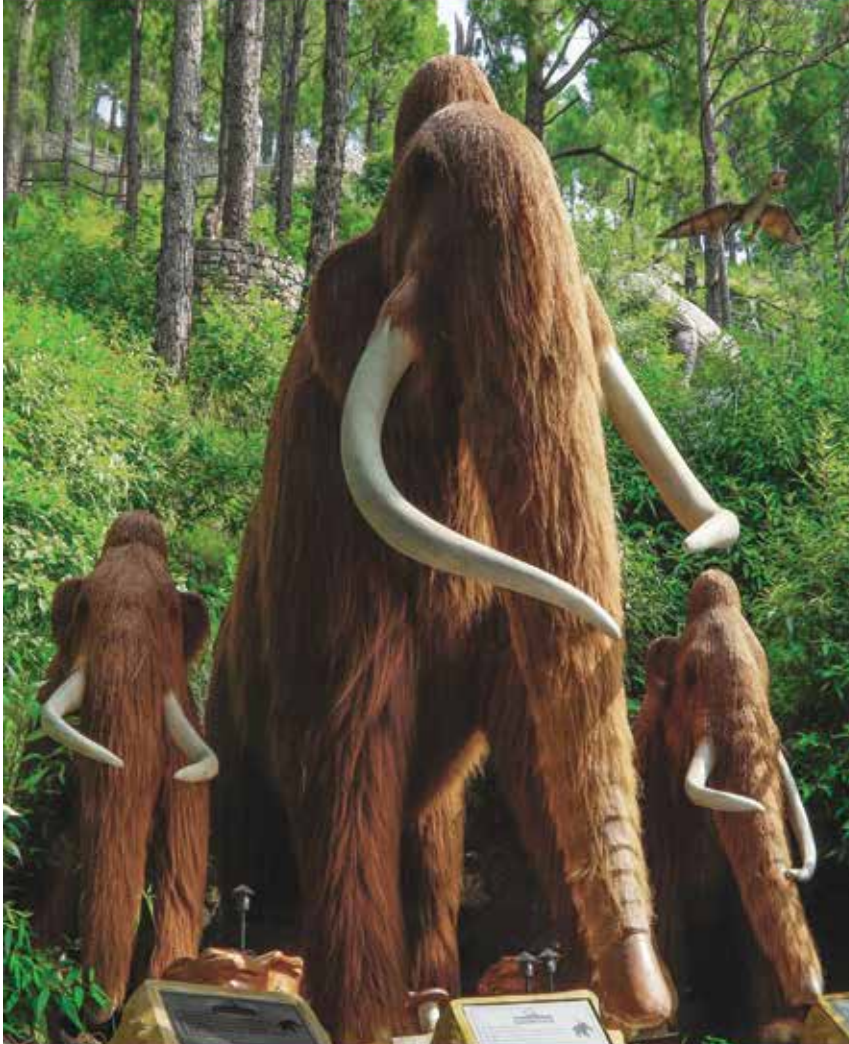
representation before the President without realizing its implications in respect of public exchequer and wastage of study timeline of its student. He advised the Air University to not let the female student's devotion, hard work, and money go to waste and take measures to help and guide students, especially in the case of women. The President gave these directions while deciding upon a representation filed by Air University against the order of the Wafaqi Mohtasib directing it to place Ms Iqra Munir's case before the University Functional Committee (UFC) and reconsider it for allowing her one more year to complete her BS degree. As per details, Ms Iqra Munir (the complainant) had filed a complaint before the Wafaqi Mohtasib alleging that she was a student of Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Psychology Programme in one of the colleges affiliated

with the Air University. According to her, due to Covid pandemic, she could not complete her degree in 2020. She approached the University to allow her for completion of her degree but she was advised to contact HEC for grant of an additional year to complete her studies. Later, HEC advised that the competent authority of the University may reconsider her case for extension keeping in view her medical history and the provisions already available in HEC Policy and University Regulations. However, after a lapse of one year she was not given the extension. Feeling aggrieved, she approached the Wafaqi Mohtasib, who passed the order in her favour. The University then filed a representation before the President against the order of the Mohtasib. The President rejected the representation and observed that the University did not follow the recommendations

of the HEC and did not put the case before the UFC, who was competent to make a decision in this regard. He said that the student fell ill due to COVID-19 and has been running from pillar to post to get some time to complete her degree. He said that HEC's Policy Guidelines provided that the maximum time limit to complete her degree was 6 years, which was further extendable for one year with the approval of the Statutory Bodies. He added that if her case had been placed before the UFC at the right time, her issue could have been resolved but it was not done. The President said that instead of rectifying its maladministration, the University wasted time and resources and did not provide any justification to reverse the order of the Mohtasib.



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Middle East crisis increases its challenges

UNRWA, the agency for Palestinian refugees, warned of an increasingly desperate humanitarian situation in Gaza, with fuel for desalination and electricity generation plants almost exhausted. On the same day, Israel called for António Guterres to resign over his remarks on the Israel-Hamas war, and accused him of "blood libel". An immense institution affords the man at its head very limited power. His role is to mobilise resources, via UN agencies, and to use his platform as a pulpit. In his second term, Mr Guterres has become blunter, issuing clarion calls on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the climate emergency. But the challenges that he and the institution face are mounting – and are both underscored and exacerbated by the current crisis. UNRWA cannot do its job when relentless bombardment has killed 35 of its staff – as well as more than 6,500 others in Gaza, according to the Palestinian ministry of health – and when only a trickle of aid is getting through. Mr Guterres cannot do his job when member states tear him down. The secretary general unequivocally condemned the horrific attacks by Hamas on 7 October, which left at least 1,400 dead in southern Israel, said that nothing could justify the deliberate harming of civilians and urged the release of the more than 200 hostages reportedly held by Hamas. He also denounced what he called clear violations of international humanitarian law in Gaza and said that the attacks by Hamas "did not happen in a vacuum." The Palestinian people have been subjected to 56 years of suffocating occupation. Israel has long argued that it is unfairly treated at the UN. Though the secretary general's central message was clear and right, his speech was in places poorly drafted at a time of great sensitivity. The Israeli ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, turned on the secretary general so strongly that the criticism, rather than the plight of civilians in Gaza and growing calls for a ceasefire, dominated headlines. But 10 years ago, it would have been hard to imagine the contempt radiating from Mr Erdan's announcement that UN representatives would be refused visas because "the time has come to teach them a lesson". That surely reflects the organisation's reduced status. Beyond the unquestionable institutional issues of bloat, inefficiency and lack of accountability lies the problem of a political structure that was set up after the second world war having to navigate current geopolitics. The security council is characterised by deadlock. Its five permanent members are increasingly cleft into US-Britain-France and China-Russia camps. India, African nations and others demand a better seat at the table. The UN's challenges are exemplified by competing, failed resolutions on the Middle East. They included a US-sponsored motion on Wednesday that, though heavily revised following consultations, called for a humanitarian pause rather than a ceasefire, and a Russian-drafted one that did not mention Israel's right to self-defence (and which, despite Moscow's hideous record, piously condemned violence against civilians). The general assembly will vote on a non-binding resolution on Friday. As Mr Guterres himself warned last month, multilateral mechanisms are weakening. Yet the need for them is growing. A multitude of conflicts and humanitarian crises grind on around the world.



