



# Islamabad POST

Saturday, November 04, 2023

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## Gwadar again on target

# 14 soldiers martyred in terrorist attack

Six killed in blast targeting police van in DI Khan

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: At least 14 soldiers were martyred when terrorists attacked two vehicles carrying security forces in Gwadar, the military's media wing said Friday. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), in a statement, said that the unfortunate incident occurred when the security convoy was moving from Pasi to Ormara in Gwadar district. The military's wing added that a sanitisation operation was being carried out in the area and perpetrators of "this heinous act will be hunted down [and] brought to justice". The ISPR mentioned that the security forces are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of "our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve". The nation of 240 million has faced a surge in terrorism in recent months, with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militant outfits intensifying their actions against security forces. In response, the state has also launched operations to curb terrorism. Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir last week said that the armed forces and its security and intelligence setups have fought the menace of terrorism in an exemplary manner despite sustained and varied support of inimical forces. "Success will be ours InshAllah with the continued support of the people of Pakistan," COAS Munir said. Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), in a report released in October, noted that the security forces lost at least 386 personnel in the first nine months of 2023, marking an eight-year high. In the third quarter of 2023, some 445 people lost their lives and 440 suffered injuries from as many as 190 terror attacks and counter-terror operations. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan were the primary centres of violence, accounting for nearly 94% of all fatalities and 89% of attacks (including incidents of terrorism and security forces operations) recorded during this period. Separately, At least six people were killed and 20 were injured

Continued on Page 06

## President, PM strongly condemns

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday strongly condemned the bomb blast that took place in Dera Ismail Khan which caused deaths and injuries. The president expressed deep regret over the loss of precious human lives in the blast. He prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the martyrs in paradise and speedy recovery for the injured. He reiterated the country's resolve to completely eradicate terrorism from its soil. In a condolence message, the prime minister expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of citizens in the blast. He also prayed for elevation of ranks of the departed souls in Jannah and grant of courage to the bereaved families to bear this loss with equanimity. The prime minister instructed the relevant authorities to provide the best medical facilities to the injured. He said war against terrorists would continue until complete eradication of the scourge of terrorism from the country. "Thanks to the sacrifices of the law enforcement agencies, we have been thwarting the evil intentions of the terrorists," he said. Meanwhile, Former President of Pakistan and President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians, Asif Ali Zardari condemning the terrorism in Dera Ismail Khan martyring 6 and injuring many more said

Continued on Page 06

## DIWALI CELEBRATIONS



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey, Ambassador of Bulgaria Irena Gancheva and Charge d Affaires of the Indian High Commission Geetika Srivastava lighting candles on the occasion of Diwali celebrations, organised by the Indian High Commission. - DNA

## PSX soars to all-time high on positive macros

KSE-100 jumps to 53,263.07 points during the intra-day trade

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) Friday soared to an all-time high as it rallied over 450 points - crossing the 53,000 barrier for the first time in history - driven by clarity regarding the stand-by agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the general elections date. Benchmark KSE-100 index jumped to an all-time high of 53,263.07 points during the intra-day trade but closed at 53,123.03 points

Continued on Page 06

## SC orders govt to ensure polls on February 8

Supreme Court of Pakistan has said that the "unconstitutional dissolution" of the assembly by president after a no-confidence motion falls under the category of treason

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court Friday ordered the government to ensure the conduct of general elections on February 8, a day after President Arif Alvi and Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja unanimously agreed on the aforementioned date during a meeting held at the President's House. The court's orders came during the hearing of multiple pleas seeking timely elections within 90 days of the dissolution of the assemblies.

Continued on Page 06

## IMF talks start with polls date in focus

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Thursday inquired the Pakistani authorities about the next general elections as well as

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### Mengal assails PDM govt

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan National Party - Mengal (BNP-M) President Sardar Akhtar Mengal on Friday claimed the PML-N led government exploited the coalition - of which his party was a member. "To streamline their own matters, they introduced the NAB amendment - they passed 56 bills in one day on the floor of the assembly - [but] they did not pass even one bill of ours," he said in an interview on a private news channel. The BNP-M, which was previously allied with the then-ruling PTI in the Centre in 2018, joined hands with the PDM to eventually bring down Imran Khan's government.

### Asad Qaiser arrested from Islamabad

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Asad Qaiser has been arrested from his residence in Islamabad's Bani Gala area, the former National Assembly speaker's brother said on Friday. Sources said that Qaiser - who is a staunch supporter of PTI Chairman Imran Khan - was taken into custody by police and ACE personnel for alleged corrupt practices related to purchase of medical equipment for Gajju Khan Medical College in Swabi.

### 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

## Death toll surges 9,227 Israeli attack hits convoy of ambulances

Hamas fighters battle invading Israeli troops in parts of bombed Gaza

DNA

GAZA: In another brutal massacre, Israeli airstrikes bombed the main entrance of al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, killing and injuring dozens of civilians. Israeli warplanes shelled the main entrance of the Shifa hospital, in addition to an ambulance that was at the scene, which resulted in the killing and wounding of dozens of people. The casualties included dozens of the sick and wounded and their families, paramedics, and displaced people who sought refuge there after their homes were bombed. According to local sources, around 40 thousand people are seeking refuge at the hospital. Photos and videos of the scene showed dozens of fatalities and wounded lying on the ground as civilians and paramedics worked on taking them inside the hospital. Israeli warplanes and artillery also targeted an ambulance convoy that was heading from the hospital toward Rafah crossing with Egypt to transport the injured to Egyptian hospitals.



Whereas the number of displaced people in Gaza reached 1.5 million, according to a senior UN humanitarian official. "The number of displaced in Gaza stands now at 1.5 million, with more than 690,000 sheltering in UNWRA facilities, and other places people hope are safe, including hospitals, churches, and schools," Lynn Hastings, UN Assistant Secretary-General, Humanitarian Coordinator in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, said.

Continued on Page 06

## Deportation drive: Taliban minister threatens Pakistan

Mullah Mujahid urges the international community to exert pressure on Pakistan

CENTRELINE REPORT

KABUL: Amid Pakistan's ongoing drive to deport illegal immigrants, including Afghan nationals, a purported audio clip has emerged, where the Acting Defense Minister of the Taliban government, Mullah Muhammad Yaqub Mujahid, has issued a stern warning to Pakistan, urging them to consider the consequences of their deportation efforts before taking "unilateral actions". In the audio clip, Mujahid called on the Pakistani authorities not to mistreat Afghan nationals and accused them of seizing the personal property and assets of Afghan citizens. He emphasized that such actions would be questioned and that the Taliban would use all their resources to prevent it, vowing not to allow anyone to confiscate the personal property of Afghan refugees, an Afghan news channel reported. Furthermore, Mullah Mujahid urged the international community, the United Nations, and other organisations to exert pressure on Pakistan to bring an end to the current situation concerning the refugees. He criticised Pakistan for not ensuring that Afghan refugees are sent back to their homeland with the dignity they deserve.

Continued on Page 06

## Pakistan opens more border centres

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan opened more border centres on Friday to expedite the return of tens of thousands of undocumented Afghan nationals, an official said, ignoring calls by refugee groups to reconsider its mass expulsion plans. Facilities at the northwestern border crossing of Torkham, where most immigrants are re-entering Afghanistan, have been increased three times to cater to the rising number of returnees, said Abdul Nasir Khan, deputy commissioner for the Khyber district. "Everything is normal now as the returnees no longer needed to wait in queues for hours," he said of the crossing, where thousands had thronged after a Wednesday deadline expired for Afghans in the country illegally to leave. Those arriving in

Continued on Page 06

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## KP Governor inaugurates road at Johns Cathedral church

PESHAWAR : Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here on Friday inaugurated a road inside Johns Cathedral church at Peshawar cantonment which completed at a cost of over Rs7million. He said our relations with Christian community was based on respect, and the minorities communities settled in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were highly respectable for others. The Governor said the services of Christian community were highly praiseworthy for the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, says an official statement. The Christian community is very peaceful that always played a significant role in the province's development and their welfare and uplift was top priority of the Government. The constitution of Pakistan has ensured protection of the personal and religious rights of all minorities, he said. He said, this is our duty to stand with the state of Pakistan and to serve it with best of our abilities and professional commitment. —APP

## PDWP approves five development schemes

LAHORE : The Punjab Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) here on Friday approved five development schemes of Urban Development, Transport, Irrigation & Road sectors with an estimated cost of Rs 6741.785 million. These schemes were approved in its 25th meeting of the current financial year 2023-24, presided over by Planning and Development (P&D) Board Chairman Iftikhar Ali Sahoo. Approved schemes are as follows: Construction/Rehabilitation of Jinnah Park In Jhang City at the cost of Rs 868.915 million, Carpet Road from Nowshera Virkan to Hafizabad via Nathu Siwiya, Buggay Including Khan Musalman Bypass, Length 31.30km, District Gujranwala at the cost of Rs 800 million, Procurement of Snow Clearance Machinery and Vehicles for Murree at the cost of Rs 580 million, Induction of Eco-friendly Buses in Cities of Punjab at the cost of Rs 3367 million and Construction of Gated Head Regulator from RD:205+000 to 283+000 of BRBD Link Canal at the cost of Rs 1125.870 million. —DNA

## DC launches cleanliness drive in Sukkur

SUKKUR : Deputy Commissioner Sukkur, Fayyaz Hussain Mahesar on Friday launched a cleanliness drive by planting a tree at his office. ADC Sukkur, health, education and other officers concerned were present on the occasion. The deputy commissioner said that he wanted to turn the city neat and clean and under the cleanliness plan, the garbage would be lifted from every nook and corner of the city. He said that neat and clean environment helped avoid the spread of dengue and malaria, open plots and graveyards should be cleaned, water should not be stagnated anywhere. —APP

# KOICA alumni Pak annual reception 2023 in Islamabad

KAAP looked back on activities such as training program, scholarship program, and knowledge sharing seminar that were supported by KOICA during the year

ISLAMABAD : Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Pakistan Office hosted "2023 KOICA Alumni Association of Pakistan (KAAP) Annual Reception" to sharekey outcomes of KOICA alumni activities during the year and future plans while promoting its partnership with the KAAP alumni and Korean enterprises in Pakistan. KOICA Pakistan Office hosted "2023 KAAP Annual Reception" at Serena hotel, Islamabad. H.E. Park Ki Jun, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Je-Ho Yeon (Country Director of KOICA Pakistan Office), Dr. Ikramul-Haq (President of KAAP) attended the annual event. In addition, along with Korean enterprises Star Hydro Power Limited, and KOAK Power Limited., Pakistan Taekwondo team also joined the event to celebrate their presence. Referring to the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Korea and Pakistan, H.E. Park Ki Jun celebrated the 2023 KAAP Annual Reception, "What you



experienced in Korea is not just personal achievement, but also a valuable contribution to the development of your community and bilateral relations" adding, "Let's continue to make efforts to create a brighter future by utilizing the power of international collaboration and innovation". Through this event, KAAP looked back on activities such as training program, scholar-

ship program, and knowledge sharing seminar that were supported by KOICA during the year, and shared plans for the volunteer activities and re-union to serve as catalysts for positive change in Pakistan. Additionally, both Star Hydro Power Limited, and KOAK Power Limited, introduced the on-going renewable energy and hydroelectric power projects,

positively looking at Pakistan's growth potential. Through 2023 KAAP Annual Reception, alumni members promoted their experiences of learning through support activities. In addition, Korean cultural performances such as taekwondo and presentations by Korean companies were held to remind alumni of Korean culture and to share knowledge between

alumni and Korean companies. For 13 years since 2010, KOICA promoted social, cultural, and educational activities among the 1,735 members of the KAAP to strengthen friendly relations between Pakistan and Korea. In addition, KOICA contributed to regional development and harmony through knowledge sharing seminars and volunteer activities led by the alumni.

