



# Islamabad POST

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**Abbas says, 'End Israeli aggression', as he meets Blinken**

Detailed News On Page-08

**EU should recognize Palestine**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Iran prepared to boost military coop with KSA**

Detailed News On Page-08

**"Politically motivated"**

## Justice Naqvi moves Supreme Court against SJC notice

This is second petition filed by Justice Naqvi against SJC proceedings initiated against him on complaints

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Justice Sayeed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi Thursday approached the Supreme Court challenging the revised show cause notices issued to him by the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), which he contends, are "politically motivated complaints". The judge, through his legal team, has filed a petition against the revised show cause notice and the SJC proceedings being pursued against him. In the plea, he has also responded to the 10 allegations put forward against him. In the petition, Justice Naqvi contends that the complaints against him are politically motivated due to the verdict on the Punjab elections taken after the suo motu proceedings initiated by former chief justice Umar Ata Bandial during the hearing of the Ghulam Mehmood Dogar case. The judge further contends that the Shehbaz Sharif-led federal government wanted to delay the polls and his cabinet later started a "malicious campaign" against him. He also contended that the Pakistan Bar Council and other organisations or lawyers met with then-PM and after that, they started "targeting" him. "It is evident that the so-called complaints filed against the Petitioner before the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) are politically motivated. These were filed simply because the Petitioner in performance of his solemn duty to protect and safeguard the Constitution highlighted the constitutional violation in delaying general election to the Punjab Provincial Assembly," said the plea. In the petition, the SC judge has contended that the revised notice was sent to him by the SJC "without first determining the veracity of the so-called complaints and/or bona fide of the so-called complainants" contrary to the rules. Justice Naqvi, further contends, that by issuing the revised notice the SJC admitted that the first show cause was neither "valid nor proper". He also contends that before issuing

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## Imran asks CJP to ensure level-playing field

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Thursday raised several concerns regarding the "discrimination" his party is facing, in a letter to Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) QaziFaez Isa seeking equal opportunities for his party to lead its political campaign. The letter, a copy of which is available with Geo.tv, calls on the top judge to direct the federal and provincial governments as well as the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to allow PTI, like all other political parties, to hold political meetings and gatherings without "discrimination". The deposed prime minister, who was removed from power via a no-trust motion in April last year, stated in the letter that the PTI leaders and activists were being targeted through the registration of multiple and successive criminal cases to keep them behind bars. He termed this a "tactic of abuse and oppression", which he said is being used all over the country. "Those bailed out by the courts in one or more cases are immediately booked in further case that purport to pertain to events several months in

Continued on Page 06

## SOLIDARITY WITH GAZANS THRU MUSIC



ISLAMABAD: Renowned singer Hadiqa Kayani performs at a music performance titled "Mystic Melodies" at Islamabad Serena Hotel. She dedicated her performance to the innocent people of Gaza. She earnestly wished that their miseries come to an end soon. - DNA

## COP28 climate 'loss & damage' fund launched

Pak applauds Loss and Damage Fund

WEB DESK

DUBAI: The UN's COP28 climate conference formally launched on Thursday a "loss and damage" fund long sought by vulnerable nations devastated by natural disasters linked to global warming. "We have delivered history today," the UAE's COP28 president Sultan Al Jaber told delegates, adding that his country was committing \$100 million to the fund. After years of dragging their feet on the issue, wealthy nations backed the fund in a landmark agreement at the COP27 summit in Sharm el-Sheikh last year. Its launch on the first day of COP28 in Dubai follows fraught negotiations on the mechanics of the fund, which will be housed at the World Bank on an interim basis. "This sends a positive signal of momentum to the world and to our work," Jaber said. Jaber said it was "the first time a decision has been adopted on day one of any COP and the speed in which we have done so is also unique, phenomenal and historic." "This is evidence that we can deliver. COP28 can and will deliver," he added. World leaders, Britain's King Charles III and activists and lobbyists are among more than 97,000 people jetting into the flashy Gulf city,

Continued on Page 06

## Ahead of polls

# Bilawal Bhutto toes father's line of political 'unity'

Asif Ali Zardari seeks masses' support to make his son Bilawal youngest PM of country

DNA

QUETTA: Following reports of differences between the top Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leaders, party chairman Bilawal-Bhutto Zardari has called for "burying" politics of hatred and division in line with the vision of his father Asif Ali Zardari's reconciliatory politics. "We have to do politics wherein we should think about unity and not of division. The PPP wants to start a new kind of politics in the country," Bilawal said while

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## PTI left Pakistan on brink of default

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior vice president and chief organizer Maryam Nawaz on Thursday convened with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Youth Coordinators, underlining the urgent need for progress and development within the province. During the meeting, she highlighted the dire state of affairs in

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### 'Unable to bear another ordeal'

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Thursday he did not want to utter anything which could force him to undergo another chilla - a reference to the recent trial he had to face. Speaking to media outside the Lahore High Court's Rawalpindi bench after attending hearing of a case, the former interior minister said the court had given one week to the Punjab government to submit details of cases against him. He said he did not participate in May 9 demonstrations. Rashid said no one had seen him from April 12 to May 12.

## Afghan Taliban say killed 12 ISKP leaders in 2023

The operation by the Afghan Taliban commenced during Pakistan and Afghanistan's negotiations regarding the tackling of the threats

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The intelligence agency of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), since the beginning of this year, has eliminated 12 top Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) leaders in Afghanistan in their war against the terrorist group. The General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) launched an operation earlier this year to eradicate the ISKP, a militant group. In February, the Afghan Taliban administration's special forces killed ISKP's intelligence and military chief, commonly known as Kotar in Kabul, while arresting another high-ranking leader of the terrorist group in a separate operation. According to the details shared by IEA, the GDI has so far neutralised the leader of Islamic State Hind Province (ISHP), the Justice and Media head of ISKP, an ISKP leadership council member, the ISKP's head of operations for Kabul city, the ISKP's head of military for Herat province, the ISKP head of guerilla operations for Kabul province, the deputy of the current

Continued on Page 06

## French embassy launches Gender Climate Award

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of France in Pakistan and Agence Française de développement (AFD), in collaboration with The European Union Delegation to Pakistan, United Nations Development Program, and L'Oreal Pakistan has announced the commencement of the second edition of the Gender Climate Award (GCA). The applications for the 2024 edition are now open and will be accepted until December 31st, 2023. The Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change will serve as the implementing partner for managing all the GCA-related activities. The Gender Climate Award 2024 aims to

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## Ahsan upbeat about winning polls

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: PML-N senior leader Ahsan Iqbal expressed optimism on Tuesday that his party will win the upcoming elections. The former planning minister said: "The PML-N can say this simply that it will develop the entire country the way it uplifted Lahore. We have built three mass transit projects". He recalled the tenure of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), saying, "The biggest of all the challenges faced by the PDM was to save the country from default." Iqbal slammed Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, saying, "What wonders the young leadership had done in Sindh."