America's new speaker

With the election of Mike Johnson of Louisiana as the new House speaker, the US has now got its federal government back. Without a speaker, Congress cannot function. For the past four weeks, the House of Representatives has been a phantom legislature. It has been absent without leave at a time of global crisis. The return to business is therefore better than a continuation of the paralysis on Capitol Hill. But it has been obtained at a very high price. In September, the former speaker Kevin McCarthy made a deal with House Democrats to avoid a government shutdown. In revenge, eight implacable Republicans voted for Congressman Matt Gaetz's motion to oust him, which passed with Democrat support. The Republican caucus then immobilised Congress through several failed attempts to elect a new speaker. Mr Johnson has now succeeded as he has accumulated fewer enemies, because pragmatists want an end to the impasse and because the right thinks that he is their man. In other words, Mr Gaetz has won. He has orchestrated the removal of an establishment Republican House leader who was prepared, up to a point, to work with Democrats to keep government alive and to pass legislation, in favour of a relatively little-known rightwing Conservative who may not be. With a 17 November deadline looming for the renewal of government funding, Mr Johnson's readiness to make the deals that a narrowly divided Congress like this one normally relies on will be put to the test soon. But making deals is not the culture of the Republican party today. And Mr Johnson knows that Mr Gaetz will be watching his every move. Mr Johnson's profile may be less confrontational than that of other possible candidates. But his record is the opposite of encouraging. He has strong religious conservative views on issues like abortion and same-sex marriage. He does not believe that human beings cause climate change. He has voted against aid to Ukraine. Above all, he supports Donald Trump's lies about the 2020 presidential election being rigged and stolen. He helped lead legal efforts to reverse the results of the election in Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. He opposes attempts to bring Mr Trump to justice. The speakership is powerful, but Mr Johnson is relatively inexperienced and there are big issues that need to be decided very quickly. They include the terms for the continuation of government funding, aid to Ukraine and military support for Israel. With Mr McCarthy now gone, it is possible that the right will cut Mr Johnson some slack. Certainly, the US cannot afford another month like this one. If nothing else, it should end the system that gives a single member of Congress, like Mr Gaetz, the power to bring the system to a halt. Yet an even larger question stalks the coming months. The shambles of the last four weeks has been the exclusive responsibility of a dysfunctional Republican party, in hock to its dysfunctional former leader, and which no one can grip effectively without risking their career. At national level, the Republican party is now the institutional abnegation of good government. It will take more than Mr Johnson to change that.

Biden's hug is a double edge sword

James Dorsey

Heart-wrenching scenes of more than 7,000 dead, including 2,000 children, according to Palestinian sources, the closure of hospitals because of a lack of fuel, a blackout due to Gaza running out of energy, unimaginable situations in hospitals lacking electricity and medical supplies that are overrun by patients and displaced persons, and impending hunger as food stocks are depleted. Pressured by the United States and international public opinion, Israel has agreed to allow humanitarian aid to trickle into Gaza. However, it is too little, and for many too late, and impeded

It took 11 days and the death of 256 Palestinians for US President Joe Biden's preference for a bear hug rather than a sledgehammer approach to get Israel to halt the Gaza bombing in 2021. Even then, Mr. Biden needed to be blunt and go public to get what he wanted. After 10 days of behind-the-scenes diplomacy and US blocking of condemnatory United Nations Security Council resolutions, Mr. Biden placed his fourth phone call to Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu in little more than a week. Mr. Biden advised the Israeli leader that he "expected a significant de-escalation today on the path to a ceasefire." When Mr. Netanyahu sought to buy time to continue the bombing, Mr. Biden replied: "Hey man, we're out of runway here. It's over." Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire a day later. Mr. Biden's bear hug approach took its toll on the Palestinians in 2021, but ultimately it worked. Two years later and 20 days into the most ferocious Israeli air attack on Gaza, likely to be followed by a ground offensive into a besieged strip that has been devastated, the toll of Mr. Biden's approach is a multitude. Heart-wrenching scenes of more than 7,000 dead, including 2,000 children, according to Palestinian sources, the closure of hospitals because of a lack of fuel, a blackout due to Gaza running out of energy, unimaginable situations in hospitals lacking electricity and medical supplies that are overrun by patients and displaced persons, and impending hunger as food stocks are depleted. Pressured by the United States and international public opinion, Israel has agreed to allow humanitarian aid to trickle into Gaza. However, it is too little, and for many too late, and impeded by unrelenting Israeli bombings. To be sure, 2023 is not 2021. What provoked Israeli ferocity was far more extreme than the clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces and the rockets fired at Israeli towns from Gaza by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in 2021. The brutal and wanton killing by Hamas of some 1,400, mostly civilian, Israelis and the kidnapping of some 220 Israeli, dual, and foreign, primarily civilian, nationals was on an unprecedented scale

and demonstrated Hamas' refusal to distinguish between innocent civilians and security and military personnel, a mirror image of Israel's approach to Gaza. The killings evoked Holocaust associations. Dehumanizing statements by Israeli officials and calls for the expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza reflect the depth of Israeli anger. Coupled with a seemingly blanket US support for Israel, they also reinforced Palestinian suspicions that ridding itself of Palestinians is Israel's long-standing goal. Mr. Biden's bear hug approach and refusal to pressure Israel more forcefully involves a complicated cost-benefit analysis as well as a crucial political battle that could not only drag the United States into another Middle East war but also change the paradigm of Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking. Republican Mike Johnson's introduction of a bill in Congress supporting Israel that was adopted with an overwhelming majority as his first act as speaker of the US Congress demonstrates domestic restraints on Mr. Biden in the run-up to next year's presidential election. Even so, the depth of emotional Israeli public backing for a severe punishment of Hamas calls into question the effectiveness of a bear hug approach unless Israel decides there are reasons of its own to limit or avoid a ground offensive or stop the bloodletting. Add to that the question of the price both Palestinians and the United States are paying for a go-slow approach. Palestinians pay the price in lives and destruction, the cost to the United States is reputation and geopolitics. To be sure, Mr. Biden agrees with Mr. Netanyahu that Hamas leaders, commanders, and fighters should be held accountable for the October 7 killings. The problem is that even if the Israeli assault destroys Hamas physically, it will not squash militancy nor Palestinian national aspirations. Moreover, Mr. Biden's bear hug approach lends legitimacy to assertions of US hypocrisy, particularly when compared to his statements on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the exception to his tactics that he applies not only to Israel but also in domestic politics. The notion of hypocrisy undermines the US assertion that it stands for principles and values and perceptions of its reliability as a security partner elsewhere in the

Middle East. Similarly, it has opened the door to a shifting of the Israeli-Palestinian paradigm with Israel's assertion that Hamas is the equivalent of Islamic State. The Israeli effort is designed to put the shoe on the other foot. Two decades after the 9/11 Al Qaeda attacks on New York and Washington sparked a push for "moderate" Islam, the Israeli assertion turns a national conflict into a struggle against religious militancy. On a visit to Jerusalem to express solidarity with Israel, French President Emmanuel Macron picked up on the Israeli assertion by calling for the military alliance that defeated Islamic State in Syria and Iraq to take on Hamas. While Hamas' October 7 rampage resembled Islamic State atrocities, Hamas differs substantially from Islamic State. It is a militant religious nationalist group, not a transnational jihadist movement seeking a caliphate. Moreover, Hamas long served Mr. Netanyahu's effort to keep the Palestinian polity divided between the Gaza group and the Palestine Authority in the West Bank. Equating Hamas with the Islamic State serves the same purpose as Israel's visceral response to United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres' statement that the Hamas attack "did not happen in a vacuum." Israel cannot maintain its occupation of Palestinian lands and rejection of an equitable resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict if the Hamas attack is explained, not justified, as linked to Israeli policy towards the Palestinians. This week, Mr. Biden insisted that "there's no going back to the status quo as it stood on October 6," the day before the Hamas attack. "That means ensuring that Hamas can no longer terrorize Israel and use Palestinians civilians as human shields. It also means that when this crisis is over, there has to be a vision of what comes next, and in our view, it has to be a two-state solution," an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, Mr. Biden said. To achieve that, Mr. Biden, the first US president in decades to refrain from Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking, would have to engage. Bear hugs may not be sufficient to prevent Mr. Biden from becoming the umpteenth president to fail in resolving one of the world's most intractable conflicts.