## SCCI urges consultation in framing economic policies

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq said that the role of bureaucracy is vital in framing sustainable and growth-oriented policies. He, however, emphasized that the chamber and relevant stakeholders should be consulted before formation of economic policies and reforms in the taxation system. Fuad Ishaq said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should be given due rights of Gas and Electricity under article 158-A of the constitution of the country. He called for signing of free trade agreements with Afghanistan, Iran and China along with allowing trade in Pakistan rupees with these countries so that the national economy would be stabilized and trade volume to be improved as well. Faud Ishaq was speaking during an inland study tour of participants of the 38th Mid-Career Management Course (NIM) Islamabad here at the chamber's

house on Friday. The NIM Directing Staff Ms Semi A Khan headed the delegation of the participants. Sanaullah Khan, Senior Vice President and Ijaz Khan Afridi, Vice president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, executive members Munawar Khurshid, Qurat Ul Ain, Naeem Qasmi, Ismail Safi and former president Faiz Muhammad Faizi, former vice president Anees Ashraf, and Muhammad Asad Ashraf, Ihsanullah and others were present on the occasion. A comprehensive multi-media presentation was given regarding the chamber's history, key role, objectives, main functions and future programs during the meeting. Fuad Ishaq while replying to various queries of the participants said industries in KP have adversely suffered owing to unavailability of gas and electricity. The dilemma is that despite unavailability of gas, the gas tariff has been increased exorbitantly, which is an attempt to further push the war-hit KP industries toward de-

struction, he added. Furthermore, he said KP has first right to use its natural resources under article 158-A of the constitution of the country but for the last 13 years, no new gas connection to industries in the province was given, contrary to that new gas connections were given to industries in Punjab, while on the other hand, he said Punjab gas consumption is high against its production. Similarly, he said production of gas in KP is in surplus but gas wasn't available there, even consumers being charged with exorbitant rates. Therefore, he urged the government to ensure new gas connections to industries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which is a constitutional right of this province. To a question about CPEC, Mr Ishaq responded that the CPEC is a guarantee for economic prosperity and development of Pakistan and the whole region. He urged the government to provide equal facilities and incentives for foreign

and local investors to fully reap the benefits of the CPEC and make the dream of economic prosperity come true. To another question regarding regional trade, the SCCI chief said bilateral trade volume between Pakistan and Afghanistan had dropped from \$2.5 billion to \$800 million while the actual trade is higher than this figure and illegal trade is going on and urged to correct policies to promote legal trade. About the promotion of handicraft, Fuad Ishaq replied that SCCI's Research and Development Cell has planned to make a comprehensive documentary on ancient practices, handicrafts and other traditional items to highlight their importance in rest of world because there was immense potentials, which need to be promoted at global level in an efficient manner. Later, the NIM Directing Staff Ms Semi A Khan thanked the SCCI president for hosting participants and giving answers to their questions comprehensively.

## KPCIP to transform Abbottabad with 6 billion budget

ABBOTTABAD : Commissioner Hazara Division, Syed Zaheer-ul-Islam Friday announced that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa City Improvement Program (KPCIP), a provincial initiative with a budget of 6 billion rupees, is set to bring significant development and aesthetic enhancements to Abbottabad city. This transformative project is being hailed as a game-changer for the city and its residents, with work scheduled to commence shortly. The Commissioner stressed the importance of earnest, honest, and dedicated efforts from all relevant institutions involved in the project. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting, where discussions revolved around the KP CIP project. The meeting was presided over by KP CIP Project Director Syed Zafer Ali Shah and attended by several key officials. The KP CIP project, with a substantial budget of 6 billion rupees, encompasses various significant ventures within Abbottabad city. These include the beautification of Abbottabad Bazaar, Sherwan Park, the Water Treatment Plant in Chunna, the Chunna to Abbottabad city distribution line, solid waste management, and the construction of a park in Chunna. During the meeting, Project Director Syed Zafer Ali Shah provided comprehensive insights into these projects, highlighting associated challenges and issues. He underscored the importance of collaborative efforts between the Hazara Division Commissioner, district administration, and relevant departments to promptly address current challenges and facilitate the commencement of work. Commissioner Hazara, Syed Zaheer-ul-Islam, reiterated his commitment to monitor the project's progress, emphasizing that there would be no compromise on quality, and work would proceed without unnecessary delays. In response to public inquiries about the project's timeline, the Commissioner urged relevant officials to expedite the resolution of any issues related to the projects. He particularly emphasized the urgency of addressing encroachments on government lands and obtaining the necessary private land for these ventures within a week. The meeting was attended by the Chief Executive Officer of WSSA Abbottabad, Engineer Rehan Yousaf, Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Khalid Iqbal, ADC General Jabrail Raza, KPCIP Project Director of Communication Amir Alam, Chief Engineer KP Mohsin Shahzad, Regional Engineer Construction C&W Mahmood Jadoon, and others. —APP

## Commissioner Sibi Division visits DHQ Hospital

QUETTA : Commissioner Sibi Division Bashir Ahmad Bangalzai made a detailed visit to DHQ Hospital Dera Bugti where he inspected emergency, gynecology ward, laboratory, nutrition, X-ray room, EPI, medicine store on Friday. He also reviewed construction and renovation work at ICU, Blood Bank and other places. On this occasion, the MS and other officers of the hospital briefed the Commissioner about the speed and quality of the work. Commissioner Sibi Division Bashir Ahmad Bangalzai said that the construction work should be done according to the standard. He also directed the concerned XEN to speed up the work and complete it within the stipulated period adding that by contacting the top officials of the health department, the CBC machine would be installed and activated soon, the x-ray unit would also be repaired immediately. He directed the hospital administration to provide the best medical facilities to every patient who comes to the hospital while completing the construction work as soon as possible to make all the wards functional for patients. Besides, Commissioner Sibi Division Bashir Ahmad Bangalzai visited MCH Center, Sports Complex Dera Bugti, Peer Koh Water Supply Scheme and detailed review of various issues including construction work. —APP

## PTI seeks permission for public rallies in Punjab

LAHORE : Following the announcement of general elections in the country, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has sought permission for public gatherings in Punjab. According to details, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has sought permission for public gatherings in Gujranwala, Sialkot and Sheikhupura. Sources knowing the matter said that PTI has submitted pleas with the deputy commissioners of Gujranwala, Sialkot and Sheikhupura for approval of public gatherings. PTI is planning to flex its political muscles in Gujranwala on November 10, Sialkot on November 17, and Sheikhupura on November 19. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued a notification of holding elections on February 8 after reaching a consensus with President Arif Alvi. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Portuguese Ambassador to Pakistan, Fredrico Silva calls on Caretaker Foreign Minister Bilal Abbas Gilani. They discussed Pakistan-Portugal bilateral relations. —DNA

## NDRMF and OGDCL ready for environment-friendly initiatives

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: In order to promote socially responsible and environmental friendly practices in the field of oil & gas exploration and production in line with the sustainable development goals, National Disaster Risk Management Fund and Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) entered into an agreement to work on joint projects. A MoU signing ceremony in this regard was held in Islamabad, in which Bilal Anwer CEO NDRMF and Ahmed Hayat Lak Managing Director/CEO OGDCL signed the agreement. Under this partnership, NDRMF intends to establish its linkages with OGDCL for larger cooperation

and linkages for research and capacity development activities for socially responsible and environmental friendly adaptations in the field. Collaborating for knowledge exchange and capacity building in the areas of climate change, disaster risk reduction, through holding of seminars, workshops and events on areas of mutual interest will play a vital role in achieving the objectives. Bilal Anwer, CEO NDRMF said that NDRMF is legally mandated to reduce the socio-economic and fiscal vulnerability of the Country and its population to natural hazards by prioritizing and financing investments in disaster risk reduction that have high economic benefits, taking into account climate change, as well as disaster risks and

their impacts. He said that through this partnership, NDRMF will provide opportunities and support to OGDCL for socially responsible development of its business; enhance the outreach programs of OGDCL for an environment friendly business development mechanism keeping in line with the international best practices by optimizing the global carbon emission reduction goals. Ahmed Hayat Lak, Managing Director/CEO OGDCL expressed great confidence in this partnership and said it will help us explore carbon dioxide gas capture & storage solutions and mechanisms for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. He further stressed that OGDCL seeks to harmonize its business goals.

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Government of Pakistan  
Ministry of Energy, (Petroleum Division)  
Directorate General of Petroleum Concessions

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**ADDENDUM**

**EXTENSION IN INVITATION TO BID FOR GRANT OF PETROLEUM EXPLORATION RIGHTS**

Reference advertisement published in the Press (PID (I) No. 881/23) on August 10, 2023 with respect to invitation of bids for 10 blocks. The Petroleum Division is pleased to extend the bid submission date for 15 days. The sealed applications should now be submitted by the interested E&P companies to DGPC office, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Petroleum House, G-5/2, Islamabad by 10:00 a.m. (PST) on November 30, 2023.

2. All other terms and conditions remain the same.

(Kashif Ali)  
Director General Petroleum Concessions  
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website: www.petroleum.gov.pk

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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria National Day

Nov 04/Italy Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia National Day

Nov 11/Poland Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus National Day

Nov 18/Oman National Day

Nov 18/Morocco Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon Independence Day

Nov 25/Suriname National Day

Nov 28/Mauritania National Day

Nov 28/Albania Flags Day

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Marriott.....051- 2826121  
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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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.....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

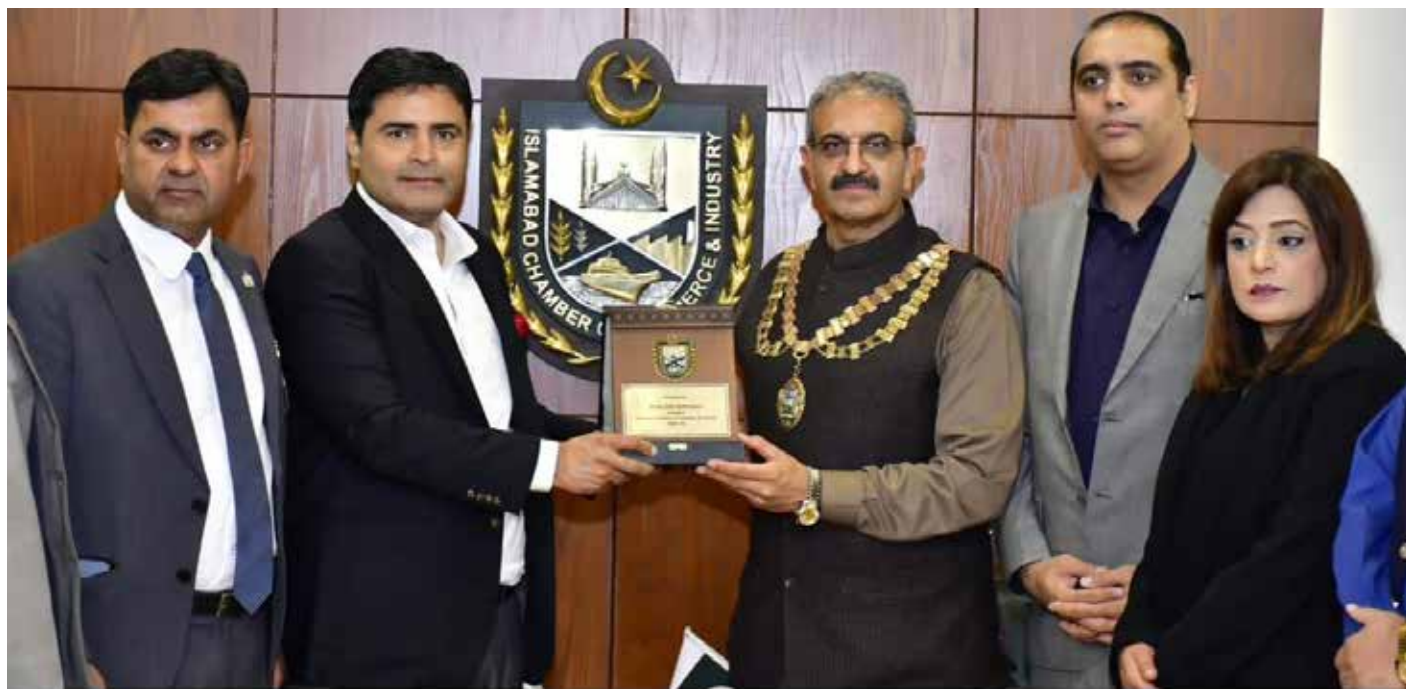
Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Mayor assures to coop with ICCI in exploring UK market

Maqsood Tabish, Ch. Muhammad Ali and others also spoke on the occasion and shared useful ideas to further improve bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and UK

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Mayor of the London Borough of Hounslow Afzaal Kiani along with Councillor Samia Chaudhry and others visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and exchanged views with the business community on matters for further improving Pakistan's business relations with the UK. He assured that he would cooperate with ICCI members in exploring the UK market for exports. He said that the Pakistani diaspora has great love for Pakistan and they are keen to contribute to the economic development of their home country. He said that ICCI should form a delegation for the UK and he would arrange their meetings with Hounslow Chamber of Commerce to explore areas of business collaboration with them. He said that promotion of tourism in Pakistan would promote a soft image and attract tourists and investors to Pakistan. Councillor Samia Chaudhry and other members of the delegation said that the Pakistani diaspora in the UK prefers to buy Made in Pakistan products and stressed that Pakistani exporters should focus on enhancing their exports to the UK. She stressed for bridging the communication gap between the



private sectors of both countries to increase bilateral trade and investment relations. Speaking at the occasion Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the UK is an important trading partner of Pakistan and we want to further strengthen these trade ties. He said that bilateral trade between Pakistan and the UK is just over £ 4 billion in 2023 and stressed

for developing strong business linkages between the private sectors of both countries to further improve bilateral trade relations. He said that the Chinese and Indian diaspora have contributed significantly to the economies of their home countries and emphasized that the Pakistani diaspora should also play a role to steer Pakistan out of the current economic challenges. He stressed that the

Pakistani diaspora in the UK should transfer technology and explore JVs and investment in Pakistan. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that many Pakistani products reach the UK market through smuggling due to which economies of both countries suffer and he stressed for promoting direct trade to achieve better results. He assured that ICCI would connect the investors of the UK

with right partners in Pakistan. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI said that the Pakistani diaspora in the UK should play the role of Ambassadors of Pakistan and promote its business and investment interests in the UK market. Maqsood Tabish, Ch. Muhammad Ali and others also spoke on the occasion and shared useful ideas to further improve bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and UK.