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## Gaza: Intense diplomatic efforts as mediators push for truce extension

"We are ready to deliver the bodies of Israeli prisoners but Israeli authorities refused to take their bodies," Hamas said

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: Egyptian and Qatari negotiators are pressing for a new two-day extension to the pause in fighting between Hamas and Israel. Palestinians who fled northern Gaza to the south say the temporary halt in Israeli bombing is not enough and a permanent end of the war must happen immediately. "Regarding the truce, we displaced people do not benefit from it at all. We are unable to obtain even basic materials, for example, flour," says Samir Yaghi from Gaza City. "All people here want the war to stop so we can return to our homes, to see what happened to our families. We have relatives who did not leave Gaza, they were under bombardment. And there is no communication and the networks are down. Are they dead or still alive? Are our homes still standing?" Suha Lubbad, another displaced person, said, "We demand there be a complete ceasefire and a complete stop of war so everyone can return to his place, to his work and to our normal life that we have lost." Salem Abu Qumbuz agreed that temporary "pauses" in Israel's bombardment are not enough. "We do not want a truce for one or two days. We want to return to our homes in northern Gaza. We do not want to stay in the south displaced, sitting in schools."

## 2 Palestinians martyred in Jerusalem operation

FOREIGN DESK

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Two Palestinian resistance fighters were shot dead on Thursday morning after they carried out a shooting operation that killed three Jewish settlers and injured at least six others, some of them seriously, near the illegal settlement of Ramot in Occupied Jerusalem. According to the Hebrew media, two settlers were killed on the scene, while another was in critical condition, three others were seriously wounded, and three others were in light to moderate condition. One of the wounded settlers was pronounced dead later. Two resistance fighters reportedly arrived at the scene in a vehicle armed with firearms. They opened fire at settlers and one car at a bus station near the settlement and were subsequently shot dead by security forces and an armed settler. In this regard, senior Hamas official Mahmoud

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# Olive farming potential in Pakistan highlighted

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan can become self-sufficient in edible oil within a decade if the immense potential of olive farming and millions of wild olive trees across Pakistan is realized. If harnessed to its full potential, indigenous olive oil production in the country can help save a staggering \$4.5 billion spent annually on importing edible oil and lead to a thriving olive export market. This was observed during a discussion at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad, organized to shed light on Pakistan's expanding potential in olive cultivation. The discussion, moderated by Naufil Shahrukh, GM Operations, IPS, was addressed by Khalid Rahman, chairman, IPS, Dr Faiyaz Alam, general secretary Dua Foundation, Shabbir Soomro, author and journalist, and Dr Ghufra Saed, Assistant Professor, Department of Food Science and Technology, University of Karachi. Dr Faiyaz Alam and Shabbir Soomro have also recently co-authored a book on the history, status and potential of olive farming in Pakistan. While introducing the work, Pakistan Main Zaitoon Ki Kashat - Tareekh, Tajurbat, Aur Imkanaat, Soomro highlighted that despite Pakistan having around 85 million wild olive trees, their full potential remains

unexplored even by local people due to a lack of awareness and knowledge about the resource. The book, the culmination of extensive research, interviews, and expertise, addresses this gap in understanding and aims to bridge the awareness deficit that has hindered the exploration of this rich resource. He said that with an emphasis on nationwide awareness, the book endeavors to enlighten readers about the immense possibilities and benefits hidden within Pakistan's olive trees. Dr Faiyaz Alam emphasized the transformative impact of arid agriculture. He deplored the mainstream media's lack of interest in giving space and time to such issues, as well as the reluctance of governments to acknowledge and reward agricultural scientists and enterprising farmers who have contributed immensely in introducing valuable olive varieties and necessary food processing technologies. Dr Faiyaz said that the efforts in the last few years, spanning areas of Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjab, have seen the seeding of 5.6 million new olive trees across 50,000 acres of land. Two million of these plants are already yielding fruit and producing several tons of olive oil for local consumption and export. He highlighted that around 75 percent of Pakistan's edible oil is imported, and the \$4.5

billion that the country spends on this can be saved through olive cultivation, making Pakistan self-sufficient in edible oil. "Research for the sake of research leads nowhere," emphasized Dr Ghufra. He highlighted that the lack of cohesion between academia, industry, and government is a dilemma obstructing the exploitation of agricultural assets like olives. He stressed that a massive potential of wild olive trees is wasted every year because of the lack of awareness, and initiative at all levels. In his concluding remarks, Khalid Rahman underscored that harnessing the potential of olive cultivation is not just about agriculture; it is a health and national economic imperative as well. It is time that "Pakistan must redefine its strengths and weaknesses," he said while stressing the need for comprehensive awareness initiatives based on indigenous assessment of strengths and weaknesses. In this regard, he highlighted that success stories in olive cultivation should be incorporated into educational curricula, and community institutions like madrassahs should be urged to motivate people with these prospects. He underscored the need for an indigenous framework that connects research, local efforts, and societal motivation. He said these efforts would produce not just agricultural growth but a holistic transformation of the national socio-economic fabric.



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Country Director of World Health Organization, Dr Palitha Mahipala, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.—DNA

## Naval Chief chairs command and staff conference

APP

ISLAMABAD : The Command & Staff Conference of Pakistan Navy concluded here on Thursday which was chaired by Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf. During the conference, matters related to national security, geo strategic affairs, combat readiness and training of troops were discussed, a Pakistan Navy news release said. The conference assessed the evolving maritime situation in the region due to ongoing conflict in Middle East. Under the prevailing maritime situation in the Middle East, deployment of Pakistan Navy Ship for the protection of Pakistan's merchant ships was discussed. Progress on Pakistan Navy projects including future plans was also reviewed and way forward was deliberated. The Naval Chief emphasized on maintaining perpetual combat readiness to effectively thwart any aggression against Pakistan. He lauded the initiatives undertaken towards capability development through acquisition of state of the art platforms and emerging technologies. The Admiral expressed full confidence over high state of operational preparedness of Pakistan Navy to meet maritime challenges while safeguarding the maritime frontiers of Pakistan. The Command & Staff Conference is the apex decision making body of Pakistan Navy in which Chief of the Naval Staff along with all Principal Staff Officers and Field Commanders review the policies and plans of Pakistan Navy.—APP

## Police Khidmat Markaz Baluchistan enhances policing access through inaugural Center

DNA

QUETTA : The European Union (EU) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) proudly announce the inauguration of Police Khidmat Markaz in Kuchlak, Quetta. This collaborative venture with Balochistan Police marks a pioneering era in community-focused law enforcement, embodying a transformative approach that places a premium on accessibility, responsiveness, and community engagement. Funded through the EU's Deliver Justice Project, a pivotal component of the broader Rule of Law Roadmap (RoLR) in Balochistan, this initiative supports reforms aimed at ensuring people-centered justice, equitable access

to justice, particularly for women and marginalized groups, and enhancing the service delivery of the security sector in alignment with constitutional safeguards and international standards. The establishment of the Police Khidmat Markaz underscores the joint commitment of the EU, UNODC, and Balochistan Police to empower local communities through improved policing services, offering facilitation for all citizens through a unified service point. The inauguration ceremony of the Police Khidmat Markaz was presided over by Mr. Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, PSP, Inspector General of Police, Balochistan, in the esteemed presence of Mr. Jeroen Willems, Head of Cooperation, European Union Delegation to Pakistan, and Dr. Jeremy Milsom, Representative, UNODC Pakistan. The primary objective of the Police Khidmat Markaz is to alleviate the workload on conventional police stations, enabling them to concentrate resources on the fundamental responsibility of crime prevention while simultaneously bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community. It is meticulously designed to provide seamless processes, guarantee prompt service for citizens, uphold respectful treatment of the public, and introduce a citizen feedback mechanism along with an online tracking system. Distinctive features include a gender desk, integrated IT software solutions, and CCTV cameras, differentiating it significantly from regular police stations in terms of structure, environment, and public interactions.