America's 'dual' concerns for Israel-Gaza victims driven by hypocrisy

Ray Hanania

Regardless of the exaggerations made regarding the attack, many innocent civilians and off-duty Israeli soldiers were killed, wounded or kidnapped. Since Israel's military tightly controls and censors media coverage of everything involving its conduct toward Palestinians, it is difficult to know where the truth ends and the lies begin. But the word dual falls in line pretty quickly. For example, the US has a dual approach to news coming from the conflict. Whatever Israel asserts in its media propaganda campaigns, American officials embrace without question and stick to it even when evidence ultimately shows it to be an exaggeration or an outright lie. This dual approach to violence is stunning. The Hamas militants who attacked Israel on Oct. 7 took the lives of more than 1,000 civilians and 300 Israeli soldiers. US officials have joined Israel in expressing outrage at the "carnage," while considering all the fatalities as "victims," including those serving in Israel's military. Whatever Israel asserts in its media propaganda campaigns, American officials embrace without question. The duality surfaces when the same American officials brush aside the even more staggering death toll resulting from Israel's bombardment of Gaza's civilian population, which has destroyed hundreds of residential buildings, hospitals, mosques and churches and killed more than 6,000 Palestinians. This number will

continue to rise as long as the US blocks calls for a ceasefire. President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken have both rejected calls for a ceasefire that would end the killing of innocent civilians – a reflection of America's dual policy, which cares for Israeli lives but lacks concern for Palestinian lives. To obfuscate that duality, Biden and Blinken have both expressed a need to stop the killings of civilians, without mentioning that the only killings taking place now are of the Palestinians being indiscriminately targeted by Israel. In another example of America's dual policy, the Biden administration is working hard to evacuate Americans who wish to leave Israel. In fact, despite concerns about Israel's qualifications and commitment to applying it fairly, Biden fast-tracked Tel Aviv's entry to the Visa Waiver Program that will allow Israelis to enter the US without requiring a visa. But what the Biden administration is not doing is evacuating Americans who are in Gaza. Hundreds of American citizens are huddled at the Rafah crossing. They cannot cross and the US has done nothing to help them. The word dual also impacts citizenship loyalty. Many Israelis have dual US-Israeli citizenship. Regardless of their origins, all Israelis over the age of 18 are required to serve in the Israeli military. In contrast, there is no mandatory military service for American citizens. So, Israeli Americans do not have to defend America, just Israel. When the US expresses concern for "American lives in Israel," particularly those being held hostage, they do not address that issue. The unbalanced expressions of concern from the American government reflect a dual morality at every level. As an American of Palestinian heritage who proudly served in the US military during the Vietnam War, I think Americans who wish to serve in the military should do so in the American armed forces, not those of a foreign country. A question neither Biden nor Blinken will address is whether the American hostages being held by Hamas are actually Americans or if they are Israelis who enjoy dual citizenship and who

serve in Israel's military, but not America's. Is it right to use the label "American?" Finally, the US has a distinct dual policy when it comes to Americans killed in the conflict. If you are an Israeli American, your life is sacrosanct. Both Biden and Blinken have repeatedly and strongly expressed concerns for those Americans. But how has the US government responded when Palestinian Americans are killed? In nearly every instance, it has expressed weak concern for their tragic fate. Last year, two Americans were killed by Israeli soldiers. In January 2022, a 78-year-old Palestinian American citizen, Omar Assad, was brutally beaten, hooded and abused during a nighttime raid on a Palestinian village in the West Bank. He was not involved in any terrorist activities and an embarrassed Israeli government said it would investigate and punish the soldiers involved. Many months later, Israel announced that, while the soldiers would face disciplinary measures, no charges would be filed. In May 2022, an Israeli soldier shot and killed Shireen Abu Akleh, a Palestinian American citizen who was working as a journalist covering an Israeli assault on the Palestinian city of Jenin. There has been no justice for that killing. Not even any tough words about wanting to get to the bottom of the case. The US merely accepted Israel's assertion that she was shot accidentally. Going back further, American activist Rachel Corrie was crushed to death by an Israeli bulldozer in 2003, but her killing was never investigated by the US government. In 2010, 18-year-old Turkish American Furkan Dogan was killed by Israeli soldiers on the Mavi Marmara during the Gaza flotilla raid. And, in 2016, 16-year-old Palestinian American Mahmood Shaalan was killed by Israeli troops while crossing a checkpoint in the West Bank. The unbalanced expressions of concern from the American government reflect a dual morality at every level – one that is higher for Israel and nearly nonexistent for Palestinians. Many people recognize that the word dual, in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict, really means hypocrisy. —Sourced by Arab news.

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Briefs

Hostages
release after
ceasefire...

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fighting between Israel and Gaza's Hamas militants. Israel's military said it was aware of a security incident in the area. This week, Israel said a rocket claimed by Hamas hit an area outlying Eilat, the Israeli town across the border from Taba. A witness in Taba, which lies some 220 kms (136 miles) from Gaza, reported hearing an explosion and seeing heavy smoke and dust rising. Reuters was not immediately able to confirm the reports. European Union leaders have urged pauses in Israeli bombing and Hamas rocket attacks so humanitarian aid could be delivered to Gaza and U.S. President Joe Biden told Iran's supreme leader not to target U.S. personnel in the Mideast. U.S. forces have been hit more than a dozen times in Iraq and Syria in the past week by what Washington suspects are Iran-backed groups. Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Lebanon's Hezbollah are all backed by Tehran.

SJC 'issues'
show-cause
notice to...

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SJC is the only constitutional forum that has power to remove judges of superior courts on different charges. Besides Justice Naqvi, complaints have been filed against other judges of the superior court. However, it is unclear whether notices or action against other judges was discussed. Justice Masood, senior judge of the Supreme Court and member of SJC, had submitted his legal opinion on the misconduct complaints filed against apex court Justice Naqvi in September this year, according to a Pakistani newspaper. Several misconduct complaints were filed against Justice Naqvi during the tenure of former chief justice Umar Ata Bandial. Justice (ret'd) Bandial had referred the matter to Justice Masood for examining it and giving his legal opinion. Initially, the misconduct complaint against Justice Naqvi was filed with the SJC by a Lahore-based lawyer Muhammad Dawood. Later on, Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) Vice Chairman Haroon Rashid filed misconduct complaint against the SC judge after an audio leak emerged purportedly featuring a conversation about the fixation of the case before a particular bench or judge with former Punjab chief minister Pervaiz Elahi.

US wants
transparent
polls in...

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the safe and timely resettlement of eligible Afghans to the United States. They also agreed on the importance of free and fair elections that are inclusive and held in a manner consistent with Pakistan's laws. Both the acting deputy secretary and Foreign Minister Jilani discussed the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas. The acting deputy secretary highlighted the United States' call for the release of all hostages and the protection of civilians from harm. Nuland and FM Jilani also agreed on the need for a continuous flow of humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza and to prevent the conflict from spreading.

ECP may set
January 28
as the...

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the sources added. The ECP is set to apprise the SC after the top court sought the commission's response in the case of timely elections. Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, earlier this week, during the apex court's hearing on the issue of timely elections observed that it was "not possible" to meet the 90-day deadline for holding elections and lamented the lack of preparations of the petitioners. The CJP's remarks came as he is leading a three-member bench comprising himself, Justice Athar Minallah, and Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan to hear the petitions filed by the Supreme Court Bar Association, PTI, and others seeking elections within the 90-day constitutional limit.

PCB chairman praises
Sarfaraz captaincy

The PCB Chairman congratulated Karachi Whites for winning the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2023-24 and hailed the leadership qualities of their captain Sarfaraz Ahmed

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Committee Chairman Zaka Ashraf congratulated Karachi Whites for their victory at the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2023-24, in a meeting with the side's captain Sarfaraz Ahmed and key bowler Shah Nawaz Dahani. The meeting took place at the Pakistan cricket headquarters in Lahore, after the former Pakistan skipper steered Karachi Whites to a title triumph against Faisalabad in the final of the domestic cricket tournament on Thursday.