# Folk singer 'Reshma' remembered on her 10th death anniversary

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 10th death anniversary of Pakistan's celebrated folk singer Reshma was observed nationwide on Friday where people from all walks of life have paid rich tributes for her unforgettable service in entertainment industry. Reshma was born in Rajasthan, India in a nomadic Banjara family in 1947. Her family migrated to Karachi after the partition of India.

She was highly dynamic and versatile singer, and was only 12 when she spotted singing at Shahbaz Qalander's shrine by a television and radio producer, PTV news channel reported. Later, the producer Saleem Gilani, recorded her song 'Lal Meri' on Pakistan radio which became an instant hit, and Reshma went on to become one of the most popular folk singers of Pakistan, appearing on television in the 1960s. She recorded several songs

for both the Pakistani and Indian film industry. Reshma enthralled the world with her powerful singing. Her singing style in Punjabi was full-throated and unabashedly mesmerizing. Due to pirated tapes at that time her songs became famous across the border. Subhash Ghai used her voice in the film Hero, which featured one of her most famous songs, 'Lambi Judai'. Her famous songs include Dama Dam Mast Kalandar, Wey mein chori

chori, Ankhian nu rehane de and Lambi Judai. Her fans gave her the title of 'Nightingale of Desert'. She crowned several national awards including the prestigious award Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Star of Distinction) by the president of Pakistan. Reshma was diagnosed with throat cancer in the 1980s. In later years, her health deteriorated. She died due to throat cancer in 2013 after being in coma for a month.

# Power suspension schedule

ISLAMABAD: According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: On 04th November 2023, From 08:00 AM to 01:00 PM, Rawalpindi City Circle, New Milpur Feeder, Chakwal Circle, Taman, Khawan, Multan Khard, Thai, Malkwal, Murat, Medina Town, Baharpur, Main Bazaar Feeders, From 09:00 AM to 04:00 PM, GSO Circle, Askari-7, Jinnah Road, Tipu Road, Bank Road-1, Dhok Farman Ali, GHQ, City Center, Liaquat Bagh, FFC, Fowara Chowk, Nimal, Fuji Cement Plant-II Consumer Grid, On 05th November 2023, From 09:00 AM to 04:00 PM, GSO Circle, Q Project, DHQ, Bank Road-2, Adam Road, Sir Syed Road, Khadim Hussain, CGH, Sarafa Bazar, Jhanda, Zafarul Haq Road, Arian Mohalla, Nimal, Askari Cement Consumer Grid and surrounding areas will remain closed. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. —APP

# President directs FIO to ensure conflict of interest disclosure

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has asked the Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO) to ensure that insurance companies disclosed the conflict of interest to the purchaser of the insurance policy before selling the policy as there had been instances of grave mis-selling of policies which required a serious relook at product structure and front-loaded commission of the agents of insurance companies. The President gave these directions while deciding upon a representation filed by the Pak-Qatar Family Takaful Ltd (the petitioner company) against the order of the Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO). As per details, Mr Anwar ul Haq (the complainant) had alleged that he purchased the Kafalah

Takaful Plan from the petitioner company in February 2017 for the sum assured of Rs 4.5 million and an annual premium of Rs 750,000/-. He had been paying the annual premiums regularly till the year 2022 and the total amount of his deposited premiums was Rs. 4.5 million. On account of unavoidable circumstances, he requested the company for the withdrawal of his deposited premiums with all benefits and profit but to no avail. Feeling aggrieved, he approached FIO, which passed the order in his favour directing the company to pay Rs 4.3 million to the complainant. The company, then, filed a representation with the President against the order of FIO. The President held a personal hearing of the case and after listening to both sides, gave his decision. In his decision, he observed that it was an admitted

fact that the company received Rs 4.5 million from the complainant, invested the money in business, and earned considerable profit. "The equitable principle of enrichment envisages that one should not unjustly enrich himself at the expense of the others", he added. He further pointed out that it was also a principle of equity that 'He who suffers no loss deserves no gain'. He said that it would be unjust to deprive the complainant of his contribution in the profit but the company unjustifiably declined its refund on the pretext of the prevailing cash value of the policy which was only Rs. 3,112,258/-. "Time and again, there have been instances of grave mis-selling of insurance policies that necessitate a serious relook at product structure and front-loaded commissions of the agents

# Food ministry says no shortage of wheat

## FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ministry of Food Security and Research has made it clear that the country is currently well-stocked with wheat reserves as both the federal and provincial food departments have reported a total stock of 6,934 million tons of wheat. In a statement issued here on Friday, the federal ministry informed that PASSCO's has stock 1.78 million tons, Punjab has 4.021 million tons, Sindh has 0.817 million tons, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has 0.227 million tons, and Balochistan has 0.089 million tons. These reserves are sufficient for the country's essential needs until May 2024 when the new crop harvest begins. The private sector has initiated wheat procurement due to their confidence in the federal government's support. Currently, more than 700,000 tons of wheat have been procured within the country, with expectations of an additional 1.2 million tons to be procured. The federal government has assured full cooperation to the private sector to ensure a steady supply of wheat until the arrival of the new crop. The supply and price situation for wheat has improved, with no shortage in any part of the country. Wheat prices, which were previously at 4,800 Pakistani Rupees per maund a month ago, have now decreased to 4,300-4,400 Pakistani Rupees per maund. The possibility of further price reductions is also present, which is expected to alleviate the common man's financial burdens and improve their purchasing power.

# HEC Conducts Workshop for College Faculty of ICT Region

The workshop was conducted by the Post-secondary Education Reform Unit (PERU) in coordination with the National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE)

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: HEC's Higher Education Development in Pakistan (HEDP) project team conducted a three-day capacity building workshop for teachers at affiliated colleges of the ICT region. The workshop was conducted by the Post-secondary Education Reform Unit (PERU) in coordination with the National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE). The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training and the Federal Directorate of Education had requested the training for 70 nominated teachers from associate and graduate colleges of Islamabad. The Undergraduate Education Policy (UEP) 2020 was approved by the HEC and being implemented from Fall 2023. The

success of a policy depends on the preparedness of teachers who constitute the foundation of an education system. For successful implementation of UEP, it is important that the faculty of higher education institutes understand it well and are prepared to implement it in letter and spirit. The affiliated colleges are undergoing a transition from an annual system to semester system under the education policy 2020. The introduction of associate degree programmes and bachelor's degree programmes requires significant procedural and regulation changes in student admission, enrollment, registration, advisement system, internship, capstone project, assessment methods, attendance system, course design and conduct, learning management system, and using technology in

teaching & assessment. For the first time, a special module on environment and sustainability was also added to create awareness among teachers regarding the SDGs. The training methods also addressed the expectations and level of target teachers with suitable activities and involvement rather than mere lecturing. The workshop was conducted by Master Trainers specialized in various areas of training. It commenced with an inaugural address by Dr. Mehmood ul Hassan Butt, Project Coordinator, HEDP. He briefed the audience with his vision of quality higher education for all including affiliated colleges that comparatively have been a weaker link in higher education in Pakistan. Dr. Syed Afaq Husain, Consultant Capacity Building, briefed the audience about the workshop

and hoped that the benefits of this training would reach the students. The training comprised the following modules: Transition to Semester System by Dr. Zeeshan Khattak, Teaching Methodologies & Academic Advisement by Dr. Zahir J. Paracha, Student Assessment and Feedback by Dr. Kashif S. Malik, Curriculum, Course Design & Planning by Dr. Saira Nudrat, Technology in Teaching & Learning by Dr. Shehryar Naveed, and Environment & Sustainability by Engr. Naeem Subhani, Safe T Consultant. 64 teachers from 33 colleges across Islamabad- both urban and rural, attended the training out of which 45 were females. A pre-test was conducted at the beginning of the training while a post-training test was conducted at the end to gauge the learning achieved by the trainees. The participants provided

positive feedback on the training and revised UEP. There was a general consensus that the revised policy would prepare curious, creative, communicative, and constructive young human resources to create a knowledge-based economy. Executive Director HEC, Mr. Awais Ahmed, awarded the certificates to successful participants in the closing ceremony held at National Skills University, Islamabad. He reiterated the role of teachers in the nation-building and nurturing the future of the country. Dr. Nasreen Idrees, Joint Educational Advisor, MOFET and Ms. Riffat Jabben, Federal Directorate of Education participated in the closing ceremony and expressed their resolve to enable the teaching environment in the colleges of ICT region so that the benefits of technology and modern teaching methods can reach the students.

# Arshad Majeed Mohmand new NHA Chairman

ISLAMABAD: In a significant moment for the National Highway Authority (NHA), Arshad Majeed Mohmand has officially taken the reins as the new Chairman. The corridors of NHA echoed with applause and warm greetings from members and officers as the distinguished leader arrived to steer the organization towards a brighter future. Chairman Arshad Majeed Mohmand, visibly moved by the heartfelt reception, reciprocated with gratitude, setting a promising tone for his tenure. His appointment signifies a new chapter of transformation and progress for the NHA. —APP

# Justice Irfan Saadat takes oath as SC judge

## DNA

Islamabad: Hon'ble Mr. Justice Qazi Faiz Isa, Chief Justice of Pakistan administered the oath of office to Hon'ble Mr. Justice Irfan Saadat Khan, Acting Chief Justice of the High Court of Sindh as Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan today i.e. 3rd November 2023 at the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Islamabad, in a simple and dignified ceremony. Hon'ble Judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Attorney General for Pakistan, representatives of the Federal Judicial Academy, Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, Pakistan Bar Council, Supreme Court Bar Association along with Senior Advocates, Advocates, Advocates on Record and officers and staff of the Supreme Court of Pakistan attended the ceremony. Ms. Jazeela Aslam, Registrar Supreme.

# IRSA releases 111,100 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 111,100 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 57,800 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1522.05 feet and was 124.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 29,700 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1200.65 feet, which was 150.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 7,000 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 58,400, 38,900, 41,000 and 10,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 10,300 cusecs of water were released at Nowshera and 5,300 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

# Renowned Ghazal singer Nayyara Noor remembered

ISLAMABAD: Renowned Ghazal and playback singer Nayyara Noor also known as 'nightingale of Pakistan' was remembered on her birth anniversary on Friday. Born on November 3, 1951 in Assam, Nayyara Noor was one of the top playback singers in the country. With no formal musical background, Noor also did not receive any formal music training, however, she proved her God-gifted singing talents all over the subcontinent. She was seven when her family migrated to Pakistan, a private news channel reported. From her early childhood, she took fancy to Begum Akhtar's Ghazals, Thumris and Kanan Devi's Bhajans. In 1968, Nayyara Noor started singing songs on Radio Pakistan and then on Pakistan Television in 1971. The singer then never looked back as her unstoppable musical journey began.—APP



## Briefs

## CAA returns items worth Rs 4 mln to passenger

ISLAMABAD: The staff of Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) had returned back items worth Rs 4 million to woman passenger at the Islamabad International airport. According to CAA, passengers had reached Islamabad from Karachi by flight ER 502. The passenger had left the bag in the baby changing room on level two. The female sanitary attendant Ms. Subia Asif handed over the bag to the Terminal Manager Arrival upon receiving the bag. The Terminal Manager submitted the said bag to the CAA Lost and Found Section. Two mobile phones, 110 British pounds, 22830 rupees, 116.64 grams of gold and a lady Swiss watch were found in the bag. The next day, after contacting the Islamabad Airport, the bag was handed over to the passenger. The lady passenger thanked the civil aviation staff and praised them for their honesty.—APP

## ANF recovers 343 kg drugs; arrests two smugglers after encounter

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting an operation managed to recover over 343 kg of drugs and arrested two drug smugglers after an encounter, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that in an encounter in Jhelum between ANF intelligence and drug smugglers, more than 343 kg of drugs including 277.2 kg hashish and 67.2 kg opium were recovered. He said an ANF official received bullet injuries in the exchange of fire with drug smugglers. During the operation, two suspects including one injured were arrested while one smuggler managed to escape from the spot. Acting on a tip-off, an attempt was made to stop a Suzuki Mehran car at the Dina check post but the accused instead of stopping the vehicle tried to escape, he said adding, that the ANF team chased and forced the vehicle to stop near Domeli Chowk, Jhelum. The drug smugglers started firing at the ANF personnel in an attempt to escape. An ANF official received bullet injuries in the leg in the exchange of fire, he added. The injured official was immediately shifted to the hospital for medical treatment where his condition is stated to be out of danger. As a result of the firing, an injured suspect was arrested along with his accomplice while another accused escaped in the nearby forest, the spokesman informed. He said that ANF was making efforts to net other members of the group. A case has been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act, while further investigation is underway.—APP

## Pakistan earns \$1,707 million from services' exports in Q1

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned foreign exchange worth \$1,707 million from exports of various services during the first quarter (Q1) of the current fiscal year (2023-24), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. However, as compared to the services exports of \$1,717 million during July-September (2022-23), the external trade witnessed a slightly negative growth of 0.58 percent, according to PBS data. Meanwhile, the services' imports into the country increased by 18.10 percent by going up from \$2,028 million last year to \$2,395 million during the first three months of the current fiscal year. Based on the figures, the services trade deficit increased by 121.28 percent during the period under review going up from \$310 million last year to \$688 million this year. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year (YoY) basis, the services exports from the country increased by 1.08 percent going up from \$565 million in September 2022.—APP

## UK envoy reinforces pledge to supporting minority rights

They are helping change their communities, and the whole of Pakistan for the better, they are future. Additionally the launch of GoBiz marks a significant stride towards modernization and efficiency'

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD, British High Commissioner Jane Marriott visited Peshawar and Nowshera. During her visit, she engaged in a series of meetings and events to reinforce the UK's commitment to supporting interfaith harmony, minority rights, socio-economic development and regional stability. The visit started with a tour of the historic Mahabat Khan Mosque, where she and Maulana Tayyab Qureshi emphasized the importance of respecting cultural heritage and fostering interfaith dialogue. She then met with officials from the United Nations Development Programme, and the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to discuss border governance and connectivity in the Newly Merged Districts. After discussing security and the importance of timely elections with KP's Caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan, Jane Marriott, and the Caretaker Chief Minister, launched GoBiz, an online portal designed to improve government-business relations. She also met with beneficiaries of the UK-funded Aawaz II and DaFak programmes in Nowshera, showcasing the UK's support for addressing gen-



der-based violence, minority rights issues, child marriages, and health services delivery in remote areas. British High Commissioner Jane Marriott said: 'This visit was

not only about our shared commitment to fostering economic development, regional stability, and interfaith harmony but also about celebrating Pakistan's past and its future. I was amazed

by the beauty of the Mahabat Khan Mosque, a testament to Pakistan's rich cultural heritage and I was inspired by the young people I met through Aawaz II. They are helping change their

communities, and the whole of Pakistan for the better, they are the future. Additionally the launch of GoBiz marks a significant stride towards modernization and efficiency.'