## First snowfall blankets hilly areas, transforming landscape into winter wonderland

DNA

ABBOTTABAD: Snowfall started in different tourists' attractive hilly areas of Abbottabad including Nithia Gali, Changla Gali, Ayobia, Donga Gali, and Thandyani on Thursday. The weather in Abbottabad turned cold as the first snowfall of the winter season continued in the area.

## Business community is united under businessmen panel

DNA

KARACHI: Rafiq Sulaiman, the vice president candidate in the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) elections from the Businessmen's Panel (BMP) has said that the business community is united under the Businessmen's Panel and the Federation elections. For 2023, the candidates nominated by the businessman panel will be elected with a huge majority and will give the gift of defeat in the swing of the United

Business Group on the night of December 30. Rafiq Sulaiman said that the business community can solve its problems only by being united with in BMP, it has been our mission since day one that FPCCI should be strengthened so that the voice of the business community across the country can be heard effectively. Rafiq Sulaiman said that the businessman panel worked for the stability of the federation for 4 years and the officials of the federation talked with the eyes of the government and we also elected our presidential candidate Muhammad Ali and senior vice president candidate Haji. Under the leadership of Ghani Usman, he will give suggestions to the government in the best interests of the business community. He said that the leadership of the businessmen panel has been successful in representing businessmen and industrialists and now again there is a need for the representatives of the business community of Pakistan to unanimously cast their panel votes in favor of BMP candidates so that His strong voice could once again reach the halls.

## Middle eastern allies support Pakistan's economic growth

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious Harmony and Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Muslim Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi Thursday said the Pakistani nation had expressed gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the UAE, and Kuwait for substantial support for Pakistan's economic development, providing a much-needed boost during challenging times. Talking to national and international media, he said Saudi Arabia, a longstanding ally, had not only reaffirmed its commitment to bilateral ties but had also extended the period of its deposits worth \$3 billion for another year as it would help contribute significantly to Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves, strengthening its economic foundation amid global uncertainties. Ashrafi said the UAE, recognizing the shared economic interests, had engaged in ground-breaking multi-billion dollar deals across diverse sectors. He said these agreements, facilitated under the SIFC, marked a strategic collaboration to foster economic stability and growth in Pakistan. He said the UAE's

commitment to these initiatives underscored its confidence in Pakistan's potential as a key partner in the region. Ashrafi said Kuwait, another key player in the Middle East, had joined the collective effort to support Pakistan's economic uplift. He said the SIFC, under the transformative leadership of COAS General Asim Munir and, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar had played a pivotal role in attracting both local and foreign investments. He said this innovative initiative would streamline processes, create a conducive business environment, and promote sustainable economic growth in the country. He said the recent multi-billion dollar deals with the UAE and Kuwait were a testament to the success of the SIFC in fostering economic stability. Ashrafi lauded army chief's steadfast commitment to maintaining law and order within the country. The national security institutions, in a resolute response to orchestrated attempts aimed at sowing discord between the Pakistan Army and the nation, had proactively thwarted negative propaganda, reinforcing the unbreakable bonds between the military and the people, he added.

# پنجاب ورکرز ویلفیئر فنڈ

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### 11 drug peddlers, bootleggers netted

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers and bootleggers here on Thursday arrested 11 accused besides recovering over four kg charras, 130 grams of Ice, 20 litres of liquor and 22 bottles of liquor from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Mandra police arrested Fakhar Abbas for having 1350 grams of charras and Atta Shah with 510 grams of charras. Dharmal police rounded up Shahid for possessing 1100 grams of charras and Amir with 35 grams of charras. Airport police in their raid netted an accused namely Hamza for having 560 grams charas and Chontra police nabbed Mudasir for having 560 grams charras. Race Course police recovered 130 grams of Ice drug from the possession of a female drug peddler namely Robab. Kalar Syedan, Bani, Cantt, and Naseerabad police also rounded up Saif, Kanwal Amanat, Rizwan and Adeel and recovered 20 litres of liquor and 22 bottles of liquor. Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations are underway.—APP

### Indian military involved in genocide of Kashmiris :Mushaal

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Human Rights Mushaal Hussein Mullick on Thursday said Indian military was involved in the genocide of Muslims in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). Addressing a seminar titled "Repression on minorities in India and atrocities in Kashmir," she expressed deep concerns over the human rights violations in the held territory. She said people of the occupied valley could never be defeated through oppression and negative tactics like jailing the political leadership. The seminar, was jointly organized by Kashmir International and Kashmir Media Service (KMS). Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights, Khalil George deplored that India had adopted the same policy in the occupied territory which Israel was following in the Palestine. He said that the main objective of the Bharatiya Janata Party government was to turn the majority of Muslims in IOJK into a minority but the people of the occupied territory would foil all such nefarious designs of the Modi regime.—APP

### Low income groups urged to apply in "BISP Savings Scheme"

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) has urged the people belonging to the low-income groups to submit applications for becoming a part of the recently launched "BISP Saving Scheme", taking a step towards making them self-reliant. According to an official source, the BISP has started receiving applications under this scheme from those applicants both men and women living in Islamabad, Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Peshawar, Lucky Marwat, Quetta, Qila Saifullah, Lahore, Multan, Karachi, Sukkur, Gilgit and Astore. The applicants, having a PMT score below 40, are required to apply through a web portal: savings.bisp.gov.pk to become a part of this scheme without paying any fee. The applicants will open a savings account in the bank to participate in the scheme. Those who will participate in the scheme will deposit money from 500 to 1000 rupees monthly in their bank account. The beneficiaries will get an additional 40 per cent of their savings from the BISP. The duration of the scheme is two years at the end of which the beneficiaries will be able to withdraw their entire amount.—APP



ISLAMABAD: First lady Mrs Samina Alvi posing for a picture with members of the Floral Art Society on the occasion of the Workshop Demo by Asma Ansari, held at the Islamabad Serena Hotel.-DNA

### National Days and Armed Forces Days

#### DECEMBER

Dec 01/Romania National Day  
Dec 02/United Arab Emirates National Day  
Dec 02/Laos Republic National Day  
Dec 05/Thailand National Day  
Dec 06/Finland Independence Day  
Dec 07/India Armed Forces Flag Day  
Dec 09/Tanzania National Day  
Dec 11/Oman Armed Forces Day  
Dec 12/Kenya Independence Day  
Dec 12/Turkmenistan Neutrality Day  
Dec 16/Bahrain National Day  
Dec 16/Kazakhstan Independence Day  
Dec 18/Qatar National Day  
Dec 18/Niger National Day  
Dec 23/Philippines Armed Forces Day  
Dec 23/Japan National 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

### Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115  
PIA Flight Info.....114  
PIA Cargo.....9280979  
Railway Inquiry.....117  
Railway Exchange 9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi. 5555489  
CAA.....9281092

### Hospitals

CMH.....5611111  
MH.....561116  
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11  
DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666

### Departments

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

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

## President asks traders to adopt honesty, fairness

Group Chairman ICSTSI Qazi Muhammad Ilyas said the trader community was positively contributing to the national economy by following the tax system

#### MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday urged the traders and businessmen in the country to strictly adhere to the principles of honesty and fairness to capture a space in the competitive global economy. Addressing the achievement recognition ceremony of the Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries (ICSTSI), the president said it was difficult to have a successful business if the customers did not trust a brand or consider it dishonest. President Alvi said in a competitive economy, businesses that fail to create an ethical reputation soon become

extinct. "Sell your products with fairness by maintaining the same standards which you show to your target audience while marketing," he told the gathering of traders, here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. Besides adopting a profit-based approach, he said, it was equally important for companies to ensure an environment of empathy and compassion in society. "Honesty in public dealing and developing trust between supplier and consumers can lead to an accommodating atmosphere in the society," he said. The president emphasized inculcating the values of honesty in the society in line with the glorious teachings of Islam which called for maintaining integrity in public deal-

ings. He also noted that it was the responsibility of society to provide a harassment-free environment to women at workplaces to ensure their inclusion in all fields of life. Dr Alvi said the promotion of small industries in the country could stimulate economic growth. The president highlighted the need for skill development through vocational courses to help the population earn the dividends of a skill-based economy. "There is no dearth of talent and skills in the country, however, the situation needs provision of better opportunities to people," he said. President Alvi said an effective implementation of tax culture could help the country over-

come its financial and economic challenges. "The key to ensuring betterment of the society is through bringing improvement in the lives of the people," he said. The president said the world needed to enforce the ideals of morality and pointed out that the current Gaza situation demanded serious attention in this regard. He regretted that the world pursued its vested interests while a large population of Palestinians faced ethnic cleansing. "Amid the 'might is right' scenario, a human life should be valued regardless of any religion, ethnicity or creed," he said. The president gave away shields to traders to honour their achievements in their respective fields. President ICSTSI Sajjad

Sarwar said the Chamber was taking steps to encourage foreign companies to invest in Pakistan. He also mentioned the provision of a platform for women to promote their vocational skills. Vice President ICSTSI Syeda Wajida Saleem said small enterprises play an important role in a country's economy and stressed the need for long-term policies in this regard. She lauded President Alvi for his continued support to women to actively participate in all fields of life with the objective of attaining financial empowerment. Group Chairman ICSTSI Qazi Muhammad Ilyas said the trader community was positively contributing to the national economy by following the tax system.

## Health Minister takes steps in polio campaign

#### DNA

ISLAMABAD: November 30, 2023 The Health Minister, Dr Nadeem Jan, demonstrated a hands-on approach to the ongoing polio campaign by visiting the nomadic population in the district of Mianwali. The visit aimed to ensure that every child, including those from the nomadic community, receives the essential polio vaccinations to safeguard their health. During the visit, the Health Minister personally checked the polio vaccination status of children and engaged with the nomadic community to understand their unique healthcare needs. The nomadic population, predominantly from Wana, travels back seasonally, presenting

a distinctive challenge in reaching and vaccinating every child. In addition to overseeing the vaccination efforts, the health minister provided valuable insights on maintaining health and hygiene, particularly among children and mothers within the nomadic community. Recognizing the importance of preventive measures, he advised the District Commissioner of the area to distribute bed nets to protect against vector-borne diseases. The health minister emphasized the significance of community engagement in the success of the polio campaign and commended the nomadic population for their cooperation. The visit aimed not only to address immediate healthcare needs but also to foster a long-term commitment to

health and well-being within the nomadic community. The District Commissioner received guidance from the health minister on implementing health and hygiene initiatives, with a focus on creating sustainable practices tailored to the nomadic lifestyle. The provision of bed nets aligns with the broader goal of ensuring a healthier environment for the community, reducing the risk of diseases transmitted through vectors. The health minister expressed his commitment to leaving no child behind in the fight against polio, irrespective of their geographical or seasonal mobility. The visit to the nomadic population underscores the government's dedication to reaching every corner of the country in the quest for a polio-free Pakistan.

## Sheikh Rashid says he ill-affords another ordeal

#### DNA

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Thursday he did not want to utter anything which could force him to undergo another chilla - a reference to the recent trial he had to face. Speaking to media outside the Lahore High Court's Rawalpindi bench after attending hearing of a case, the former interior minister said the court had given one week to the Punjab government to submit details of cases against him. He said he did not participate in May 9 demonstrations. Rashid said no one had seen him from April 12 to May 12. He further stated that he was not seen on any camera, in video, speech or picture however, cases were registered against him. He said he was falsely implicated in May 9 events.

## China helping Pak transition to solar power

#### DNA

ISLAMABAD: At the 2023 China International Supply Chain Expo (CISCE), the products we display cover multiple scenarios such as zero-carbon homes, industrial parks, and energy bases, including the string ground PV system solution SOFAR PowerMega. Besides, the overseas star product smart household storage system SOFAR Power-All and new released industrial and commercial energy storage system SOFAR PowerMagic, centralized energy storage system SOFAR PowerMaster, covering zero-carbon homes, parks, and energy bases." This was stated by Zhu genhao, Domestic Solution Director, Centralized Energy Storage Business Line of SOFAR, in an interview with China Economic Net during the CISCE. SOFAR is a global leading supplier of solar PV and energy storage solutions and committed to be the leader of digital energy solutions. In March, SOFAR presents its wide product portfolio at Solar Pakistan, furthering its commitment to renewable energy and fueling the national transition to a low carbon economy. Jesse Lau, Regional Director, APAC&MEA, sees Pakistan as a vibrant solar market, and promises to boost efforts to prop up local decarbonization ambitions and surging demands. "As a pivotal player in Pakistan, we will keep bringing forth innovations that address diverse applications with a considerably lower LCOE typically for local market." Pakistan's practical solar potential, measured at 4.713 kWh/kWp, places the country at 49th globally. This metric showcases the efficiency of solar power generation systems in Pakistan and highlights its ability to convert sunlight into usable energy.

## ECP adjourns contempt case hearing until December 6

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has adjourned the hearing of a case linked to contempt of the commission until December 6. Nisar Durrani, an ECP member, chaired a four-member bench that resumed the hearing of a case, where Chairman PTI Asad Umer and Fawad Chaudhry face accusations of contempt of the Chief Election Commissioner and the commission. The bench again deferred the indictment of PTI chairman in the contempt until next hearing. Faisal Chaudhry, representing Fawad Chaudhry, and Shoaib Shaheen, counsel for Chairman PTI Asad Umer, appeared before the bench. PTI counsel Shoaib Shaheen stated that they haven't received copies of the election commission's orders pertaining to PTI chairman. A member of the ECP said, the Law Ministry has cited security concerns, stating that the PTI chairman cannot be brought before the commission. Shoaib Shaheen expressed his desire to present arguments, stressing the importance of transparency by making the report public. Alternatively, if public disclosure isn't possible, he requested the commission to share the report with the accused's counsel, especially as it is being used against PTI. In the event of a trial, he insisted that the entire proceedings should be conducted within the prison. Despite submitting an application, they are yet to receive a copy. A commission member mentioned that over a year has passed, and charges can be framed at any time. The critical matter revolves around framing charges for the case.—APP

## Speakers pay tribute to Late S.M.Munir

#### DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) held a condolence reference for the Late S.M.Munir, renowned industrialist, former President FPCCI, former Chief Executive TDAP and former Patron-in-Chief of United Business Group on the occasion of his first anniversary. A large number of businessmen and industrialists of the city attended the condolence reference and paid tribute to SM Munir for his great services to the business community of the country. In his telephonic address, SM Tanveer, son of late S.M. Munir and Punjab Minister for Industries and Commerce, thanked Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President ICICI and his team for holding the condolence reference for his father. He said that late SM Munir had dedicated his life to serve the business community of the entire country and always struggled for the promotion of their business inter-

ests. He said that the life of late SM Munir is a beacon of light for the business community and hoped that they would always remember his services. He vowed to continue serving the business community of the country through the platform of United Business Group in pursuance of the mission of late SM Munir. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that late SM Munir was a role model for the business community and in recognition of his services, the auditorium of ICICI will be named after him. He said that he learnt a lot from late SM Munir who always worked for the welfare of the business community. He said that late SM Munir always played on the front foot for resolving the issues of the business community. Late SM Munir has set good precedents for the business community through his hard work and honesty and we have to adopt his principles to excel in the business field to make the country's economy stronger. Engr. Azharul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICICI

paid tribute to SM Munir's great personality and services to the business community. He resolved that we all together should play a role to advance the mission of late SM Muneer for the welfare of the business community. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICICI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that late SM Munir Bhajjaan was a towering business leader whose services to the business community will always be written in golden words. The void created in the leadership of the business community by the death of the late SM Munir will never be filled. He said that heroes like the late SM Munir should be made role models for the society. His greatest achievement is that instead of creating followers, he created business leaders for this country. Former President ICICI and FPCCI, Zubair Ahmad Malik highlighted the services of late SM Munir to the business community and hoped that the UBG would achieve a landslide victory in the forthcoming elections of FPCCI to continue the mission of late S.M.Munir.