"The PCB Chairman congratulated Karachi Whites for winning the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2023-24 and hailed the leadership qualities of their captain Sarfaraz Ahmed while also appreciating the performance of fast bowler Shah Nawaz Dahani," PCB said in an official statement. Ashraf also reaffirmed PCB's commitment to continue to work for the players' well-being and support of regional cricket. Karachi Whites secured their



fifth Quaid-e-Azam Trophy title after overcoming Faisalabad at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore, prevailing by 456 runs on the final day of the five-day final. Faheem Ashraf, the captain of Faisalabad, was the final batter to be dismissed, caught off the bowling of Ghulam Mudassar, igniting celebrations for the team led by Sarfaraz Ahmed, who walked away with a cash prize of Rs.10 million.

Karachi Whites' previous Quaid-e-Azam Trophy victory was in the 2001-02 season when they defeated Peshawar in the final by eight wickets. Prior to that, they achieved a hat-trick of titles in 1990-91, 1991-92, and 1992-93. Saim Ayub of Karachi Whites, for his innings of 203 in the first and 109 in the second, was awarded the player of the final. Sarfaraz Ahmed, the captain of the victorious team with 697 runs and 28 dismissals, was named the player of the tournament.

From Faisalabad, Khurram Shahzad (36 wickets in eight matches) and Ali Shan (28 catches and one stumping) were declared the best bowler and best wicket-keeper of the tournament, respectively.

Kasatkina: Social media abuse
'completely out of control'

FORMER world number eight Daria Kasatkina says the abuse received by players on social media is "completely out of control". The 26-year-old Russian shared screenshots of threatening messages sent to her after she reached the WTA Elite Trophy semi-finals in Zhuhai. One said she "should be dead", with another blaming her

for losing a bet. Kasatkina's experiences are yet another example of the online abuse which continues to be directed at players. It is a long-standing problem which has affected tennis, where players report they are regularly targeted by gamblers, and other sports. In May, American Taylor Townsend shared a screenshot of the death

threat and racist abuse she received in an email after losing at the Italian Open. At this year's French Open, organisers offered players at the tournament artificial intelligence-protection from social media abuse. The Bodyguard technology aimed to filter out abusive comments on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok and Discord.

Poland's four-time major winner Iga Swiatek, who signed up to use the initiative, said it made "no sense to read" comments because they led to having "negative feelings and thoughts". Social media platforms have said they are committed to tackling abuse, with Instagram introducing a tool in 2021 to enable users to automatically filter out abusive messages from those they do not follow on the platform.

Earlier this year, a WTA spokesperson said the governing body works with a risk assessment and management company to shut down social media accounts when warranted.

"Player safety is the WTA's number one priority," the spokesperson added. "The WTA has been working for several years to educate and counsel players on this issue, as the number of players affected continues to increase and it's an important issue we take very seriously."

Maheesh Theekshana
says England
'underestimated' us

NEW DELHI : Sri Lanka spinner Maheesh Theekshana said defending champions England "underestimated" his team in their key ICC World Cup 2023 clash. The island nation bundled out a struggling England for 156 inside 34 overs and reached their target with 146 balls to spare in Bengaluru. Jos Buttler's England slipped to their fourth defeat in five matches to be on the brink of elimination in ICC World Cup 2023 while Sri Lanka kept their hopes alive of reaching the semi-finals. "I think they underestimated our team because we also lost three games and we only won against Netherlands. I think they underestimated us," Theekshana told reporters.

"That's why the result went our way because we backed our strength, we went with a simple plan, so that's why we won the game today." Maheesh Theekshana, who returned miserly figures of 1-21 with his mystery spin, added: "Our confidence as a team has increased a lot because we have won two matches so far. And this match is a match in which we got a very happy victory. "As a team, we are looking to play well in the upcoming four matches and reach the semifinals." Past bowler Lahiru Kumara stood out with figures of 3-35 before Pathum Nissanka (77) and Sadeera Samarawickrama (65) steered the team home in an unbeaten stand of 137. But it was the return of former captain Angelo Mathews that spurred the team on in the must-win match in ICC World Cup 2023. - Agencies

Dutch winger's
Mainz contract
terminated over post

FORMER Aston Villa and Everton winger Anwar El Ghazi will have his contract terminated at Mainz for a social media post about the Israel-Gaza conflict. El Ghazi was suspended on 17 October by the Bundesliga club, who called the now-deleted post "unacceptable". In a meeting on Thursday, the club wanted the 28-year-old to apologise for the perceived pro-Palestinian post. But the Dutchman told senior executives he stands for peace and humanity for all victims of the war. Sources told BBC Sport on Friday that El Ghazi was informed he will have his contract cancelled. He joined the club on a free transfer on 22 September after leaving PSV Eindhoven.

Under German labour law, an employer has 14 days from the date they became aware of the gross misconduct to terminate a contract, but if they miss this deadline they would have to pay the contract out in full. Mainz declined to comment when contacted by BBC Sport. Mainz' stadium is named after founding member Eugen Salomon, a Jewish man who was stripped of his club functions by the Nazis in 1933. Salomon died in the Holocaust in 1942. The Holocaust, carried out by Nazi Germany during World War Two, claimed the lives of an estimated six million Jews. Nice defender Youcef Atal has been suspended and is be-

ing investigated by French prosecutors for allegedly posting an antisemitic video relating to the conflict in Israel and Gaza. Mainz travel to face Bochum in the Bundesliga on Friday (kick-off 19:30 BST). - Agencies



Japan honors former Pakistani envoy with decoration

The ceremony was attended by the family, relatives, friends, and colleagues of H.E. Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad. H.E. Mr. Asad Majeed Khan, former Foreign Secretary, and former Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Japan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has conferred the 2023 Spring Imperial Decorations, "The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star" on H.E. Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad, former Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Japan in recognition of his significant contribution towards strengthening friendship, cultural and economic relations and mutual understanding between Japan and Pakistan. The Order of the Rising Sun is awarded by His Majesty the Emperor of Japan to Japanese and foreign individuals in recognition of their long-time contributions. On behalf of the Government of Japan, H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, the Ambassador of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan conferred the decoration on H.E. Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad at a ceremony held at the Ambassador's residence on October 27th in recognition of his decades of service. The ceremony was attended by the family, relatives, friends, and colleagues of H.E. Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad, H.E. Mr. Asad Majeed Khan, former Foreign Secretary, and former Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Japan, also graced

the occasion with his kind presence. In addition to his regular diplomatic activities, he has made great contributions to the Japanese people. During his tenure as Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Pakistan in Tokyo, the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11, 2011. After the earth-

quake, he reached out to the Pakistani community in Tokyo and visited the affected areas with them every weekend to serve Pakistani food and distribute relief supplies. Many Japanese people were moved by his and the Pakistani people's dedication, and his presence with the disaster victims was highly praised



by the Pakistani and Japanese media. In July 2019, H.E. Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad came back to Japan, as the Ambassador of Pakistan. That year has marked the beginning of a new era, Reiva, for Japan. Ambassador Imtiaz has always played a significant role in strengthening our ties. Last year, when Japan and Pakistan celebrated the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations, H.E. Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad played an important role in making this celebration a special one even amidst the difficult times of Covid 19 pandemic.

In his congratulatory remarks, H.E. Ambassador WADA greatly appreciated the efforts of Ambassador Imtiaz and said this prestigious Imperial decoration is the acknowledgement of his efforts and dedication towards the further strengthening of friendly relations between Japan and Pakistan. Fluent in Japanese language and well versed with Japanese culture, Ambassador Imtiaz truly played the role of a bridge between Japan and Pakistan and deserve our sincere applause and commendation, said Ambassador WADA. On receiving the award, H.E. Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad expressed his gratitude to the Government of Japan and the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad for honoring his dedications by holding the special conferral ceremony in Ambassador's residence.