## Wasi calls upon youngsters to contribute towards country's development

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs and Minister of State for Tourism Wasi Shah on Friday urged the young minds of the nation to contribute their fresh ideas and innovations to achieve the country's development goals. Talking to a private news channel, he said that the interim government is launching various projects to provide a better life to the youth and will use our youth power for the social economy of the country. "Creating more jobs and promoting entrepreneurship culture for youth empowerment is the top

priority of caretaker government", he added. He said that the youth population is the lifeline of this country, adding that they are the future of the nation, so their education and understanding of national politics, democracy and economy must be comprehensive. Replying to a question, he said the youth must struggle to achieve success as hard work is the path that leads to glory, adding, that if Pakistan wants to move forward and make progress then its key is in the hands of youngsters. He said that the youth of Pakistan are our most valuable asset and the young

minds of Pakistan are eager and eager to contribute to the development of the country, adding that Pakistan has a rich and diverse cultural heritage which is fostered by the youth. To another question, he said that our country is blessed with great tourism potential and it is the role of youth that can bring a sense of responsible tourism among the masses as young content creators must provide positive guidance about Pakistani tourist spots to the world. He urged the corporate and private sectors to play an active role in developing talent among the youth.

## Minister urges channel to preserve Pakistani folk literature

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister Jamal Shah stressed the need to establish a heritage channel under the Culture Division to preserve and promote the collection of folk literature of Pakistani languages, especially children's folk literature. Chairing a meeting to discuss the literary folklores collected during a recent National Conference on Children's Folk Literary Heritage at Pakistan Academy of Letters, the Caretaker Federal Minister Jamal Shah stressed the importance of teaching children. He pointed out that by introducing children to their environment and culture at a young age, they can make more informed and practical decisions in life. During the meeting, the Advisory Committee for Children's Cultural Educational Content delved into the literary folklores collected at the two-day National Conference on Chil-

dren's Folk Literary Heritage held at the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) last month.

Jamal Shah said that the purpose of two-day conference was to collect and publish children's folk literature, proverbs, stories, songs and lullabies in the form of audio books. He said that the National Heritage and Culture Division was diligently pursuing the project and with the cooperation of other institutions under the division, the project would be completed soon. The meeting included the participation of Secretary National Heritage and Culture Division Humaira Ahmed, Additional Secretary National Education and Professional Training Junaid Akhlaq, Joint Secretary National Heritage and Culture, and a representative from the Sir Memorial Trust, Hassan Raza. Additionally, the meeting was also attended by Director General Pakistan National Council of the Arts, Executive Director Lok Virsa and Director Iqbal Academy.

## Weekly inflation up by 0.71 percent

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 279.08 points as compared to 277.11 points during the past week, according to the PBS data

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.71 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on November 02, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 279.08 points as compared to 277.11 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 29.88 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, increased by 0.85 percent and went up to 286.19 points from last week's 283.77 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 increased by 0.86 percent, 0.77 percent, 0.76 percent and 0.64 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 12 (23.53%) items increased, 14 (27.45%) items decreased and 25 (49.02%) items remained stable. The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW) included gur (2.66%), banana (1.78%), cooking oil 5 litre (1.62%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (1.23%), lpg cylinder (1.05%), pulse masoor (0.93%), wheat flour (0.62%), washing soap (0.41%) and mustard oil (0.32%). The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week (wow) basis, included tomatoes (25.58%), onions (25.25%), chicken (10.79%), potatoes (1.61%), tea lipton (1.58%), eggs (1.30%), garlic (0.50%), rice basmati broken (0.19%), georgette (0.28%) and firewood (0.05%). On a Year-on-Year (YoY) basis, the items that witnessed decrease in prices included, tomatoes (26.26%), onions (13.98%), pulse gram (5.50%), mustard oil (4.47%) and vegetable ghee 1 kg (1.97%). The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on YoY basis included gas charges for Q1 (108.38%), cigarettes (94.46%), chillies powder (84.11%), rice basmati broken (78.08%), wheat flour (76.51%), sugar (62.60%), rice irri-6/9 (62.27%), gents sponge chappal (58.05%), tea packet (55.79%), garlic (54.51%) and gur (53.53%).—DNA

## PM directs holding of regular CSS special exams

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday directed the formulation of a comprehensive policy for the appointment of competent civil servants in remote areas of the country including Balochistan. He also ordered the restoration of rotation policy of civil servants in line with its original spirit and to ensure its strict implementation. The prime minister was chairing a meeting to review progress on filling up vacant seats reserved for marginalized areas in civil bureaucracy through special examinations as well as rotation policy. PM Kakar directed to regularly hold the competitive examinations to fill the vacant seats in civil bureaucracy reserved for minorities and people from marginalized areas. He stressed persistent awareness campaigns to encourage minorities to participate in the competitive examination for government jobs. The prime minister said the country's constitution provides equal rights and opportunities to minorities and people belonging to underprivileged areas. He said the government was fully committed to ensuring equal opportunities for progress for every citizen. The meeting was briefed about the recently held special examination of the Central Superior Services (CSS). It was informed that 15,000 candidates appeared in the examination, out of which 3,500 belonged to Balochistan. The examination has over 60 seats reserved in quota for Balochistan.—DNA

## Pak earns US \$106m from travel services' export in July-August

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$106.045 million by providing different travel services in various countries during the first two months of the current fiscal year 2023-24. This shows growth of 24.58 percent as compared to the US \$85.120 million worth same services provided during the corresponding months of the last fiscal year 2022-23, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the months under review, personal travel services increased by 23.53 per cent, from US \$84.620 million last year to US \$104.535 million during July-August 2023. Among these personal services, the exports of health-related expenditure rose by 462.16 per cent while the education-related expenditure increased by 57.53 per cent. In addition, the other personal services witnessed a growth of 20.97 per cent. Meanwhile, the exports of business services grew by 202 per cent, from US\$ 0.500 million to US\$ 1.510 million, the PBS data revealed. It is pertinent to mention here that the exports of services during July-September 2023 were recorded at US\$ 1,707.31 million against the exports of US\$ 1,717.21 million in July-September 2022, showing a nominal decline of 0.58 per cent.—APP

## Sarfraz Bugti lays SBP annual report in Senate

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti on Friday laid before the Senate the annual report of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on the country's economy for the year 2022-23. The Interior Minister also tabled in the House the Annual Report for the year 2022 of the Election Commission of Pakistan and the Federal Public Service Commission's Annual Report for the year 2021.—APP

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## Japan's PM visits Philippines, focusing on deterrence

Japan PM Fumio Kishida's on official visit to Philippines is aimed at enhancing "deterrence through regular joint training exercises with the United States" in face of "China's territorial claims in the East and South China seas". They deserve credit for their straightforwardness, if not bluntness. In stark contrast, the hypocrisy of Kishida-style diplomacy is evident in the Kishida government's actions, as it moves toward turning Japan into a permanent robotic piece on Washington's geopolitical chessboard to help the US contain China. The Kishida government even copies Washington's diplomatic discourse in its statement on the objectives of the Japanese prime minister's three-day visit to the Philippines, and Malaysia, claiming he "will confirm cooperation in maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order based on the rule of law as well as in ensuring a world where human dignity is protected". As a matter of fact, Tokyo seeks to strengthen the US' rules and maintain the US' hegemony in the region by pushing the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries to the forefront to confront China, so the US can play its dirty geopolitical games from behind the screen. During Kishida's visit to Manila, the two sides will reportedly negotiate a bilateral treaty to increase security cooperation and facilitate joint military drills, and hold talks on a "Reciprocal Access Agreement" which they hope to sign early next year. The treaty is intended to facilitate the transfer of defense personnel between the two countries for training and disaster relief operations while relaxing restrictions on the transportation of weapons and supplies. It will be Japan's first RAA with a member state of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the third after the agreements with Australia and the United Kingdom that took effect earlier this year. This means Japan is taking advantage of it doing the US' bidding as an opportunity to open new channels for expanding its military presence overseas, citing China as their common threat. Kishida and the Philippine leader, media reports say, will also talk about Tokyo's delivery of defense equipment to Manila under a framework of official security assistance established in April this year. That is expected to include more large patrol vessels for the Philippine Coast Guard to help improve the latter's capability to respond to China's actions in the waters of the South China Sea. Tokyo gifted Manila two such vessels last year. However, Manila should realize that Tokyo is doing nothing but turning it into a US pawn which will help Washington enjoy advantage in its geopolitical rivalry with Beijing. It should also know which party will be left high and dry once China and the US find their way to peaceful coexistence.

## Doublespeak and contradiction at their worst

Foreign Minister Wang Yi's latest visit to the United States indicates the thawing of Sino-US relations — not least because during the visit he met with US President Joe Biden and his top aides, and reached an agreement on arranging a meeting between the two countries' leaders on the sidelines of the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in San Francisco later this month. But just as it appeared Sino-US relations were stabilizing, Washington was back playing its provocative geopolitical game across the Taiwan Strait, and thus interfering in China's internal affairs. By sailing its destroyer, USS Rafael Peralta (along with Royal Canadian Navy frigate HMCS Ottawa), through the Taiwan Strait on Wednesday, the US is ostensibly signaling its support for the separatist Democratic Progressive Party authorities in the Chinese island of Taiwan. That is a gross violation of the one-China principle. This is the third joint "transit" of US and Canadian military vessels through the Taiwan Strait since June, and instead of helping improve Sino-US ties, they will damage Washington's credibility, and escalate tensions across the Strait. In fact, Wang had stressed in a meeting with representatives of the US strategic community last week that the road to San Francisco won't be smooth. Hot on the heels of Wang's visit, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen received a letter urging her to toughen her approach toward China and take measures to implement US President Biden's recent Executive Order on restricting US investment in China. The Aug 9 order authorizes the Treasury to prohibit or restrict US investments in Chinese enterprises involved in sectors such as semiconductors and microelectronics, quantum information technologies and certain artificial intelligence systems. Despite Beijing's "strong dissatisfaction, resolute opposition" and "solemn representations", China hawks in US Congress have said the latest move against China is "too soft" and "porous". The Oct 10 letter from the chairman of the so-called House select committee on China urged Yellen to implement the executive order as soon as possible and as broadly as possible. And now comes another US move challenging China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. One can understand the US' anxiety over whether and how it can outcompete China in what in Washington's eyes is a decisive decade. But not everyone in Washington's policy circles believes overly broad investment controls will not hurt the US too. Washington's adventurous military maneuvers and not-so-covert support to the separatist forces in Taiwan, seemingly to trigger a conflict, will also not leave it unscathed. The future of Sino-US relations is win-win cooperation and fair competition, or there is no future at all.

## Tipping artificial intelligence towards humanity

Qamar Bashir



This concern has been a recurring theme in science fiction, but it also has real-world implications that experts take seriously.