## Briefs

## Parents urged to cooperate with polio vaccination teams

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon on Thursday urged parents to cooperate with the polio vaccination teams and ensure that their children receive the necessary two doses of polio drops. Addressing a review meeting on the fourth day of the campaign, Memon emphasized the importance of achieving the target of vaccinating all children under the age of five in Islamabad. He expressed concern that some children were not present for vaccination on the third day and instructed officials to prioritize them for the remaining days of the campaign. The meeting was also attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner General, DHOs, Assistant Commissioners, representatives from the Health Department, and other stakeholders. The participants discussed the performance of the campaign so far and identified areas for improvement. Memon reiterated the government's commitment to eradicating polio from Pakistan and called upon parents to play their part by ensuring that their children are vaccinated. He also commended the efforts of polio workers and other stakeholders involved in the campaign. The ongoing polio vaccination campaign in Islamabad is part of a nationwide effort to eliminate the crippling disease.—APP

## PTDC to organise 'Salam Pakistan' photography competition

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) will organise Salam Pakistan photography and short tourism documentary film competitions on December 11 in connection with International Mountain Day. Talking to APP, the PTDC official said that "Salam Pakistan" is the official tourism brand of the country that was recently launched by the Prime Minister. He urged filmmakers and storytellers to capture the essence of our diverse and stunning landscapes as Pakistan was amazing and rich with tourism potential. He said that four to five-minute documentaries and photography competitions on the topic of culture and mountain heritage, mountain people and their lifestyle, fascinating mountain scenery, mountain adventure and sports will be part of the event. The winners of these competitions will be awarded with cash prizes and awards at the sustainable tourism conference, the official added. He said more information can be obtained from PTDC's official website <https://tourism.gov.pk> while photography and short tourism documentary films can be submitted till December 4 at <https://bit.ly/47Lhvg>.—APP

## ANF busts inter-provincial drug-trafficking gang; arrests seven

RAWALPIND: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting a major operation managed to bust an inter-provincial drug-trafficking gang and arrested its seven members including the ringleader, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that ANF arrested an accused named Allah Noor who was the ringleader of a drug smuggling gang which was involved in inter-provincial drug trafficking through the motorway. He said that the operation was launched after comprehensive planning. Earlier, six members of the gang were also arrested. ANF also recovered 419 kg of drugs including charras and opium from their possession. He informed that ANF during an operation conducted a raid on November 18 and succeeded in arresting the leader of the group, Allah Noor.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Indonesian artists presenting a traditional Indonesia martial arts performance at the National Library of Pakistan. —DNA

## Pakistan, Kuwait relations getting stronger: Ambassador

The two country leadership had a good follow-up conversation where they discussed the prospect of greater investments from Kuwait amid the growing Pakistan' economy, he added

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Ambassador to Kuwait Malik Muhammad Farooq Thursday underlined the importance of the strategic relationship between Pakistan and Kuwait that both countries' leadership was keen to strengthen bilateral relationship in different domains such as food security, trade, investments and people-to-people engagement. In an exclusive talk with PTV news channel, he elaborated that Pakistan and Kuwait had share a cherished relationship that only

grew stronger with each passing year. "We are seeing greater interest from Kuwaiti to invest," he added. He also expressed his satisfaction at close cooperation between the two countries at multilateral fora. Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar was on a two-day official visit to Kuwait with the primary objective of signing of MoUs in multiple areas geared to transforming the six decades' long bilateral relations into mutually beneficial economic ties, he said. The two country leadership had a good follow-up conversation where

they discussed the prospect of greater investments from Kuwait amid the growing Pakistan' economy, he added. "Both countries enjoying friendly relations, which are rooted in history," he said. "Pakistan and Kuwait are celebrating the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries," he added. "Both nations have also maintained regular high-level contacts in future," he mentioned. He further highlighted, "Kuwait leadership has serious concern over redressal of the dire humanitarian situation in Kashmir

and Gaza." "Kuwait has called on the international community to prevent the use of starvation as a military and political weapon against Palestinians in the Gaza." He said two nation leaders also witnessed the signing of seven agreements concluded to attract multi-billion dollars investment from the State of Kuwait in various sectors of Pakistan including Food Security/ Agriculture, Hydel Power, Water Supplies (safe drinking water and supporting mining activities), establishment of Mining Fund to support mineral industry, Technology Zones De-

velopment and Mangrove Preservation. He added, "Upcoming Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP) would also be a 'great opportunity' for Pakistan and Kuwait to discuss ideas on how to support countries most affected by climate change and Kuwait is being focused on the issue of climate change." In concluding remarks, Ambassador stressed that the two nations' mutual commitment to building up bilateral trade and economic cooperation and regular interaction on regional and international issues were need of hour.

## PPP: ever-loving, ever-living political party: Pervez

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan Raja Pervaiz Ashraf has said that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is the only political party which has strong roots in common people's hearts and minds. In a message on the 56th Foundation day of PPP, "It is PPP which reflects the true aspirations of the poor, farmers, farm workers and the middle class living across Pakistan and imparts them the confidence to raise their voices for their rights, he added. The Speaker also underscored that PPP continued its struggle under the leadership of Ms. Nusrat Bhutto and Ms. Benazir Bhutto after the martyrdom of Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (ZAB). "Benazir Bhutto Shaheed's sacrifices for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan will always be written in golden words in history," he said. He said that PPP is the most popular party from Karachi to Kashmir and there are a large number of workers of the party who are working hard to achieve the mission of Quaid-e-Awam and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto. "PPP always leads the country on the path of development and raises the standard of living of the downtrodden sections of the society whenever it forms governance," he added. Raja Pervez also paid tribute to the unforgettable sacrifices of the leaders and workers of PPP for the restoration of democracy and the promotion of democratic values in the country. He said that the PPP conferred this nation and country with a unanimous constitution and laid the foundations of the nuclear program, besides establishing a network of universities, educational institutions, and hospitals. The Speaker said that the PPP believes in expediency and the power of the people and the party also remained successful in enactment of the 18th Amendment with the support of other political parties.—APP