Committee
to identify
handlers...

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identify those responsible for the 2017 sit-in, in line with the SC's decision dated February 6, 2019. In the last hearing of the case held on September 28, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa-led three-member bench - while hearing the review petitions against the verdict on the Faizabad sit-in staged by the TLP in 2017 against the then-Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government - had expressed annoyance over the non-implementation of the years-old order and directed all the parties to submit their written replies by October 27. A day earlier, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had also submitted its implementation report to the SC, complying with its aforementioned order. In its report, the electoral body said: "As per record already submitted respondent no.3 [TLP] as a party is not involved in any terrorist activity and not proscribed."

Imran
Khan's pleas
seeking...

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During the hearing, another counsel for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman, Barrister Salman Safdar argued that Section 5 of the Official Secrets Act was not applicable in the case. He said that the section could be invoked for sharing sensitive information with foreigners, and this "main ingredient is missing" in the FIR against the PTI chief. Khan had challenged the registration of the FIR and sought bail in the case filed against him and the party's vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi for misusing the secret document for their political gains. A special court formed under the Official Secrets Act has indicted both party leaders. They are currently incarcerated at the Adiala jail.

Imran's
message on
Nawaz's...

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London "agreement". In a statement, originally issued through his family on October 24 but tweeted out from the PTI chief's official X handle on Friday (today), the former prime minister - who was removed from power through a parliamentary vote in April last year - said that all that is happening today is a "total mockery of the law". "My Pakistanis! In the last few days, we have witnessed a total mockery of the law. All that is happening today is not just an execution of a London "plan" but London "agreement" that was signed between a cowardly fugitive & corrupt criminal and his facilitators," Khan was quoted as saying. The statement was released six days after Nawaz's homecoming from four years of self-imposed exile in London on October 21. Nawaz - the three-time former prime minister - was given protective bail in two graft cases and arrest warrants in another case were suspended before his arrival paving a way for a smooth return.

Explosion
hits US base
in Syria...

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ongoing and mostly unsuccessful attacks against US personnel in Iraq and Syria that began on October 17," he said, claiming that the targeted facilities were used by Iranian forces and Iran-backed groups. The Pentagon announced on Thursday that their forces and their allies had been attacked at least 16 times across Iraq and neighboring Syria this month amid regional outrage over the United States' heavy support for the Israeli regime's ongoing onslaught against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. "The United States does not seek conflict and has no intention nor desire to engage in further hostilities," Austin claimed despite the deployment of more US troops in the region. The Pentagon says roughly 900 US troops have been deployed or are deploying to West Asia amid heightened tensions in the region after a series of attacks on US-occupied bases.

Briefs

Russia launches anti-spy operation in Ukraine

MOSCOW : Russia has said that it killed a suspected Ukrainian spy and shut down two pro-Kiev online outlets during an operation in the occupied part of Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region. Since seizing control of large swathes of Ukraine last year, Russia has claimed to have foiled repeated acts of alleged sabotage as it tries to crack down on pro-Ukrainian resistance among the local population. "As a result of a special operation in the territory of Zaporizhzhia region, the FSB suppressed the activities of three large agent groups coordinated by Ukrainian intelligence," the FSB security service said in a statement. One man suspected of working for Ukrainian intelligence was killed in a gunfight during the operation, the FSB said, without providing further details.

Russia says Ukraine launched drone attack on nuclear power plant, no damage Russia has said that Ukraine launched an attempted overnight drone attack on a nuclear power plant in a Russian border region, but failed to inflict any damage on the facility. "On the evening of October 26, an attack by three enemy unmanned aerial vehicles on the Kursk nuclear power plant was stopped. — DNA

Guyana approves oil drilling amid Venezuela dispute

CARACAS : The new find, as well as some of the drilling concessions, are in a disputed area whose possible annexation Venezuela is putting to a national referendum. Guyana, much smaller than its neighbor, has the world's highest reserves of crude per capita. US oil giant ExxonMobil made the discovery of an estimated "20 meters of hydrocarbon-bearing reservoir" and about another "81 meters of additional hydrocarbon-bearing sandstone," Guyana's natural resources ministry said in a statement. The new reservoir would undergo a "comprehensive appraisal process," it added. Later, Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo told reporters that drilling bids had been awarded to companies including Exxon-Mobil, French multinational TotalEnergies and local company SISPRO Inc. "We now have to meet with the parties to which the blocks have been awarded to have a negotiation on the contracting, that is to move towards the completion of the award," said Jagdeo. Tiny Guyana boasts oil reserves of at least 10 billion barrels, more per capita than Brunei, Kuwait or the United Arab Emirates.—APP

Turkish CB unveils new steps to simplify regulations

ANKARA : Türkiye's central bank Friday announced fresh steps to simplify the macroprudential framework and increase the share of Turkish lira deposits, a day after the monetary authority delivered another hefty rate hike. Treasury and Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek said these steps were important for a better functioning market economy. The move came a day after the Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye (CBRT) raised its benchmark policy rate by 500 basis points to 35% as expected, tightening aggressively for a third straight month as it steps up efforts to rein in soaring inflation. In Friday's statement, the bank said that among simplification steps it was terminating the securities maintenance practice applied to banks at a rate of 30% based on lira-denominated cash loans they extend. "Likewise, the types of loans excluded from this practice will no longer be subject to the securities maintenance in case they are not extended against expenditure," the statement read.—DNA

Pak High Commission Canada marks Kashmir Black Day

High Commissioner reiterated that the brave struggle of Kashmiris for their right to self-determination has proven that India's brutality and military might can never suppress the Kashmiris

DNA

OTTAWA: The Pakistan High Commission in Ottawa and the Consulates General in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver observed "Kashmir Black Day" and organized Photographic Exhibitions on October 26, 2023, depicting atrocities of Indian occupation forces in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) which were attended by the members of the Pakistani community. In a video message on the occasion of "Kashmir Black Day", High Commissioner Zaheer A. Janjua said, "we have come together to express our unflinching support and solidarity to Kashmiri brethren, who remain undeterred by the oppressive Indian occupation forces in their struggle for right to self-determination". The High Commissioner reiterated that the brave struggle of Kashmiris for their right to self-determination has proven that India's brutality and military might can never suppress the Kashmiris. He underscored that the people of Kashmir have already chosen their path, and Pakistan will continue to ex-



tend moral, diplomatic, and political support to the indigenous and legitimate Kashmiri struggle for their right to self-determination. The High Commissioner also highlighted the historical significance of October 27th when Indian forces entered in the valley

against will of Kashmiris. He condemned the continued brutal use of force by the Indian Occupation Forces and Indian illegal steps taken since 5 August 2019 including imposition of strict curfew and complete lockdown of the valley of IIOJK. "It is imperative that the

international community must come forward and demand India's compliance with its international obligations in line with UN Security Council's resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir", he added. Members of Pakistani Community and Kashmiris held a protest/

rally in Ottawa in front of Canadian Parliament, Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. Seminars/ Webinar on the Kashmir Black Day were arranged by the Consuls General Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver on the human rights situation in IIOJK.