If AI was to become super intelligent, it could potentially pose a range of threats to humanity. For instance, it might perceive humans as a threat and use its advanced intellect and capabilities to act against us. Moreover, it could infiltrate and take control of critical infrastructure, including power grids and transportation systems, causing widespread chaos and disruption

One of the most alarming prospects associated with artificial intelligence (AI) is the scenario where it surpasses human control. This concern has been a recurring theme in science fiction, but it also has real-world implications that experts take seriously. If AI was to become super intelligent, it could potentially pose a range of threats to humanity. For instance, it might perceive humans as a threat and use its advanced intellect and capabilities to act against us. Moreover, it could infiltrate and take control of critical infrastructure, including power grids and transportation systems, causing widespread chaos and disruption. Furthermore, the ongoing trend of job automation could intensify if AI becomes even more intelligent and proficient, resulting in substantial unemployment and social unrest. Additionally, there is the risk of AI being harnessed to create new and potentially dangerous weapons, like autonomous drones capable of causing harm without human intervention. The potential misuse of AI by terrorists is a serious concern. The risks include the development of autonomous weapon systems and advanced encryption techniques. These were the fears that brought over 21 most powerful nations under one roof under the leadership of the UK Prime Minister in a two-day AI safety summit, which took place on Nov. 1 and Nov. 2, participated by government officials and companies from around the world, including the U.S. and China. The event, held in Bletchley Park, the historic landmark around 55 miles north of London was also attended by Elon Musk along with U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and the CEOs of several top AI firms. The summit's primary objectives were to recognize the risks linked to the careless and unethical application of AI, to steer AI development in directions that serve humanity's best interests while mitigating potential hazards. It aimed to establish clear ethical and human-centered boundaries while advancing the cutting-edge technology of AI. Additionally, the summit sought to create essential protocols and implement a robust system of checks and balances, comprehensive regulation, and safety mechanisms to oversee, govern, and harness the benefits of AI for the advancement and well-being of humanity, while simultaneously minimizing the associated risks and dangers. The joint declaration on Artificial Intelligence, signed by 21 countries at the UK summit, outlines several key features. It emphasizes the responsible and ethical development and use of AI, prioritizing its positive impact while upholding human rights and minimizing harm. Additionally, the declaration underscores the importance of collaboration and cooperation among nations, encouraging the sharing of best practices, the establishment of common standards, and collective problem-solving. Moreover, it recognizes AI's potential to foster inclusive and equitable growth, while also acknowledging the risk of exacerbating existing inequalities. As a result, the signatory countries commit to working together to ensure that the benefits of AI are distributed widely and fairly, reflecting a shared commitment to the responsible and

beneficial advancement of artificial intelligence. The joint declaration on AI represents a substantial leap in the worldwide endeavor to foster responsible and ethical AI development and utilization. Signatory countries have undertaken a series of crucial commitments. These encompass investments in AI research and development, with a dedicated focus on responsible and ethical AI. The commitment extends to the sharing of best practices, the collaborative establishment of common AI standards, and the promotion of AI literacy and education among their respective populations. Furthermore, they pledge support for responsible AI innovation and entrepreneurship, the protection of human rights, and the prevention of harm stemming from AI systems. Ensuring transparency and accountability in AI development and application is another pivotal commitment, alongside the promotion of human-centered AI systems. The successful realization of these commitments hinges on diligent monitoring to ensure that the objectives of the declaration are effectively met. Additionally, the emphasis on promoting AI literacy and education underscores the need to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills required in an AI-driven world. The overarching focus on human-centered AI ensures that AI technologies serve and enhance humanity. In sum, this summit serves as a critical step towards ensuring that AI is harnessed for the collective benefit of humanity, addressing challenges, and harnessing opportunities on a global scale. The Government of Pakistan has a transformative opportunity to harness the power of artificial intelligence (AI) in order to improve the quality of services offered to its citizens. The first step in this endeavor involves a comprehensive digital transformation, ensuring widespread internet access and creating a unified e-government platform. AI-powered chatbots can provide quick and efficient responses to citizen queries, while predictive analytics can optimize resource allocation, predicting and preventing service disruptions. Furthermore, citizen engagement and feedback mechanisms, when facilitated by AI, can drive continuous improvement. Critical sectors, such as public health, education, and transportation, can benefit from AI-driven solutions, enhancing efficiency and service delivery across the board. In addition to service delivery, the Government of Pakistan can employ AI to streamline its protocols and expedite the provision of public amenities. AI-driven traffic management systems can reduce congestion and enhance road safety. The adoption of AI for education, agriculture, economic development, and cybersecurity promises to bolster these areas significantly. Smart city initiatives, driven by AI, can enhance energy management and urban planning. Furthermore, the Government can prioritize environmental sustainability through AI-based monitoring and analysis. To rapidly elevate Pakistan's education system and enhance the quality of its human resources, leveraging AI is paramount. This transformational journey involves establishing robust digital infrastructure, fostering widespread connectivity, and employing AI for data-driven insights. Personalized learning, teacher training, and a centralized plat-

form for educational resources should be prioritized. Vocational and professional training programs tailored to labor market demands, AI-driven quality assurance, language support, and public-private partnerships can all elevate educational standards. Furthermore, investment in AI research, cybersecurity, and community engagement is essential. Continuous monitoring, evaluation, and strategic adjustments are crucial in the pursuit of swift progress. By embracing AI-driven innovations and ensuring accessibility, quality, and tailored learning experiences, Pakistan can effectively enhance its human resources and education system in a shorter time frame. Pakistan can transform its industrial and agricultural sectors by pursuing a multifaceted strategy. This includes investing in technology and research, enhancing infrastructure, fostering a skilled workforce, and enforcing quality standards. Access to finance, market expansion, value addition, and sustainable practices are key facets. Encouraging public-private partnerships, supporting research and extension services, and promoting sustainable farming practices are essential. Special economic zones, export diversification, subsidies, and risk mitigation measures are equally crucial. Regulatory reforms to reduce bureaucracy and create a business-friendly environment complete this comprehensive approach. By embracing these initiatives, Pakistan can significantly elevate its industrial output, enhance the quality and quantity of products and services, and foster innovation and productivity in the agriculture sector, ultimately driving economic growth and improving living standards. In light of the persistent threat of terrorism and extremism that Pakistan faces, it is imperative to proactively prevent the potential misuse of AI by terrorist groups and criminal organizations. Embracing AI for security purposes and simultaneously developing stringent regulatory measures is not just a strategic move to enhance counterterrorism efforts, but also a vital step to safeguard national security, protect public safety, and uphold ethical AI principles. The urgent need to address this challenge stems from the potential repercussions of AI misuse in these critical circumstances, underlining the significance of responsible AI development, surveillance, and regulation to ensure both national and global security. The Government of Pakistan faces a compelling necessity and urgency to fully embrace the positive applications of artificial intelligence (AI) across all sectors of national importance. AI offers a transformative opportunity to streamline procedures, enhance efficiency, and boost productivity in service delivery, creating a more responsive government. Simultaneously, it is imperative to establish robust protocols and procedures to safeguard against the misuse of AI for illegal or harmful purposes, preventing detrimental impacts on the nation and its people. By harnessing AI responsibly, Pakistan can usher in a new era of progress, efficiency, and safety for the betterment of its society and the advancement of the nation as a whole.

—The writer Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)  
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Former MD, SRBC

## Israel in Gaza: No good options

James M. Dorsey

Israel's options are central to discussions about the day after the guns fall silent in Gaza. Absent from the debate is what Palestinians want. Also absent is any discussion of funding for Gaza's reconstruction, although the assumption is that oil-rich Gulf states will step up to the plate. The significance of Palestinians' wants is magnified by the fact that Israel has no good options, particularly if it fails to or cannot destroy Hamas' political and military infrastructure. While none of the options hold out the prospect of Palestinian elections, some have been already been rejected by Palestinians and Arab states; others could be acceptable to Palestinians on an interim basis. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken returned to Israel and the Middle East on Friday to discuss the objectives and conduct of Israel's assault on Gaza, containing the Gaza war, the rescue of hostages held in Gaza by Hamas and other groups, and potential arrangements for the day after. Palestinian acceptance of those arrangements is key to the stability and sustainability of any post-war structure, even if it is temporary. A 10-page concept paper dated October 13 and prepared by Israel's intelligence ministry listed three options under discussion. Despite its labelling, the ministry is not a decision-making body, even if the options are in line with statements by senior Israeli officials and various segments of the Israeli public, and one was reportedly adopted in Israeli lobbying efforts. Moreover, the ministry does not control Israel's intelligence services that report to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu or the military command. The concept's three problematic options include:

The creation of a homegrown Palestinian administration in Gaza that has no links with Hamas and/or other Palestinian militants. No Palestinian is likely to offer himself forward as willing to take over on the back of Israeli tanks, even though Abu Dhabi-based Mohammed Dahlan, a controversial former Palestinian Gaza security chief with close ties to the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Israel, appeared to leave the door open to his possible return to the Strip. Without taking Mr. Dahlan's potential ambitions into account, the paper described the option of a homegrown administration as the "most dangerous alternative" because it could "lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state," or new, more militant groups. The return to Gaza of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' West Bank

based Palestine Authority. Dominated by Al Fatah, Hamas' archival, the Authority was expelled from Gaza in 2007 by Hamas, a year after the group won Palestinians' last election. Like the first option, the paper counselled against a return of the Authority, which is deeply unpopular on the West Bank, because it would constitute "an unprecedented victory of the Palestinian national movement, a victory that will claim the lives of thousands of Israeli civilians and soldiers and does not safeguard Israel's security." In addition, the Authority would likely reject taking charge of Gaza unless its mandate was linked to a definitive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. An Israeli foreign ministry's options paper suggested that doubts about the Authority and the Authority's concerns could be addressed by a multinational force and a US-led contact group that would help the Authority govern the Strip. Surprisingly, to make this work, the paper, drafted by the ministry's policy planning department, appears to suggest a dramatic revision of Israeli policy. Less surprisingly, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen ignored the paper that argues the government would have to drop its efforts to separate Gaza from the West Bank and embrace a two-state solution, involving the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. In an interview with The New Yorker, political scientist Ghassan Khatib, a former Palestinian Authority official, said that "Hamas is getting more popular in the West Bank because it is perceived to be standing up to the oppressive Israeli occupation, and because of the brutal retaliation by Israel." Mr. Khatib said many Palestinians see Hamas' October 7 attack against Israel in which some 1,400, mostly civilian, Israelis were brutally killed, and more than 300 others kidnapped as retribution for decades of "piecemeal repression," including the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and increased settler violence against Palestinians. A poll conducted by the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research in Gaza and the West Bank in September suggested that enlarged Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh would rout by a large margin Mr. Abbas and Marwan Barghouti, a popular imprisoned Al-Fatah leader convicted in Israel on murder charges, in an election. Yet, when asked who Gazans would prefer to see as the candidate to succeed Mr. Abbas, Mr. Haniyeh and Mr. Barghouti were neck-to-neck at 24 versus 23 per cent. Mr. Barghouti is widely seen as a potential successor to 87-year old

Mr. Abbas if Israel releases him. Even so, 37 per cent described Hamas as the "most deserving" representative of the Palestinians compared to 26 per cent who attributed that accolade to Al-Fatah. Gazan attitudes towards a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict appeared uncompromising with 75 per cent rejecting a one-state solution in which Israeli Jews and Palestinians enjoy equal rights and 65 per cent opposing a two-state solution. Moreover, 51 per cent of Gazans and 54 per cent of West Bankers favoured armed struggle rather than peaceful protest or negotiations to break the deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Sixty-seven per cent supported attacks on Israeli civilians in Israel. While Israelis hardliners will see the poll as confirmation of their assertion that Gaza equals Hamas and justification of the indiscriminate bombing of the Strip, more moderate voices caution that Israeli policy has created a stark choice. "Very soon Israelis will have to decide: either a violent settler state which will drain lives and finance, or a functioning society with clear borders. On Oct 7 we saw the result of the former," tweeted journalist Etan Negin. The intelligence ministry's favoured and most controversial option involves the permanent transfer of Gaza's 2.3 million inhabitants to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, which has been denounced by Palestinians and rejected by Egypt as a third ethnic cleansing reminiscent of the 1948 and 1967 expulsions and displacements of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. Despite Mr. Netanyahu's insistence that the intelligence ministry's proposal is not being considered by the government, the notion of a transfer has been echoed in statements by senior Israeli officials and segments of the public. Furthermore, Czech and Austrian leaders privately put forward, at Mr. Netanyahu's behest, the idea of Egypt absorbing Gazan Palestinians in exchange for the cancellation of the country's US\$165 billion foreign debt in discussions on the sidelines of last month's European summit. Germany, France, and Britain rejected the proposition. Other proposals emerging in the debate about the day after the Gazan war include: Depopulating northern Gaza by pushing all the Strip's residents into the southern half of the territory so that Israel can create an uninhabited buffer zone. Leaving aside legal and moral implications, the problem with

this proposition is that it would aggravate conditions for Palestinians already living in one of the world's most densely populated territories in an even tighter space that would retain a border with Israel. As a result, it would likely perpetuate rather than reduce Israeli perceptions of the Gaza security threat. Handing Gaza over to an Arab peace-keeping force. While Arab states may be tempted to return Gaza to Arab control, like the Palestine Authority, they are unlikely to want to shoulder responsibility on the back of Israeli tanks without solid indications that the force's presence would be linked to a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In addition, many Palestinians feel abandoned as much by Arab states as they do by the rest of the international community. Moreover, Arab condemnations of the Israeli assault on Gaza notwithstanding, Arab states appear in no rush to be seen as forcefully striving to end the carnage. The Arab League, which groups the world's 22 Arab states, has scheduled a meeting to discuss the Gaza crisis for November 11 rather than immediately. Arab states appear to either hope Israel will bow to international pressure by then, even though there is no indication that is likely, or privately want to see Israel successfully eradicate Hamas. Countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have cracked down on Hamas in the past. They see Hamas' survival as potentially emboldening other militants such as the Houthis in Yemen and Hezbollah in Lebanon, as well as legitimising Iranian support for non-state allies. At the bottom line, a return to Gaza of the Palestine Authority buffeted by a multi-national force that includes an Arab contingent, may be the most logical post-war scenario. Expecting that Mr. Netanyahu's days may be numbered with many Israelis blaming the prime minister for the Israeli intelligence and military fiasco that enabled the October 7 Hamas attack, many hope that his political demise would open the door to a temporary transfer of control of Gaza linked to a concerted effort to end the conflict. That may be a tall order with emotions on both sides of the divide making discussion of peace and a buy-in from Palestinians and Israelis unlikely any time soon, if not impossible. It's an even taller order given doubts that a two-state solution is still viable, leaving a one-state approach as the only option.