## China-Pak sustainable agriculture coop shines at the 2023 CISCE

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China-Pak sustainable agriculture cooperation shines at the ongoing 2023 China International Supply Chain Expo (CISCE), China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday. The report says, Plump rice grains, sweet melons, fragrant sesames... an endless stream of visitors were full of praise for the dazzling array of agricultural products at the expo. "From the single germplasm resource cooperation and product trade to current Agriculture Value Chain (AVC) comprehensive business, the cooperation between Syngenta Group and Pakistan in the agricultural field has great potential, undoubtedly," a staff at Syngenta Group China told CEN. "By supplying inputs and production services to growers, bartering with entities in core producing areas in exchange for key agricultural products, while linking China's agricultural product market demand and opening up the global upstream

and downstream chains, the AVC model has brought practical benefits to farmers in Pakistan." Sesame cultivation in Pakistan has tripled in the past 5 years. In the South Asia country, sesame is grown on roughly 600,000 acres with a per acre yield of 0.5 tons. As most Pakistan sesame is for export, with more than 1/3 goes to China, Syngenta global AVC aims to link the quality sesame from Pakistani growers served by Syngenta with international value chain partners especially in China. In May 2023, APAC's first Centriro Flagship Center of Syngenta launched in Okara, Punjab, serving more than 500 farmers on exceed 10,000 acres of farming on potato, corn, rice, vegetables and sesame. All of them get top-quality agronomy inputs including seeds, fertilizer, crop protection, services such as drones spraying and farm mechanization. Such a farming ecosystem is helping local farmers achieve better yield and ROI. Mian Bashir Ahmad, one of Centriro growers who benefits from the protocols, smiled with satis-

faction. "I have 150 acres of farmland, among which sesame occupies 20 acres. My guidance from planting to harvesting was done by a team of Centriro Flagship Center. By using drones to spray insecticides they provided, my sesame yields increased by 10 percent. Owe to the improved quality of exported sesame, I received a price 30 percent higher than the average market price." While increasing production and income for local farmers, AVC serves China's domestic edible grain and oil import diversification, which is a win-win situation under the global supply chain system. In order to promote agricultural cooperation along the Belt and Road, Jianghuai Horticulture Technology Co., Ltd., a subsidiary of Syngenta Group China, has established cooperative relationships with scientific research institutions, enterprises and farmers in 18 Asian, African and Latin American countries and regions. These include Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Costa Rica, Egypt, and so on.

## Int'l mountain day to be observed on Dec 11

ISLAMABAD: International Mountain Day, themed "Restoring mountain ecosystems", will be observed on December 11 across the world to highlight the significance of the mountains and their peoples' lifestyles. According to details, the United Nations General Assembly nominated December 11 as "International Mountain Day" in 2002. However, beyond their aesthetics, mountains play a crucial role in our planet's well-being, impacting global ecosystems, climate, and communities. This theme was selected to fully include mountains in the UN decade on ecosystem restoration 2021-2030, co-led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN and the UN Environment Programme. The Decade is an opportunity to draw together political support, scientific research and financial resources to significantly scale up restoration and prevent further degradation of mountain ecosystems. It is pertinent to mention here, that mountains cover around 27 percent of the Earth's land surface and host about half of the world's biodiversity hotspots.—APP

## IED to deploy facilitation center doorstep

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to streamline vehicle registration processes and provide enhanced convenience to citizens, the Islamabad Excise Department (IED), will be deploying its Facilitation Center Doorstep ICT Vehicle at the Trail 3 parking lot today, from 3 pm-5 pm. The Director Excise and Taxation Islamabad Bilal Azam talking to APP said, "This initiative marks a significant step towards bringing essential services closer to the public, eliminating the need for lengthy commutes to the excise office." "The Doorstep ICT Vehicle will offer a comprehensive range of services, including vehicle registration, transfer, and token tax payment, along with the issuance of Domicile Certificates, Birth Certificates, Power of Attorney, International Driving Permits, and Fuel Permits (Domestic/Commercial)." "This move underscores the Islamabad Excise Department's commitment to facilitating citizens and promoting efficient service delivery. By bringing these services to the doorstep, the department aims to alleviate the burden on vehicle owners and streamline administrative processes," he added. According to Excise and Taxation authorities, "We encourage all citizens to take advantage of this convenient opportunity to register their vehicles, transfer ownership, pay token taxes, and avail other essential services at the Trail 3 parking lot today, from 3 pm-5 pm."

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## Closure of shops wrong way to control smog, pollution

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The official trade body of the retail sector in the country has opposed the closure of markets and shops in view of controlling the rising smog, as the government is trying to control mitigate air pollution by reducing commercial activity. The Chairman of the CAP Tariq Mehboob, addressing a ceremony observed that heavy transport, burning of waste and crop residue and non-compliant factories contribute to smog the most, not the retail sector. No other country or region is shutting down markets to control air pollution. As is the case in China and our neighboring

countries, the focus must be on controlling movement of large vehicles which use low quality fuel and emit black smoke; cracking down on burning of waste and stopping factories that are polluting by burning wood, tyres, etc. due to the absence of natural gas," he pointed out. "Since the past one year, the retail timings are already restricted to 10 PM as per the orders of the Court. For the past few weeks, additional restrictions have been applied including late opening and full day closures which are resulting in huge losses to retail businesses and allied sectors, employment and tax generation", said Tariq Mehboob, Chairman CAP whilst speaking with

the media. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, shutting down retail has become the norm whenever any crisis emerges and it only has a superficial impact on the problem. Retailers have experienced over 30 prolonged bouts of restrictions on operating timings and days over the past four years, with compliant retailers being the worst affected every time. Less prominent markets seldom follow any restrictions imposed by government due to limited enforcement capacity, as per CAP. "Recently, ad-hoc changes to notifications have resulted in confusion and abrupt disruptions for our businesses and employees. Moreover, restaurants and other service

sectors have been allowed to remain open while shops must close, so movement of small vehicles still continues during closed period. We cannot support the closure of any commercial activity because it does not address the root causes of smog. Shutting down only one sector repeatedly will not create the desired results in smog reduction or electricity saving," stated Asad Shafi, Vice Chairman CAP. On this issue, Tariq Mehboob explained that, "implementation of full retail shutdown in 6 major divisions of Punjab on last Sunday has resulted in an extraordinary loss of Rs. 10 billion for retail businesses, the domestic supply chain and tax revenues.

## Gaza ceasefire: Sustain glimmer of hope

**A**MID the horror of the last seven weeks, recent days have brought some degree of relief for many in Israel and Gaza. Hostages released by Hamas are deeply traumatised by their ordeal; many will face fresh despair as they learn that their friends and loved ones are dead, or as they attempt to come to terms with leaving fathers and husbands in captivity. Inhabitants of Gaza remain homeless, hungry, desperate, grieving and terrified by the prospect of death soon raining down upon them once more. And yet the ceasefire and releases have brought a faint glimmer of limited hope when previously there has seemed to be none. Qatar said on Wednesday afternoon that it was "very optimistic" that the ceasefire will be lengthened further. Hamas said it was willing to back a four-day extension, and Israeli officials indicated that it had enough hostages to cover two to three days more of releases, with an estimated total of 161 hostages held captive in Gaza. For Hamas, this time has allowed it to regroup, while the release of jailed Palestinians has boosted its support. However, almost as many Palestinians have been arrested as freed since the truce went into effect, including children, according to the Palestinian Prisoners Club. For Benjamin Netanyahu, the pause has indicated recognition of US concerns and addressed the fury of those lambasting the Israeli prime minister for not prioritising hostages. Prospects of extending the ceasefire beyond the weekend look a great deal bleaker. Future releases will be harder to negotiate. Hamas will seek to extract a far higher price for those remaining, overwhelmingly men, than it did for women and children, particularly when it comes to soldiers. The Palestinian prisoners proposed for release will not only be women and children, but men, some of whom may have committed serious crimes. Mr Netanyahu, knowing that his political survival is tied to continuance of this conflict, said in a video statement on Wednesday that he was "unequivocal" that the country would return to fighting, adding: "There is no situation in which we do not go back to fighting until the end."