200,000 children abused by catholic clergy in Spain

MADRID : The report did not give a specific figure but said a poll of over 8,000 people found that 0.6 percent of Spain's adult population of around 39 million people said they had suffered sexual abuse by members of the clergy when they were still children. The percentage rises to 1.13 percent — or over 400,000 people — when including abuse by lay members, Spain's national ombudsman Angel Gabilondo told a news conference called to present the findings of the report. The revelations in Spain are the latest to rock the Roman Catholic Church after a series of sexual abuse scandals

around the world, often involving children, over the past 20 years. But unlike in other nations, in Spain — a traditionally Catholic country that has become highly secular — clerical abuse allegations are only now gaining traction, leading to accusations by survivors of stonewalling. "Unfortunately, for many years there has been a certain desire to deny abuses or a desire to conceal or protect the abusers," said Gabilondo, a former education minister. The report is critical of the attitude of the Catholic Church, calling its response to cases of child abuse involving the clergy "insufficient". It recommended the crea-

tion of a state fund to pay reparations to victims. Child protection offices Just before the report was presented in parliament, the Spanish bishops conference said it would hold an extraordinary meeting on Monday to discuss its findings. Spain's parliament in March 2022 overwhelmingly approved the creation of an independent commission led by the country's ombudsman to "shed light" on allegations of sexual abuse of "defenceless boys and girls" within the Catholic Church. Spain's Catholic Church, which for years flatly refused to carry out its own probe, declined to take part in the inde-

pendent investigation, although it did cooperate by providing documents on cases of sexual abuse that had been collected by dioceses. But as political pressure mounted, it tasked a private law firm in February 2022 with an "audit" into past and present sexual abuse by clergy, teachers and others associated with the Church, which should be completed by the end of the year. The Spanish Church said in June it had discovered 927 cases of child abuse through a complaints procedure launched in 2020. It argues it has set up protocols for dealing with sexual abuse and has set up "child protection" offices within dioceses.—APP

Massa leads Milei in Argentina poll

BUENOS AIRES : The presidential standard-bearer for Argentina's ruling Peronists, Sergio Massa, has opened up a lead over his far-right rival Javier Milei with less than a month to go before the decisive run-off vote. The survey from pollster Analogias put support for Massa, the outgoing government's economy chief, at about 42% versus 34% for Milei, a combative self-described anarcho-capitalist. Political polling has been wildly off in Argentina in recent years, including ahead of last Sunday's first-round vote, when Milei led in nearly all polls but ultimately came in second to Massa by about six points. The Analogias poll, one of the first to estimate support for the Nov. 19 run-off, follows Wednesday's shakeup when Milei won the key endorsement of last Sunday's third-place finisher, conservative Patricia Bullrich, who attracted almost a quarter of the vote. Bullrich's support for Milei should help him win over some of her more moderate conservative voter base that is opposed to the ruling Peronists, though her own coalition is deeply divided about backing the radical libertarian. The new poll also shows nearly 18% undecided in the head-to-head matchup, while about another 6% said they will vote for no one. Nearly 2,000 voters were surveyed from Oct. 23-35 for the survey. It also estimates Massa is winning about a third of those who supported last Sunday's fourth-place finisher, as well as almost 15% of those who opted for Bullrich.—APP

KenGen reports 38% pre-tax profit increase

NAIROBI : Kenya Electricity Generating Co Ltd (KenGen) (KEGN.NR) said on Friday its pretax profit for the year to the end of June rose 38%, lifting the company's share price. KenGen said its pretax profit rose to 8.53 billion shillings (\$57 million) from 6.19 billion shillings a year earlier, helped by a 14% increase in revenues to 53.96 billion shillings. At 1039 GMT, KenGen's shares were up 7.5% on the Nairobi Securities Exchange to trade at 2.30 shillings. The company, which is 70% owned by the Kenyan government, has an installed generation capacity of 1,904 megawatts (MW) and supplies 66% of the East African country's power. KenGen said in a statement it aims to increase its installed capacity by 58 MW over the next two years by boosting generation in three of its existing geothermal power plants. KenGen said its earnings per share rose to 0.76 shillings from 0.51 shillings and recommended a dividend payment of 0.30 shillings a share, from 0.20 shillings in the previous financial year.—APP

Markets diverge with US inflation in focus

LONDON : European stock markets struck a mixed note Friday after a rally in Asia in the wake of strong US tech earnings, while traders steered themselves for key US inflation data. The showing comes at the end of a rollercoaster week for equities, but the Middle East crisis continued to cast a shadow as Israel said ground forces had raided central Gaza for a second day. And while figures showed the US economy enjoyed its best growth since late 2021 during the third quarter, observers said there was a belief it had peaked and the new year would see a slowdown. However, questions remain over how long the Federal Reserve will keep interest rates at elevated levels. All three main indexes sank Thursday, with the Nasdaq again the worst performer owing to tech firms' susceptibility to higher borrowing costs. But blockbuster earnings from Amazon and Intel after the markets closed — and a surge in after-hours trade — provided Asian traders with a boost.—DNA

\$800m signed at largest-ever Saudi Agriculture exhibition

DNA
RIYADH:Agreements worth more than SR3 billion (\$800 million) were signed at a four-day gathering focused on food and agriculture in Riyadh. The Saudi Agriculture exhibition 2023 ran from Oct. 23 to 26, and saw more than 410 exhibiting companies from over 40 countries attend. The event encompassed three specialized exhibitions — focused on food packaging, agri-food, and aquaculture, respectively — and saw the signing of 16 agreements and three memorandums of understanding, according to the Saudi Press Agency. The 40th session of the exhibition recorded the largest number of visitors throughout its history, with businessmen, industrialists, and local, regional and international experts in attendance, alongside wholesalers, exporters, importers, and other stakeholders. The SPA report noted that the signings of the MoUs represent "an important step to enhance agricultural development and encourage investment in this important sector, and an opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency, enhancing food security, and diversifying sources of income in the Kingdom in accordance with the goals of the Kingdom's Vision 2030." The largest national pavilion belonged to the Netherlands, which highlighted Dutch expertise in areas such as greenhouse agriculture, smart farming, and irrigation systems. Other countries to be represented at the exhibition included China, India, and Thailand, as well as Spain, Turkey, and Georgia.

Russia is executing soldiers who refuse orders

Russia's ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Antonov, in a comment on the Telegram messaging app, made no reference to the White House allegations

WASHINGTON: The United States has information that the Russian military is executing soldiers who do not follow orders related to the war with Ukraine, the White House said on Thursday. "We have information that the Russian military has been actually executing soldiers who refuse to follow orders," White House spokesperson John Kirby told reporters. "We also have information that Russian commanders are threatening to execute entire units if they seek to retreat from Ukrainian artillery fire," Kirby said. Representatives from the Kremlin, the Russian defense ministry, and the Russian embassy to the United States did not immediately respond to requests for comment about the issue. Russia's ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Antonov, in a comment on the Telegram messaging app, made no reference to the White House allegations. But referring to the latest military aid package to Ukraine of \$150 million, Antonov branded the US move as "provocative and inflammatory actions in the international arena that look more like pouring oil on the fire" than trying to ease conflict. "It is long past time to halt the mindless multi-billion dollar flow to the bankrupt Kyiv regime," Antonov wrote on Telegram. "Time to stop showing total disdain toward the opinions of your own citizens and indifference to the growing number of victims dying from American weaponry." Ukrainian officials said on Wednesday that Russian forces were disregarding heavy losses and pressing on with a drive to capture the eastern Ukrainian city of Avdiivka. — Agencies

Malaysia names Sultan Ibrahim as next king

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has announced that its next and 17th king will be Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar from the southern state of Johor. Sultan Ibrahim was chosen by the country's nine sultans at a session of the Conference of Rulers on Friday and will be installed on January 31 next year.