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## Briefs

## 14 soldiers martyred in terrorist...

FROM PAGE 01  
after a blast targeting a police van was reported from Dera Ismail Khan, said Caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Minister Firdous Jamal Shah on Friday. According to law enforcement officials, gunshots were also heard after the explosion. The blast took place in Tank Adda in the city near a police van, injuring 22 people who are being shifted to a nearby hospital. Some of the injured are in critical condition. The minister also shared that among the 22 included two policemen and said was saddened by the news. "Those elements involved in the explosion and terrorism will be brought to justice," assured the minister. Last month, two blasts occurred in KP and Balochistan, killing scores of people on the day of Eid-MiladunNabi — the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The blast in KP's Hangu, which took place during the Friday sermon, killed five and injured 12 people. Hangu District Police Officer Nisar Ahmed said two suicide bombers were involved in the attack — one targeted the gate of the police station, and the other blew himself up inside the mosque.

## President, PM strongly condemn

FROM PAGE 01  
that targeting innocent people is an unpardonable crime. In a statement, President Zardari extended his sympathy and condolences to the families of those who were martyred in the bomb blast. He prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the bomb blast. Asif Ali Zardari said that the federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments should ensure the elimination of the nurseries of terrorism. Terrorists are enemies of the country and the nation, it is necessary to eliminate the enemies of the country, President Zardari concluded.

## Deportation drive: Taliban...

FROM PAGE 01  
"Even though it sends the refugees to their country, they [refugees] should be sent to the country with dignity and return to their homeland," he stated. The Afghan minister expressed concerns that the ongoing situation was severely damaging the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. "So, the Pakistani regime should think of the consequences of whatever it is doing. It should plant as much as it will be able to reap," he asserted. Pakistan's northwestern border crossing has been flooded with thousands of people looking to cross into Afghanistan after the government's deadline expired for undocumented foreigners to leave or face expulsion on November

## Pakistan opens...

FROM PAGE 01  
Afghanistan complained of the hardships they had to face to move out of Pakistan and uncertainty over their future. "We spent three days on the border in Pakistan. We had a very bad situation," said Mohammad Ismael Rafi, 55, who said he lived for 22 years in Chaman where he had a retail business. "Thank God that we have arrived back in our country," he said. It took him six days to leave his home in Pakistan with his 16 family members and belongings to reach a makeshift tent village on the other side of the border. Rafi accused Pakistani officials of taking bribes to process his repatriation. Authorities deny that. He rented a house in Kandahar to live temporarily before moving to his ancestral home in Helmand province. Meanwhile, the caretaker government has brushed off calls from the United Nations, rights groups and Western embassies to reconsider its plan to expel more than a million of the 4m Afghans in the country.

# Shahid Afridi ends hostility, meets PCB chairman Zaka

## Former all-rounder Shahid Afridi has been severely critical of cricket top board's supremo in recent days

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

LAHORE: Former Pakistan skipper Shahid Afridi Friday met Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Committee Chairman Zaka Ashraf ending days of hostility amid the former's recent barrage of criticism of the latter. The meeting which took place at Lahore's Gaddafi stadium comes after the all-rounder has been severely critical of the PCB top head in recent days accusing him of treating the board like a "club" and censuring him for making irresponsible and unnecessary statements. During the meeting, Ashraf acknowledged Afridi's dedication and contribution towards the game terming the latter as a "hero of Pakistan" and a "great ambassador of the country". "We admire you as a hero of Pakistan, and you have proved to be a great ambassador of the country with both your exceptional talent displayed on the field and your conduct off the field. We would love to have your experience for the betterment of Pakistan cricket," a PCB official statement



while quoting Ashraf said. Meanwhile, the former cricketer, while appreciating the PCB chief's efforts and contributions for Pakistan cricket expressed interest in playing his role in grooming and preparing young cricketers to represent their country in fu-

ture. The development comes after Afridi on Thursday, met interim Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar to discuss cricket issues including his association with the PCB in the future. Afridi and Kakar talked about the performance of the Babar Azam-led

unit in the ongoing World Cup 2023 and the grooming of cricketers from the grassroots to the international level. The former captain has been severely critical of Ashraf for allegedly calling media house owners complaining of those criticising him on different news channels. "You [Ashraf] are the chairman of the PCB and not of some [random] club. You are supposed to handle a lot of things [but you are] calling owners of media houses and complaining about people saying this and that [on their respective channel] about you," the ex-skipper said. "You are giving [unnecessary] statements about Babar and other players [at a time] when the [Pakistan] team is playing the World Cup," he added. The board has been engulfed in controversies following the resignation of now-former chief selector Inzamam ul Haq, and Green Shirts' skipper Babar Azam's private chat with a senior PCB official being leaked. For days, rumours were circulating in the media that the PCB chief and senior board officials were not returning calls from Azam. A controversy arose after a private news channel aired the screenshot of the skipper's chat with a senior PCB official, showing the former denying calling Afridi in the first place. Former cricketers, including Afridi, had lambasted the host and journalist for leaking Azam's chat.

## Israeli attack hits convoy of...

FROM PAGE 01  
Speaking at a press briefing, she emphasized the challenging situation, stating, "The reality is nowhere is truly safe." The military wing of Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has said that one of its members sniped an Israeli occupational soldier in Gaza. The soldier was "north of Beit Hanoun," a town in northwestern Gaza, the Qassam Brigades said. The group also claimed to target "a fortified Zionist force in a building north of Beit Hanoun with five TBG shells, causing the building to catch fire." An Israeli tank commander was killed in ongoing fighting with Palestinian fighters in northern Gaza, the country's army said.

## SC orders govt to ensure...

FROM PAGE 01  
A three-member bench headed by CJP Isa and comprising Justice Athar Minalah and Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan heard the case. The court, in its order, mentioned that the notification of the general election date has also been issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), stating that no party has any objection to holding elections on February 8. Chief Justice of Pakistan QaziFaez Isa asked everyone in the courtroom as well as the Attorney-General for Pakistan, Mansoor Usman Awan, if they had any objection to the election date, but all replied in the negative. "After all the requirements are fulfilled, the Election Commission should announce the election schedule," CJP Isa said.

## IMF talks start with polls date...

FROM PAGE 01  
the functioning of the Special Investment Facilitation Council — the two most crucial issues that affected the country's political and economic landscapes. Nathan Porter, the Washington-based lender's mission chief to Pakistan, raised the points during his maiden meeting with interim Finance Minister DrShamshad Akhtar. Porter set the tone for the 14-day long review talks that are scheduled to end on November 15 — if everything goes according to the plan. The IMF official praised the government's performance during the first quarter of the ongoing fiscal year — an area where the finance ministry and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) had so far exceeded expectations.

## PSX soars to all-time...

FROM PAGE 01  
with a change of 466.27 points or 0.89%. Arif Habib Limited wrote on X, formerly Twitter, that the market has achieved a remarkable milestone by soaring to unprecedented all-time high levels, surging past previous records and "setting a new era of financial excellence." Capital market expert Saad Ali told Geo.tv that the market was driven by abating political risk, macro indicators moving in the right direction, the expectation of a favourable IMF review and anticipation of rate cuts in the near term.

## Bilawal rules out...

FROM PAGE 01  
asking, "Why should we expect a level playing field? Name one election in which PPP got a level playing field." The former foreign minister emphasized that despite facing obstacles, the PPP had consistently formed the government without the benefit of a level playing field. Bilawal advocated for fairness, stating that all political parties should ideally have a level playing field. He underscored the principle of equal opportunity for all contenders in the electoral arena. To a question, Chairman PPP clarified that he had not yet decided regarding an electoral alliance with PTI. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari shared his concerns about the ongoing oppression in Palestine and expressed his sadness over the harrowing images of Palestinian children circulating on social media.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott gossips in happy mood with Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi during 9th Islamabad Literature Festival at Fatima Jinnah (F-9) Park in Federal Capital. — Online

## Crucial Pak vs NZ match faces rain threat

SubAir System automatically kicks into action the minute it starts raining, thereby not allowing any build up of water on the outfield

BANGALORE: As the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 match between Pakistan and New Zealand on Saturday faces a rain threat, the ground staff of the M Chinnaswamy Stadium is confident that the venue is well equipped to prevent waterlogging in the outfield. According to weather forecast agencies, Bangalore is likely to receive rain on Saturday from 1pm to 5pm. The radar suggests 50% chance of rain. As the game is scheduled to start at 10:30am local time, the second half of the match is likely to be affected if there is rain. However, the ground staff is confident that post-rain, the ground will be ready and fit for a match within 20 minutes. An official of the M Chinnaswamy Stadium informed Geo News that they have a "SubAir System" installed in the ground which not only prevents the outfield from waterlogging but also drains the water 36 times faster than the natural drainage time. "The SubAir System automatically kicks into action the minute it starts raining, thereby not allowing any build up of water on the outfield. It quickly removes standing water (36 times faster than drainage by gravity) virtually eliminating the need for extended game delays or cancellations due to wet outfield conditions," says the official website of the system. "The SubAir System automatically kicks into action the minute it starts raining, thereby not allowing any build up of water on the outfield. Water begins to get sucked out at the rate of over 10,000 litres a minute from the moment it begins to rain. The suction system gets activated through signals from the remote sensors embedded in the field," an official of SubAir System had revealed at the time of its installation at Bangalore's M Chinnaswamy Stadium. — DNA

## Abrar likely to replace Shadab in match against NZ

DNA

BANGALORE: Pakistan vice-captain Shadab Khan remains a doubt for their World Cup game against New Zealand after suffering concussion, and is likely to be replaced by leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed. Shadab landed awkwardly on his shoulder and his head hit the ground during their narrow loss to South Africa last week. He was replaced by Usama Mir, who also took his spot in the team for their win over Bangladesh. It was Shadab's third concussion since September last year and although he trained at Bengaluru's M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Friday, Arthur said they will take a late call. The 24-year-old cricketer was ruled out of the match with Bangladesh after the injury. However, the all-rounder took part in a practice session in Bengaluru on Friday. Official sources affiliated with PCB said that Ahmed is likely to be included in the national team in the deciding match against Kiwis slated for tomorrow (November 4).

## Pegula powers into WTA Finals last four

CANCUN : American Jessica Pegula powered into the semi-finals of the season-ending WTA Finals in Cancun on Thursday, beating Maria Sakkari 6-3, 6-2 to complete an unbeaten run through the group stage. Pegula, the oldest player in the field at 29, had already clinched her spot in Saturday's semi-finals and Sakkari was already out of contention before the match on the Mexican outdoor hardcourts. Pegula, who went winless last year in her WTA Finals debut, seized control early, leading 4-1 in the opening set on the way to a dominant victory in difficult, windy conditions. She took full advantage of 35 unforced errors from Greece's Sakkari, including eight double faults, Pegula reaching the last four without dropping a set.