No one suggests that it is easy for Israel to remove those who wreaked the horrors of 7 October. But its tactics to date have shown very limited success against Hamas, at unbearable civilian cost. The Israel Defense Forces estimate that they have killed between 1,000 and 2,000 Hamas fighters in the assault on Gaza. That is a fraction of its 30,000 or so total, and a tiny number set beside the total Palestinian death toll of about 15,000, almost half of them children, according to Gaza's health ministry, under Hamas control. With domestic political pressure growing, the Biden administration has made it clear that it opposes Israel extending that kind of campaign to the south, targeting people in the place it ordered them to flee to. With almost 2 million people packed into a smaller area, an even higher death toll might well result. Yet it is not hard to conceive of an Israeli offensive which, if not the all-out assault waged on northern Gaza, is still far from being a carefully targeted surgical strategy. Without an enduring ceasefire materialising, violence might fade only slowly and uncertainly. But there may be a few precious days left in which to advance towards a meaningful political process to end these hostilities. The last few days have shown that progress is possible. The last few weeks have shown that the alternative should be unthinkable.

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## Opportunity for Tokyo to reflect on its actions

**O**N the morning of August 6, 1945, a Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber of the United States Army Air Forces dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Three days later, the US dropped another atomic bomb on the city of Nagasaki. These were the first, and so far only, times nuclear weapons have been used in warfare. To those who defend the US' actions, the bombs were instrumental to securing Japan's unconditional surrender and the subsequent ending of World War II. Those who decry their use point to the immeasurable human suffering they caused. In Hiroshima, an estimated 80,000 people were killed as a direct result of the blast, and at least another 60,000 died by the end of the year from the effects of the fallout. At least, 70,000 are believed to have been killed in the Nagasaki bombing. For decades, the Genbaku Dome, or Hiroshima Peace Memorial, and the hibakusha, the surviving victims of the atomic bombings, have been reminders of the devastating potentials of nuclear weapons. Japan's Education Ministry on Tuesday announced it would recommend over 1,500 photographs and two videos taken after the bombing of Hiroshima for inclusion in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register. In a joint statement, the institutions that submitted the application said they "expect primary documents that transmit the horrors of war and the use of atomic weapons will be recognized throughout the world and used by various governments and citizens as they work toward never repeating such a mistake". It is up to the UNESCO Executive Board to decide whether these documents should be admitted into the Memory of the World Register in 2025, which would mark the 80th anniversary of the bombing of the two Japanese cities. Our collective memory needs such a reminder. With talk of the use of nuclear weapons tossed about recently in a seeming game of bluff and dare and some countries trying to neuter the nuclear nonproliferation regime, such a record testifying to the pressing need for nuclear arms control, if not complete elimination of such weapons of mass destruction, seems especially timely. But the Japanese government's push for the UNESCO Memory of the World Register to include those documents, worthwhile though it is, rings with suspicions of virtue signaling, at least to its neighbors, in light of some of its own actions. After all, while urging the rest of the world to remember the Japanese people's suffering as victims of the nuclear attacks, the Japanese government has generally been mute about the ordeals Japanese aggressors imposed on their victims during the same war. Until now, the Japanese government has yet to offer a formal apology to the victims, and Japanese politicians have made constant efforts to whitewash their country's WWII atrocities. More recently, the Japanese move to release nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean in open disregard of neighboring countries' concerns has raised further questions about the sanitized impression they want future generations to have of the country. With the horrific experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to reflect on, Japanese politicians should be as aware as anyone of the damaging potential of nuclear contamination. Instead, they have turned a deaf ear to neighboring countries' pleas for prudence.

## A complex alignment in the middle east

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Both Turkey and Iran have ties to Hamas, but of different natures. Turkey does not consider Hamas a terrorist organization and supports it as part of its policy to defend the Palestinian cause. However, since 2020, Turkey has distanced itself from Arab Islamists, including Hamas, to improve relations with Arab states and Israel. On the other hand, Iran provides political, economic, and military support to Hamas. Besides their relationship with Hamas, Turkey and Iran share concerns about the American presence in Syria. Ankara opposes continued U.S. support for the Kurds in northern Syria, considering it an obstacle to curbing Kurdish autonomy

**T**HE unexpected attack on Israel by Hamas caused concern about a potential escalation of the Gaza conflict into a regional war. The U.S. commitment to the Middle East has raised worries in Turkey and Iran. Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) views unconditional U.S. support for Israel as an obstacle to de-escalation efforts, while Iran sees the United States as Israel's partner in the Gaza civilian massacre. Both countries fear that increased U.S. presence in the Middle East could harm their regional interests. Despite differing approaches to Hamas, both Ankara and Tehran have connections to the group. Turkey, unlike its Western allies, does not label Hamas as a terrorist organization. President Tayyab Erdogan sees Hamas as part of the Palestinian resistance, aligning with Turkey's policy to defend the Palestinian cause. However, Turkey has distanced itself from Arab Islamists, including Hamas, since 2020, aiming to improve relations with Arab states and Israel.

In contrast, Iran provides political, economic, and military support to Hamas. Tehran seeks to capitalize on the changing regional dynamics and growing anti-Israel sentiment in the Muslim world. Iranian Foreign Minister Hussein Amir expressed Iran's readiness to play a role in the release of civilian hostages held by Hamas, aligning with Turkey and Qatar. Amid the Gaza conflict, Iranian and Turkish leaders held talks for dialogue and coordination. However, the limits of Turkey's influence on Israel and its ineffective attempts to mediate hostage negotiations with Hamas have become apparent. Hamas carried out a violent and unexpected attack on Israel on October 7, causing disruption in the Middle East. The United States responded by sending two aircraft carriers to the eastern Mediterranean, fearing an escalation of the Gaza conflict into a regional war. To reinforce defenses, 900 additional U.S. troops were deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations due to increased attacks by Iran-linked militias in the region. The renewed U.S. commitment to the Middle East has raised concerns in Turkey and Iran. Turkey's leadership sees unconditional U.S. support for Israel as a hindrance to de-escalation efforts, while Iran views the United States as Israel's "undeniable partner" in the Gaza civilian casualties. Both Ankara and Teh-

ran fear that a strong American presence in the Middle East will negatively impact their regional interests. The Gaza conflict has the potential to bring Turkey and Iran closer due to their shared objections to the U.S.-led regional and global order. However, there are limits to a lasting alliance between the two countries.