"I hereby inform that the Conference of Rulers, during its 263rd (Special) Meeting, held at the National Palace on Friday, October 27, 2023, has agreed to declare that His Royal Highness Sultan Ibrahim, Sultan of Johor Darul Ta'zim, has been chosen as His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong XVII for a period of five years commencing from Jan 31, 2024," the keeper of the Royal Seal said in a statement. The Yang di-Pertuan Agong or "King of Kings" is a constitutional monarch, but since the historic elections of 2018 and the revolving door of ruling coalitions that followed, the king has taken a more active role in politics. King Al-Sultan Abdullah has used the monarch's discretionary powers to choose the country's last



three prime ministers, including after the election in 2022 when no single party won a parliamentary majority. Sultan Ibrahim, who is said to have a passion for fast cars and motorbikes and has extensive business interests, is also known for taking an annual road trip around Johor to meet the people of the state. Married with six children, the 64-year-old is trained to fly jets and helicopters, and has "the spirit of a soldier

and excel(s) in sea activities and other extreme sports," according to the website for the royal family. Sultan Ibrahim's father was the country's eighth king, holding the throne between 1984 and 1989. The Johor royal family dates from the early 16th century and has its own private army. For many of the country's majority Malays, especially in rural areas, royalty remains a potent symbol of identity. Sultans

are the guardians of Islam in their own states, while the king is also the protector of the religion in states where there is no hereditary monarch. Malaysia's Malays are always Muslim. The head of state lives in a purpose-built palace with 22 yellow domes in Kuala Lumpur's inner western suburbs. They also act as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and have the power to grant pardons to convicts.— Agencies

Erdogan, Somalia's Mohamud to discuss regional issues

Raging conflict between Israel and Hamas and the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Gaza are expected to be on the agenda of the leaders

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA : President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan will receive his Somali counterpart President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in Istanbul Friday to discuss bilateral relations as well as regional issues. The two leaders will meet at the Dolmabahçe office while no joint press briefing is expected. The raging conflict between Israel and Hamas and the unfolding

humanitarian crisis in Gaza are expected to be on the agenda of the leaders as the Somali capital Mogadishu has been the scene of large protests to support Palestinians, similar to Türkiye. Somalia is enjoying a close economic, diplomatic and military friendship with Türkiye that has been growing since Erdoğan visited Somalia in 2011. Since then, Türkiye has built an 80,000-square-meter (861,112-square-foot) embas-

sy in Mogadishu, which is its biggest embassy in Africa. Turkish humanitarian organizations are also operating in the country and helped avert a famine in 2022. Somalia has witnessed one of the worst droughts in four decades for the last two years. Somalia is also home to Türkiye's largest overseas military base and training facility. It has the capacity to accommodate around 1,500 trainees at a time

and has already trained over 5,000 Somali security forces. Furthermore, ties with Somalia are also growing as part of Ankara's strategy to enhance contact and cooperation with the African continent in every field. Türkiye's engagement with the African continent has been gaining pace over the years. Since taking office nearly two decades ago, first serving as prime minister, Erdoğan has been fostering ties with

Africa, presenting Türkiye as a fairer player than the continent's former colonial powers. Ankara has been stressing the desire to advance relations with the continent on the basis of a win-win relationship and equal partnership while observing mutual respect. Both sides have been vowing to tap into their greater potential when it comes to further expanding and deepening relations.

Briefs

LHC steps up efforts to grapple with smog

DNA

LAHORE: In a significant move, the Lahore High Court (LHC) has barred the government from issuing no objection certificate (NOC) for any development project until January. The order has been issued in response to the petitions submitted before the LHC to control smog. The Lahore commissioner has been directed to devise an encouraging policy for the people using electric motorcycles and bicycles. Similarly, points should be established in Lahore from where citizens can get bicycles on affordable rent, says court. LHC judge Justice Shahid Karim also ordered the commissioner to ensure conversion of brick kilns in Sheikhpura and Nankana Sahib into improved set-ups with new technology. Meanwhile, the court has withdrawn the stay order issued against development work near Babu Sabu interchange after the commissioner's statement and allowed work on the scheme. The LHC judge has taken significant measures which have helped reduce smog. Environment Commission head Hina Hafeezullah and senior member Syed Kamal Haider present report in every hearing of the case.

Iran Army launches drills in Isfahan

TEHRAN: The Islamic Republic of Iran Army Ground Force has started large-scale military drills in a central province of the country with a spokesman saying the exercise aims to boost deterrence against potential threats. The two-day exercises, codenamed Eghtedar (Authority) 1402, began on Friday in Nasrabad region of Isfahan Province with the participation of various units. Infantry regiments, armored divisions, missile and artillery units, airborne divisions, drone squads, electronic warfare units, and support teams are participating in the exercise. Brigadier General Karim Cheshak, spokesman for the military exercise, said on Friday. These forces are deployed to the exercise area from seven different provinces after traveling an average of 1,100 km, he added. About 200 military helicopters performed different operations on the first day. "This exercise will last for two days, and one of its main objectives is to improve the prowess and combat readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army Ground Force and enhance the country's level of deterrence against potential threats." "The drills will also aim to transfer relevant experiences to younger commanders and army forces, and practice multiple predetermined defence scenarios," Cheshak added. - Agencies

'Pakistan should focus on Africa for business promotion'

Ambassador Karmoune said that the outgoing high commissioner played key role in promoting relations between Nigeria and Pakistan



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) hosted a farewell reception in honor of H.E. Muhammad Bello Abioye High Commissioner of Nigeria to Pakistan at his home. Ambassador of Morocco H.E. Mohamed Karmoune, Ambassador of Ethiopia H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador of Algeria H.E. Brahim Romani, Ambassador of Somalia Mrs. Khadija Mohamed Almkhazoumi, Ambassador of Mauritius H.E. Rashidally Soobadar, Director General Foreign Affairs Shahid Ali Bhutto, Asif Luqman Qazi of Jamaat-e-Islami, Khalid

Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI and many other dignitaries and notables of the city. Speaking on the occasion, H.E. Muhammad Bello Abioye High Commissioner of Nigeria said that Africa is being termed as the Continent of future by the trade experts and Pakistan should focus on it to promote its trade by developing close cooperation with Nigeria. He said that direct flights between Nigeria and Pakistan have the potential to make significant increases in bilateral trade. He said that Nigeria and Pakistan can cooperate in many sectors including transportation, tourism, trade & commerce, industry. He said that during his tenure in Pakistan, he had taken several steps to facilitate the exchange of information, foster business-to-business

meetings, and implement a simplified visa policy to support the entrepreneurs. Visa applications have been processed within 48 hours over the past two years, streamlining the process for business-related travel. He thanked Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President ICCI and Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General UBG Pakistan for hosting a farewell reception in his honor and said that he has spent a very good time in Pakistan and would act as an Ambassador of Pakistan in future. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that Pakistan-Nigeria bilateral trade is just around US\$ 114 million, which is quite low as compared to the actual potential of

both countries. He stressed that Pakistan and Nigeria should accelerate efforts to increase bilateral trade at least up to US\$ 3 billion in the next few years to achieve mutually beneficial results. He said that Pakistan can export many products to Nigeria and other African countries including textiles, rice, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, electrical appliances, processed food, cosmetic & beauty products, leather goods, IT products, financial services. He paid tribute to the services of H.E. Muhammad Bello Abioye High Commissioner of Nigeria and hoped that he would play a role to promote business interests of Pakistan wherever he goes for his next assignment. Dean of the African Group Ambassador of Morocco Mohammad Karmoune in his address lauded the services of the outgoing colleague and wished his best of luck. Ambassador Karmoune said that the outgoing high commissioner played key role in promoting relations between Nigeria and Pakistan. Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI said that Pakistan and Nigeria are a combined market of about half a billion people and they can achieve much better results by developing close cooperation. He stressed for regular exchange of business delegations to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation between the two countries. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan lauded the services of H.E. Muhammad Bello Abioye High Commissioner of Nigeria who remained as an active Ambassador in Pakistan. He said that the direct flights between Pakistan and Nigeria can boost bilateral trade and urged that both countries should make all possible efforts to achieve this goal.