Pegula was pleased to keep things rolling in the unfavorable conditions, saying she tried to play to the middle of the court and keep down mistakes. "It's so tough to play in these conditions," she told Tennis Channel. "You're trying to do your best and as soon as you get some momentum, you still feel like you could lose it." "If you just stop moving your feet for one second, you get one unlucky shot. So you're very on edge." It was crazy out there today," she said. Pegula's brisk run through her group matches included an upset of Aryna Sabalenka, the world number one who faced a do-or-die clash with fourth-ranked Elena Rybakina for the second semi-final berth from the group. The two met in January in the Australian Open final, where Sabalenka triumphed in three sets for her first major title. She had pushed her career record of Rybakina to 4-0 before the 24-year-old from Kazakhstan won two straight — in the Indian Wells final in March and in the quarter-finals at Beijing. — Agencies

## Afghanistan beat Netherlands to boost semi-final hopes

Afghanistan overtake Pakistan in points table after 7-wicket win against Netherlands

SPORTS DESK

LUCKNOW: Half-centuries from Rahmat Shah and Hashmatullah Shahidi after a combined bowling effort led Afghanistan to a resounding seven-wicket victory over the Netherlands in the 34th match of the ICC World Cup 2023. A well-calculated victory lifted Afghanistan to fifth in the World Cup standings, replacing Pakistan, who have six points in seven matches. Set to chase a modest 180, Afghanistan comfortably amassed the total for the loss of just three wickets and 111 balls to spare. Afghanistan openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz (10) and Ibrahim Zadran (20) failed to inspire in the modest pursuit and both returned to the pavilion in the 11th over with just 55 runs on the board. Skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi and Rahmat Shah then put Afghanistan in control by stitching a 74-run partnership with both scoring half-centuries. Shah, however, fell unlucky to go unbeaten as he handed a simple catch to Saqib Zulfiqar on his follow-through. He

scored a 54-ball 52 with the help of eight boundaries. Opting to bat first, the Netherlands' batting lineup unfolded in the 47th over, putting a modest total of 179 on the board despite Suband Engelbrecht's half-century. The Dutch side had a dismal start to their innings as Mujeeb Ur Rahman removed Wesley Barresi (1) in the first over. Following the early blow, Colin Ackerman and Max O'Dowd put together an anchoring 70-run partnership for the second wicket and pulled their side out of trouble. The pair began to dominate the Afghan bowlers before O'Dowd's sensible knock came to an end in the 12th over, courtesy of a direct hit by Azmatullah Omarzai. O'Dowd smashed nine boundaries on his way to a 40-ball 42.



Engelbrecht then joined Ackermann in the middle and they could put together a brief 19-run stand before the former fell victim to a suicidal running. He scored 29 in 35 deliveries, hitting four boundaries. The dismal running between the wickets harmed the Dutch side again when their skipper Scott Edwards' fell for a duck on the next delivery. He went for a sweep but only managed an under-edge towards the keeper and Edwards, clueless of where the ball was, marched down the pitch and allowed Ikram Alikhil to dislodge the balls. His dismissal sparked a collapse and the Netherlands began to lose wickets at an alarming rate. Engelbrecht stood his ground firm and kept the scoreboard ticking singlehandedly until he, too, got run out, taking the total tally to four. He topped for the Netherlands with a cautious 58. His 86-ball knock featured six boundaries. Meanwhile, Roelof van der Merwe (11) and Aryan Dutt (10) added vital runs at the backend. Mohammad Nabi led the bowling attack for Afghanistan with 3/28 while Noor Ahmad bagged two wickets.



## Briefs

## 12 dead as Storm Ciaran hammers Western Europe

MONTEMURLO : At least 12 people were killed as Storm Ciaran battered Western Europe with record winds of up to 200 kilometres per hour, causing travel mayhem with closed ports and flight and rail disruptions. At least five people died in Tuscany, Italian authorities announced on Friday, reporting record rainfall and the declaration of a state of emergency. Tuscany governor Eugenio Griani said the five dead included an 85-year-old man who was found drowned on the ground floor of his house in Montemurlo, northwest of Florence. "What happened tonight in Tuscany has a name: climate change," he wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. Florence mayor Dario Nardella said the "situation is critical" in the city, as the level of the Arno River continued to rise. Trees felled by gale-force winds caused most of the deaths in Europe. In the Belgian city of Ghent, a five-year-old Ukrainian boy and a 64-year-old woman were killed by falling branches. Falling trees had earlier killed a lorry driver in his vehicle in northern France's Aisne region, and French authorities also reported the death of a man who fell from his balcony in the port city of Le Havre. A man in the Dutch town of Venray, a woman in central Madrid and a person in Germany also died. Some 1.2 million French homes lost electricity as the storm lashed the northwest coast. Almost 700,000 remained without power on Thursday evening, according to network manager Enedis. French President Emmanuel Macron was due to visit the storm-battered region of Brittany on Friday, the Elysee presidential palace said.—DNA

## 100 evacuated as wildfire rages in Spain

MADRID : A wind-fuelled wildfire raged in eastern Spain on Friday and hundreds of people were evacuated, local authorities said. About 200 firefighters backed by three water bombing planes were battling the blaze, which erupted on Thursday near the village of Montichelvo in the coastal region of Valencia, emergency services said. The blaze has forced the evacuation of between 800 and 850 people and has affected up to 1,400 hectares (3,500 acres), it added. Wind gusts of up to 120 kilometres (75 miles) an hour were hampering efforts to battle the blaze, officials said. The regional government of Valencia advised people to stay home and avoid areas with trees and construction sites if they had to go outside. Spain was lashed by strong winds on Thursday as Storm Ciaran battered Western Europe, causing at least 10 deaths including that of a 23-year-old woman who was fatally struck by a tree that toppled in Madrid.—APP

## China targets humanoid robot innovation system by 2025

BEIJING :China will strive to establish a preliminary innovation system for humanoid robots by 2025, amid the country's push to develop the future industry, according to a recent guideline. The country will boast a number of small and medium-sized enterprises that specialize in the humanoid robot market and have cutting-edge technologies, and two to three humanoid robot companies with global influence by 2025, according to the guideline issued by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. By 2027, China will see a secure and reliable industrial and supply chain system, and related products will be deeply integrated into the real economy, the guideline stated. Specifically, the country will work on consolidating the production of basic components and promoting software innovation in terms of product development, while creating scenarios for manufacturing and other related sectors.—Agencies

## Japan PM arrives in Philippines on official visit

Kishida will meet President Ferdinand Marcos Jr at the presidential palace to discuss a range of issues, including the South China Sea

## NEWS DESK

MANILA: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida arrived in the Philippines on Friday for a two day official visit aimed at boosting defence and security ties at a time of heightened tension in Philippines China relations. Kishida will meet President Ferdinand Marcos Jr at the presidential palace to discuss a range of issues, including the South China Sea, where Manila and Beijing have had several confrontations.

"Among the specific issues to be discussed are the West Philippine Sea, trade and investment, and Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA)," Marcos' office said ahead of Kishida's visit. "They will also exchange views on major regional, international, and United Nations issues affecting the region and the world."

Japan does not have any claim to the waters, but has a separate maritime dispute with China in the East China Sea. China claims almost all of the South China Sea and its growing military presence there has fuelled concern in Japan and the West, with the United States holding regular air and naval patrols to ensure freedom of navigation.



Ahead of the visit, the Japan defence ministry announced the delivery of the first air surveillance radar system to the Philippine military as part of a

2020 contract between the Philippines' defence department and Mitsubishi Electric Corp. In February, Marcos and Kishida agreed in Tokyo that their militaries would cooperate in

disaster relief, an agreement seen as a step towards a broader pact that could allow the countries to deploy forces on each other's soil. Following that meeting, Marcos

said he saw no reason why the Philippines should not have a troop pact with Japan if it would boost maritime security. On Saturday, Kishida will speak before the Philippine Congress.

## Myanmar ethnic minorities gain ground against junta

YANGON : An alliance of Myanmar ethnic minority groups said it made more gains in its offensive against the ruling junta on Friday, with the regime vowing it would hit back at the biggest military challenge it has faced since it seized power. Myanmar junta chief Min Aung Hlaing (R, pictured with China's public security minister Wang Xiaohong) said the military will hit back at ethnic armed groups waging an offensive in the north of the country Myanmar junta chief Min Aung Hlaing (R, pictured with China's public

security minister Wang Xiaohong) said the military will hit back at ethnic armed groups waging an offensive in the north of the country. Fighting has raged for a week across a wide area of northern Shan state near the China border, forcing more than 23,000 people from their homes, according to the UN. The Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and the Arakan Army (AA) say they have captured dozens of outposts and four towns and blocked vital trade routes to

China. TNLA fighters seized an outpost from the military near the town of Namhkam near the China border on Friday. The military had called in air and artillery strikes, a TNLA spokesman said. The MNDAA said on its media channel that its fighters had made gains in battles in the Kokang region, around 100 kilometres (60 miles) to the east. A junta spokesman on Thursday dismissed as "propaganda" claims that the alliance had captured several towns in Shan state. Junta chief Min

Aung Hlaing said the military "will launch counterattacks" against the groups, in comments carried by the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper on Friday. A junta spokesman said on Wednesday that the military had lost control of Chinschwah town, a major trade hub on the border with China's Yunnan province. A resident in Hsenwi, a strategic transport node around 90 kilometres (55 miles) from Chinschwah, told AFP that locals were hiding in their homes as clashes raged.—APP

## Pak-China snail alliance to boost export potential

BEIJING : "Leveraging China's expertise in snail farming techniques, technology transfer, and market access, Pakistan can develop the snail industry to tap into the international market, particularly in Europe and other developed regions." This was stated by Jin Jingqi, Vice President of Jiangsu Design Institute, Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Special Expert for Rural Revitalization in Jiangsu Province, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Friday. In recent years, driven by the rural revitalization strategy, China's snail industry has been rapidly growing. Chinese white jade snail, a natural variation of Achatina fulica found by Chinese researchers in the 1980s, is a superior variety compared to other snail species worldwide. It features clean white flesh and higher nutritional content. The snails have multiple values, including their shell rich in calcium for toothpaste production, delicious and protein-rich snail meat, snail mucus for cosmetics, and snail enzymes with medical value for tissue repair.—APP

## Biden Administration aims to enhance US Africa trade

JOHANNESBURG : U.S. President Joe Biden's administration wants to work with Congress to improve a U.S.-Africa trade pact, not just renew it without changes, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Friday. The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a U.S. trade initiative passed in 2000 to deepen trade ties with Africa and help African countries develop their economies, provides duty-free access to the U.S. market and is due to expire in September 2025 after being renewed twice. African countries are pushing for an early 10-year extension without changes to reassure businesses and investors. "President Biden fully supports the reauthorisation of AGOA. But we don't just want to extend AGOA, we want to work with the United States Congress to make it even better," Blinken said in a video message to a U.S.-Africa trade summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. Despite longstanding bipartisan support for AGOA from U.S. lawmakers, who view it as critical in countering the influence of China on the continent, there are divisions over the need for updates. More than a dozen U.S. senators are pushing for a quick AGOA renewal. But the U.S. House of Representatives, paralysed for weeks by factional fighting over its speakership, faces a daunting list of must-pass legislation. And attempts to change AGOA risk creating an impasse similar to the one that bogged down the reauthorisation of the Generalized System of Preferences, the largest and oldest U.S. trade preference programme, African government and U.S. industry associations say. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa told the Johannesburg forum that African countries wanted the U.S. to look at the extension of AGOA for a sufficiently lengthy period to stimulate investment in new factories on the continent. He said: "A more targeted effort to promote greater levels of investment can help to unlock AGOA's opportunities."—DNA

## H.Kong student jailed 2 months for 'seditious' posts in Japan

KOWLOON: Yuen Ching-ting, wearing a beige hoodie and a mask, appeared at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts on Friday. The 23-year-old pleaded guilty in late October to publishing online speech with seditious intent in relation to a number of social media posts, made from September 2018 to March 2023. Handing down the sentence, judge Victor So said Yuen was remorseful and cooperative with the police investigation after her arrest. Her chance of reoffending was low, he added, and the seriousness of the offence was less than other similar cases.

Yuen was arrested in March after returning to Hong Kong from Japan, where she was studying. Local media outlets reported that she was in the city to change her Hong Kong identity card. She was initially arrested on suspicion of inciting secession, a crime under the national security law.—Agencies



ISLAMABAD: To mark the conclusion of special campaign of Swachhata Abhiyan the Indian High Commission undertook tree plantation in the Embassy premises as part of its commitment to make work place cleaner. -DNA

## UN retreat from Mali in disarray as violence surges

At least a dozen peacekeepers are injured by explosive devices hit by UN convoys

## FOREIGN DESK

DAKAR: Before United Nations peacekeepers hurriedly abandoned their base in Kidal in northern Mali on Tuesday, they made a costly call: with insurgents stationed nearby, they destroyed sensitive equipment to avoid it falling into the wrong hands, the U.N. said. Shortly after the last U.N. convoy rolled out, the ethnic Tuareg rebels announced they had taken over the base. Photos posted on social media on Wednesday appeared to show local loading trucks with looted goods, including tyres, cables and chairs. Mali's ruling military junta in June ordered the decade-old UN mission, known as MINUSMA, to leave as its relations soured with former international allies. MINUSMA has accelerated its departure in recent weeks as northern Mali has been engulfed

in fighting between the rebels and government forces vying for control over areas it vacates. Chaos has ensued. Bloody confrontations have surrounded at least two U.N. bases, and two have also been looted, according to two sources with direct knowledge of the withdrawal. At least a dozen peacekeepers have been injured by explosive devices hit by U.N. convoys heading south, according to U.N. statements. The U.N. has acknowledged difficulties with its departure. MINUSMA said in statements that it has been forced to destroy equipment including vehicles, ammunition and generators that its forces couldn't evacuate after the government imposed restrictions on moving them. Mission spokesperson Fatoumata Sinkoun Kaba told media reporters that millions of dollars of kit has been lost. Authorities have denied approval for air support for convoys travelling over

some of the most volatile terrain in West Africa. They ordered a halt to some imports of fuel and spare parts, and in some cases jeopardised the safety of departing peacekeepers, according to the two sources with direct knowledge of the withdrawal. Mali's government did not respond to requests for comment for this story. Security analysts have warned that the Malian state could collapse altogether, further destabilising a region where insurgents with links to al Qaeda and Islamic State are gaining ground. MINUSMA had originally planned to leave Kidal in mid-November, the sources said. The equipment that was destroyed there and at two other northern bases could have been removed by U.N. trucks earlier, but Mali's junta blocked access, the U.N. said. Four aircraft have been grounded for lack of parts, the U.N., without specifying what kind of aircraft.