Both Turkey and Iran have ties to Hamas, but of different natures. Turkey does not consider Hamas a terrorist organization and supports it as part of its policy to defend the Palestinian cause. However, since 2020, Turkey has distanced itself from Arab Islamists, including Hamas, to improve relations with Arab states and Israel. On the other hand, Iran provides political, economic, and military support to Hamas. Besides their relationship with Hamas, Turkey and Iran share concerns about the American presence in Syria. Ankara opposes continued U.S. support for the Kurds in northern Syria, considering it an obstacle to curbing Kurdish autonomy. Iran aims to challenge the U.S. presence in Syria to remove American forces from the region. There are attempts by Iran and Russia to mediate between Damascus and Ankara regarding Syria, although no concrete results have been achieved. Additionally, in the South Caucasus, despite differences between Iran and Turkey, there are signs of potential collaboration, such as Iran's acceptance of the 3+3 initiative proposed by Turkey. Ankara and Tehran also coincide in their perceptions of the changing world order. Both question the coherence and effectiveness of Western institutions and advocate for a more equal international order. Turkey criticizes the structure of the UN Security Council and has disrupted NATO, while Iran seeks to strengthen ties with emerging powers, such as its strategic partnership with China and membership in the SCO and BRICS. Both countries aim to break away from Western-dominated international structures. For Tehran and Ankara, the events following October 7 seem to have created an opportunity that supports their assumptions and revisionist efforts. The belief in Israel's invincible military and intelligence has been shattered. This has also impacted the U.S. government's attempts to restore regional order by promoting normalization between Arab countries and Israel, at least in the short term. Many in the Global South are frustrated with the strong and unconditional support that the U.S. and the EU offer to Israel. Israel's refusal to issue visas to UN offi-

cial, despite indirect criticism from the UN chief, reinforces the view of Ankara and Tehran that the international body is dysfunctional. This situation could lead to closer cooperation among different reformist actors. For instance, on October 26, Hamas leaders visited Moscow, and Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri met with a Hamas delegation on the same day. Turkish Foreign Minister, mentioning Turkey's proposed "guarantee formula," urged China and Russia, as members of the United Nations Security Council, to contribute to a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, there are limits to the emergence of a "reform axis." Firstly, Turkey is a NATO member. Despite events in Gaza, President Erdogan surprised many by approving Sweden's NATO membership and sending the bill to the Turkish parliament for ratification. NATO membership allows Turkey flexibility in balancing its relations between Western allies and Russia. Unlike Iran's revisionist stance, Turkey's revisionism is more reformist. Ankara also sees Tehran's non-state allies as potential threats in Syria and Iraq. As the Gaza conflict continues, the shared concern about the United States' return to the Middle East might overshadow the competing interests of Tehran and Ankara, potentially preventing a clash between their regional policies. Both actors aim to reshape their common neighborhood, capitalizing on the current state of world politics after the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. However, once a new order emerges, their historical competition for strategic dominance in areas like Iraq and Syria may resurface. Furthermore, the commitment of other revisionist actors is uncertain. Russia may benefit from increased cooperation between Turkey and Iran, seeking to sideline Western actors, but the sustainability of this remains unclear. Despite Russia's current controversial stance against Israel, there's no evidence yet that Moscow intends to completely change its long-term policy towards Israel. China may find Iran-Turkey relationship useful but will likely proceed cautiously, considering its relations with the Gulf States. Iranian and Turkish interests seem increasingly aligned against Israel's actions and the resurgence of a U.S.-led regional order, their historical competition and various forms of global revisionism suggest that any emerging alliance between them may be weak and potentially stressful in the medium to long term.

## World needs to come up with key climate roadmap at COP28

Andrew Hammond

The EU has doubled down on its hugely ambitious European Green Deal and is still cutting its emissions overall. The EU's "State of the Energy Union Report 2023" highlights how the REPowerEU plan and emergency legislative measures have also helped to promote renewable energies. Moreover, EU-wide greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to have fallen by about 3 percent last year. At COP28, the EU is encouraging all parties to agree on global energy goals to deliver on three objectives

**T**HE high-profile COP28 climate summit opened in Dubai on Thursday, although key leaders like US President Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping will not be attending. One of the other world powers that will help fill this vacuum is Europe, which sees the Middle Eastern event as critical for meeting the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement. EU leaders, including European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Charles Michel, will be out in force at the big event. This reflects the fact that Europe has a huge stake in the summit. Firstly, the EU has become one of the big three players in climate negotiations, partly through the power of example, as the bloc has slashed its greenhouse gas emissions by about a third compared to 1990. Secondly, the EU has been an early and influential mover on green innovation, including developing the world's first carbon market in 2005. One of the key announcements that it is expected to make at COP28 is a new international "Critical Raw Materials Club," following the finalization of the EU Critical Raw Materials Act. Thirdly, Europe is feeling the effects of existing climate trends. The continent has warmed more than twice as much as the rest of the world over the past three decades and has experienced the greatest temperature increase of any continent, according to the World Meteorological Organization. From 1991 to 2021, Europe warmed at an average of 0.5 degrees Celsius per decade, the organization reported, while the global average was 0.2 C. One reason Europe is warming so fast is that a significant part of the continent is sub-Arctic and Arctic, Earth's fastest-warming region. It is also experiencing changes in so-called climate feedbacks. For example, fewer clouds over Europe during summers means more sunlight and heat. While Europe has long been a leader on tackling climate change, many had speculated that its ambition might be tempered by the twin shocks it has suffered

since 2020: Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of these has been huge, elevating the urgency of the EU's energy security. This has seen a big effort put into the striking of about 120 energy deals with other powers, mainly in the Middle East. These agreements have mainly focused on new gas and liquefied natural gas supplies as a transitional source in the movement toward clean energies. Given this new investment in gas, Europe's decarbonization pathway will be complicated in the coming years. However, the EU has nonetheless doubled down on its hugely ambitious European Green Deal and is still cutting its emissions overall.

The EU has doubled down on its hugely ambitious European Green Deal and is still cutting its emissions overall. The EU's "State of the Energy Union Report 2023" highlights how the REPowerEU plan and emergency legislative measures have also helped to promote renewable energies. Moreover, EU-wide greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to have fallen by about 3 percent last year. At COP28, the EU is encouraging all parties to agree on global energy goals to deliver on three objectives. Firstly, tackling the unabated use of fossil fuels globally by making sure that consumption peaks before 2030 and phasing out subsidies that do not help achieve a just transition. Secondly, moving toward a fully or predominantly decarbonized global power system in the 2030s, leaving no room for new coal power. Finally, tripling global installed renewable energy capacity by 2030 and doubling the rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030. Europe is encouraging such lofty ambitions because of the current challenges facing climate diplomacy. This includes the dark geopolitical context following the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. There are also the strains between the Global North and Global South on climate issues. This has shifted mindsets, at least temporarily, in much of the world,

making it more difficult to envision a repeat of the kind of broad international agreement that was sealed at the Paris summit in 2015.

And this is despite the warnings from the UN in a major report in September that the world is way off track in its efforts to tackle climate change. This study asserted that the planet remains headed for a temperature rise of up to 2.6 C and must take urgent action. In this context, Dubai is unlikely to see a series of big new national climate pledges being made. In what may be a challenging conference, one key goal is to create a roadmap for the second half of the 2020s, which Biden has called the "decisive decade" for humanity to tackle global warming. While there are many short-term challenges, there is some room for longer-term optimism. For instance, a September International Energy Agency report found that a small "window of opportunity" remains for keeping the landmark Paris Agreement alive because of a remarkable growth in clean power. However, as positive as this may be, the IEA highlighted that stronger measures will be required in the second half of the 2020s if the world is to have any chance of delivering on the 1.5 C target. If the international community fails to grow clean energy fast enough, the world body warned that measures such as carbon capture and storage will be required at scale, despite so far being unproven for use in this vast way. Key climate stakeholders are therefore seeking to develop a post-COP28 roadmap into the second half of the 2020s, including stronger climate deal implementation through national laws to make delivery most effective. As Europe has shown, these frameworks could then be replicated in more countries and progressively ratcheted up as climate ambition increases, helping to create what could yet be a key foundation for sustainable development in future decades.

- Sourced by Arab news