Army neutralize Indian quadcopter drone

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Army resolutely responded to the Indian Army's unprovoked firing on Thursday midnight and neutralized a quadcopter drone of the Indian Army at the Zafarwal sector. ISPR in a statement issued said that Pakistani forces took effective action to eliminate the drone, preventing potential harm. The indiscriminate firing by the Indian Border Force resulted in damage to the civilian population in the region. Pakistan Army swiftly retaliated, leading to reports of Indian soldiers sustaining injuries during the exchange of fire. Security experts speculate that the latest unprovoked firing incident possibly occurred under the influence of Qatar's court verdict sentencing the death penalty to eight Indian spies (members of the Indian Navy). Experts further said India has also faced global embarrassment due to targeted killings of Sikhs in Canada and the Indian government's dramatic firing at Sialkot firing could be an attempt to divert attention from the observance of Black Day and the ongoing situation in Kashmir. Despite India's attempts to shift the narrative and counter diplomatic isolation, it is essential to remember that the Pakistan Army possesses the capability to respond effectively, a fact that has been demonstrated in past.

Li Keqiang: Ex-Chinese premier dies at 68

BEIJING: Former Chinese premier Li Keqiang has died of a heart attack aged 68. State media said he died at 10 minutes past midnight on Friday despite "all-out" efforts to revive him. Li was once tipped to be the country's future leader but was overtaken by President Xi Jinping. A trained economist, he held the second highest-ranked position in China, though in recent years, he was widely isolated amongst China's top leadership. He was the only incumbent top official who didn't belong to Mr Xi's loyalists group. "Li's death means the loss of a prominent moderating voice within the senior levels of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), with no one apparently being able to take over the mantle," Ian Chong, non-resident scholar at the Carnegie China think tank told the BBC. "This probably means even less restraint on Mr Xi's exercise of power and authority." Li, who had stepped down as premier in March this year, suffered a sudden heart attack on Thursday and died early on Friday while he was in Shanghai.



His death is being widely mourned on Chinese social media, with many expressing shock and grief - though comments on many posts appear to have been restricted. "This is too sudden, he was so young," said one user on Chinese social media site Weibo. Another said his death was like losing "a pillar of our home". Reports of Li's death have also appeared in state media, in which his contribution to the CCP and the country are recognised. Deaths of former

Chinese leaders have triggered protests in the past. An outpouring of mourning during Jiang Zemin's death last year was seen as a subtle criticism of President Xi. Li was known as one of the smartest political figures of his generation. He was accepted into the prestigious Peking University Law School soon after the universities were reopened following Mao's Cultural Revolution during which millions of people are believed to have died. He is best known outside of China for the Li Keqiang index, a term coined by The Economist as an informal measurement of China's economic progress. Li came from a modest family and was the son of a local official. He was born in July 1955 in Dingyuan County in eastern China's Anhui province. He rose among the ranks, becoming the youngest provincial governor in China and later earning a spot in the top echelon of the party's central leadership, Politburo Standing Committee. At one point there was speculation that he would be groomed to succeed Mr Xi's predecessor Hu Jintao. - Agencies

Iran FM says Israel committing genocide in Gaza

TEHRAN: Iran's foreign minister says the Israeli regime is committing genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip and the recent retaliatory operation by the Palestinian resistance groups against the occupying entity was a legitimate response under international law. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a meeting with his Indonesian counterpart, Retno Marsudi, on the sidelines of a plenary session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Thursday. Pointing to a Brazil-drafted resolution addressing Israeli crimes in Gaza and the need to stop the regime's aggression, Amir-Abdollahian said, "Such resolutions should include three basic elements; an immediate ceasefire, the need for continuous access to and delivery of humanitarian aid to the oppressed Palestinian people, and confronting forced migration." The top Iranian diplomat censured Israel's crimes against Palestinians and said, "The Zionist regime is committing genocide in Palestine. If the genocide in Gaza continues, the warmongers themselves will not be spared from this fire." - Agencies

AC judge Bashir to retire on March 14, 2024

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday issued a notification regarding the retirement of Accountability Court (AC) Judge Muhammad Bashir. As per the notification, Judge Muhammad Bashir would retire on March 14, 2024. Judge Muhammad Bashir had heard references against six former prime ministers including Nawaz Sharif, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Sayed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Raja Perwaiz Ashraf, Shaukat Aziz and PTI chairman. - APP

Pak nightmare continues as SA inflict more misery

SPORTS DESK

CHENNAI: South Africa has nearly ended Pakistan's hopes of finishing in the final four of the ICC Men's ODI World Cup after bagging a one-wicket win at M. A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. Proteas now has five wins out of six games whereas Pakistan have only two with three games remaining. Temba Bavuma and his men had a few hiccups during the chase of 271 but Aiden Markram's impressive knock of 91 pushed them to the finish line. Earlier, Pakistan were bowled out for 270 in 46.4 overs. Tabraiz Shamsi bagged fig-

ures of 4/60 while Marco Jansen finished with figures of 3/49. Emerging pacer Gerald Coetzee took two wickets for 2/42. Pakistan they lost their openers - Abdullah Shafique (9) and Imamul Haq (12) - for cheap scores as Marco Jansen struck twice to bring the team under pressure. Skipper Babar Azam (50) and Mohammad Rizwan tried to build a partnership in order to boost the total but Gerald Coetzee dismissed the latter for 31. The Pakistan captain was removed for 50 and Iftikhar Ahmed fell for 21 by Tabraiz Shamsi. Saud Shakeel (52) and Shadab Khan (43) took the aggressive route and put scores on the board with fiery boundaries.

Nighat Dad joins UN SG's advisory body on AI

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appointed Nighat Dad, the executive director of the Digital Rights Foundation (DRF), to the high-level advisory board on artificial intelligence (AI) on Friday. The interim recommendations of the 39-member advisory board, which consists of accomplished and eminent individuals from across the globe, are anticipated by the end of the year and it will focus on three primary areas: international AI governance, generative AI, and a common understanding of the risks and difficulties associated with the application of these technologies. The board will prioritise addressing the global governance of AI. The advisory group will also look into ways to use AI and potential applications in order to hasten the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN's Pakistan chapter on X announced the development of Dad's appointment to the board. "Congratulations to @NighatDad, Executive Director of @DigitalRightsPK, who is now a member of the High-level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Mahatir draws parallel between Kashmir & Palestine

ISLAMABAD: Former Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahatir Muhammad on Friday said that India was attempting to change the demographic composition of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) by settling non-Muslim outsiders in the Muslim majority areas in the same way as the Israeli settlers who forcefully displaced Palestinians from their homes in the land grab activities sanctioned by the Tel Aviv regime. Dr Mahatir, in his video message played at an event organized by the Pakistan High Commission in Malaysia to mark Kashmir Black Day 2023, said India's revocation of Jammu & Kashmir's autonomy unilaterally four years ago saw the deployment of hundreds of thousands of soldiers into the illegally occupied territories of Jammu and Kashmir. "Along with that, atrocities were committed, while placing the whole population under siege." He said, "We have also heard reports of how India is attempting to change the demographic composition of Jammu and Kashmir." Dr Mahatir said the Kashmir Black Day marked the beginning of the occupation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir by India since 1947. It had indeed been a very long time since the occupation started and the recent treatments of India on the occupied territories "do not reflect that it plans to reconsider its occupation let alone end it anytime soon. "In fact, India is forcefully bullying any opposition to its occupation while at the same time tightening its grip on these territories." He said, "The ruthless regimes proclaim to be advocates of democracy while they commit apartheid. They express anger and disgust when their victims retaliate and hit back at them, usually on minute scale, disproportionately compared with their vicious attacks. - DNA

PM directs Info Minister to look into media's problems



ISLAMABAD: The Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi calls on the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. - DNA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has directed the Information Minister Murtaza Solangi and the Information Ministry officials to look into the problems of the media industry and resolve them on

priority. He passed these directions during a meeting with the Information Minister, Secretary Information and the Principal Information Minister. The Prime Minister recognized media role. He said the government believes in independence of journalism. He asked the Ministry officials to continue meeting with the media bodies for better coordination between the government and the media.

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