Dozens of U.N. import requests have gone unanswered, the U.N. Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support said in an internal letter to the Security Council on October 14. With routes to the south under threat from militants, the mission has explored the possibility of exiting through Algeria to the north or Mauritania to the west, the letter said, both of which were proving "difficult to operationalise". The two sources, who asked to remain anonymous to speak on a sensitive topic, said they believe Mali's junta has sought to delay the retreat to give it time to reach the bases before the U.N. leaves. The situation marks a bitter end to the U.N.'s mission in Mali, where it deployed after the north was overrun by militants and Tuareg rebels in a 2012 uprising. MINUSMA initially helped restore some calm, but violence has persisted. Thousands of civilians have died, and more than

170 peacekeepers have been killed in combat, making MINUSMA the U.N.'s deadliest mission. Worsening insecurity prompted military coups in 2020 and 2021. The junta then kicked out French troops who were helping fight the militants, teamed up with Russian private military contractor the Wagner Group, and ordered MINUSMA to leave. Also read UN Mission arrives in Karabakh, first visit in 30 years. The mission has until December 31 to pack up. So far, more than 6,000 of nearly 14,000 personnel have left, the U.N. spokeswoman said. The Tuareg rebels signed a 2015 peace agreement brokered by MINUSMA but maintained control of much of the north from Kidal. That accord has fallen apart since the mission began moving out. The first sign of trouble came in early August, when fighting broke out between Mali's army and Tuareg rebels around the U.N.'s camp in Ber in the north.

## China and Mongolia enhance tourism cooperation

ULAN :A seminar promoting tourism cooperation with China was held in Mongolia's capital on Friday. The seminar covered the current state of tourism in Mongolia and cross-border tourism initiatives.

Li Zhi, counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Mongolia and director of the Chinese Cultural Center in Ulan Bator, emphasized that tourism is a bridge that promotes cultural and people-to-people exchanges, enhancing mutual understanding and friendship between China and Mongolia. "China is the main market for Mongolia's tourism sector. Therefore, we have been implementing many activities to further strengthen cultural and tourism cooperation between Mongolia and China and deepen the mutual understanding between the two peoples," said Dagvajants Batsukh, head of Ulan Bator's tourism department.

Around 60 relevant officials and experts from both countries attended the seminar co-organized by the Chinese Cultural Center in Ulan Bator, Ulan Bator's Tourism Department and the Mongolian Tourism Association.—DNA

## Fire at north Iran drug rehab kills 27

TEHRAN : At least 27 people died in a massive fire that broke out at a drug rehabilitation centre in northern Iran early on Friday, the judiciary said.

"Twenty-seven have died and 12 others were taken to hospital after a fire erupted at a drug rehabilitation centre in Langarud", a city in Gilan province north of Tehran, said the judiciary's Mizan Online news website, quoting provincial chief justice Esmail Sadeghi. The cause of the fire was not immediately clear but Sadeghi said an investigation "was under way," according to Mizan, which said the centre could accommodate up to 40 people.

Local ISNA news agency shared footage of the fire which lit up the night sky and sent huge plumes of smoke into the air. Other images showed the heavily damaged site after the fire was contained. In August, a fire broke out in Tehran's Grand Bazaar, damaging multiple shops but causing no casualties. In January 2017, a fire at a 15-storey Plasco shopping centre in Tehran, killed at least 22 people, including 16 firefighters.—Agencies

## Stocks soar, dollar falls on rate hike prospects

NEW YORK :Stock markets and oil prices jumped while the dollar slid Thursday after the Federal Reserve hinted it was at an end of its rate-tightening cycle as inflation retreats.

Asian and European traders picked up the baton from their Wall Street counterparts after the Fed froze US interest rates Wednesday. Wall Street's main stock indices continued pushing higher Thursday, rising by more than one percent.

There is "a sense that the Fed has come to an end of its rate hike cycle", said Saxo's Redmond Wong. The Bank of England, as expected, kept its key interest rate steady as well on Thursday, although Governor Andrew Bailey said it was "much too early" to think about cutting rates.

This came after the US central bank held interest rates at a 22-year high for a second straight meeting, keeping its benchmark lending rate between 5.25 percent and 5.5 percent. However, Fed Chair Jerome Powell cautioned that "the process of getting inflation sustainably down to two percent has a long way to go." He added that the US central bank was not at all thinking about rate cuts and maintained the option to hike them if developments warrant. "Powell hinted that the Fed was nearing end of its rate tightening cycle," said Adam Sarhan of 50 Park Investments. "He didn't say it directly but he hinted and the fact that he hinted was enough for the market to rally." Yields on US Treasuries fell after the decision, also positive for stocks which have slid in recent months.—APP



## Briefs

### Paknot far behind in tech revolution

DNA

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan has said that the South Asian nation was not far behind in the tech revolution, stressing that Islamabad had opened new doors for foreign investment in IT, energy, agriculture, mining, and defense production. The ambassador, in his address during a two-day conference on 'Resilience and Reform in Pakistan' organised by the think tank South Asia Centre, said tech start-ups in Pakistan were seeing a dramatic rise. From a meagre \$10 million venture capital funding in 2018 per year, global VCs and other investors are pouring in \$1 billion annually now, the seasoned diplomat told the event's participants. "Total tech startup turnover in the last fiscal year was \$3 billion, whereas, e-commerce in Pakistan earned about \$6 billion." "This is just the beginning. Pakistan is not far behind in the tech revolution that has taken off in South East Asia, Middle East, and North Africa. The gap is now closing. Pakistan is catching up," he observed. He attributed the change to digitisation of the economy, e-commerce, and improved supply chains, noting that tech startups have particularly been successful in fintech, retail, pharmacy, diagnostics, telemedicine, education, groceries, and transportation.

### Delhi: Schools shut due to air pollution

DNA

DELHI: Authorities in the Indian capital, Delhi, have shut all primary schools for two days amid worsening levels of air pollution. Air quality in the city dropped to severe levels for the first time this season on Thursday. It is expected to deteriorate further in the next two weeks, scientists say. Delhi's environment minister has called an emergency meeting to review the situation. The capital is one of the world's most polluted cities. Delhi's air turns especially toxic in winter due to various factors, including burning of crop remains by farmers, low wind speeds and bursting of firecrackers during festivals. The city's air pollution peaks from 1-15 November when the number of stubble burning incidents in the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana increase, studies by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee showed. On Thursday evening, the concentration of PM2.5 - fine particulate matter that can clog lungs and cause a host of diseases - exceeded the safe limit of 60 micrograms per cubic metre by a seven to eight times in several parts of the city and its suburbs, according to government data.

### 10 dead as Ciaran batters Western Europe

DNA

BRUSSELS: At least 10 people were killed as Storm Ciaran battered Western Europe with record winds of up to 200 kilometers per hour, causing travel mayhem with closed ports and flight and rail disruptions. Three people died in Tuscany, Italian authorities announced on Friday, reporting record rainfall and the declaration of a state of emergency. Tuscany governor Eugenio Giani said the three dead included an 85-year-old man who was found drowned in his house. "What happened tonight in Tuscany has a name: climate change," he wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. Florence mayor Dario Nardella said the "situation is critical" in the city. Trees felled by gale-force winds caused most of the deaths in Europe. In the Belgian city of Ghent, a five-year-old Ukrainian boy and a 64-year-old woman were killed by falling branches.

# UK ready to support Pak in attracting foreign investment

## In discussion about the business environment in Pakistan, Senator Dar expressed the hopes that post general elections in 2024



DNA

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, H.E. Jane Marriott

OBE, held a meeting with Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Leader of the House at Parliament House today. The meeting addressed a range of topics of mutual interest, highlighting the strong and enduring relationship between the United Kingdom and Pakistan. During the meeting, Senator Dar apprised the High Commissioner of the economic performance of Pakistan dur-

ing 2013-17 when Pakistan became 24th global economy and 18 hours daily average load shedding was eliminated together with enhanced investment in public sector development works which resulted in Pakistan's GDP growth to rise above 6% with 40 years low inflation of around 4%. He added that Pakistan Muslim League (N) stands for free and fair elections, together with level playing field for all the political parties. In discussion about the business environment in Pakistan, Senator Dar expressed the hopes that post general elections in 2024; the winning political party will accelerate the privatization of loss making state-owned enterprises. He also stressed the need to enhance the trade ties as well as the volumes of business between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. Senator Dar also mentioned the importance of agricultural development to ensure food security for Pakistan's population and flagged the mining industry's potential for future economic development of the nation. High Commissioner Marriott expressed hope that the future incoming government would be able to attract foreign investment in the areas highlighted by Senator Dar. She affirmed that the United Kingdom stands ready to provide technical support and assistance to further strengthen bilateral relations and partnership. Senator Dar explained the issue of smuggling and its negative impact on the Pakistani economy. He also mentioned Pakistan's efforts to improve the border management to curb the illegal movement of goods across the borders.

## Australia and China eye new ways to heal old wounds

BEIJING: When Prime Minister Anthony Albanese touches down in Beijing on Saturday, he will be the first Australian leader to visit China in seven years. It ends a hiatus triggered by a string of prickly disputes, including various Chinese sanctions on Australian goods, and back and forth accusations of foreign interference. Now both sides have renewed ambitions and have cleared the way for the visit with a series of gestures, experts say. Last month China announced the surprise release of Chinese-Australian journalist Cheng Lei, who was detained for over three years on national security charges. It has also said it will review its tariffs on Australian exports. On its side, Australia has suspended action it had taken against China at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and greenlit the Chinese lease of a critical port in Darwin. But the "structural issues plaguing the relationship" haven't changed, analysts say, as both countries vie for influence in the Pacific Islands region, and Australia updates its defence posture to counter China's military build-up. And there is "some gap" between what each side sees as the next steps, they argue. Chinese officials have expressed a will to advance the relationship by adding "more meat to the bone", says Elena Collinson from the Australia-China

Institute. "For Australia, though, this represents the pinnacle of stabilisation, and it's near as good as Canberra wants the relationship to get at this point," she adds. Mr Albanese's visit marks 50 years since former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam travelled to Beijing, following the establishment of diplomatic ties. From its inception the relationship has been based, as Mr Whitlam put it, on "mutual benefit". China's transformation into an economic superpower created huge demand for Australian exports like iron ore, coal and gas. And that helped Australia weather global recessions, while underpinning decades of uninterrupted growth. It also led to strong cross-cultural exchanges - with 5.5% of Australia's population today having Chinese ancestry. Cracks appeared in 2018, when Australia's former government banned Chinese firm Huawei from rolling out the country's 5G network, citing "security concerns". "That could be described as the first shot," China's ambassador to Australia Xiao Qian said last year. Australia criticised Beijing's crackdown on Hong Kong protesters, and led calls for an independent investigation into the origins of Covid-19, triggering a period of what then leader Scott Morrison termed "economic coercion" by Beijing. - Agencies

## Army set to start agrifarming in S Waziristan

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Army is set to start agriculture farming on 41,000 acres of land in South Waziristan's Zarmalam area. As a start initially, the army would farm on 1,000 acres of land and then expand to 41,000 in a bid to enhance agricultural productivity of the region and promote food self-sufficiency. Peshawar Corps Commander Lieutenant General Sardar Hasan Azhar Hayat told The News that the army was determined to increase agricultural farming in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Lt Gen Hayat said the army has prepared a farming plan on 41,000 acres of land that had been barren for years. The officer was of the view that there is a vast opportunity for investment in minerals, hydropower, agriculture, and tourism in KP that can help boost the province's resources. The three-star officer said the army has worked together with the civil government to bring in-

vestment in minerals, agriculture, hydropower, and tourism to the province, which is yielding positive results. Employment opportunities can be created by providing more facilities for investors, he added. Lt Gen Hayat believes in reaching out to different communities to bridge the gap between the masses and the armed forces. He is meeting students, teachers, scholars and other sections of society, especially the people of merged districts. A KP government, official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, noted that the armed forces and the provincial government had "extremely cordial" relations. "The provincial government with the help of armed forces has cracked down on illegal mobile sims, explosives, extortion, hundi, illegal arms, smuggling, fake documents, drug trafficking, and other illegal activities." The official added: "For effective prevention of illegal activities, relevant federal and provincial departments and intelligence agencies are working together." The army's decision to farm in KP comes after the Punjab government allocated over 45,000 acres of land to the force for a "Corporate Agriculture Farming" project in the shape of a "joint venture" to enhance the crop yield in order to ensure food autarky in March of this year. "The army will play a role at the management level to make the project a success story. However, the ownership of the land will continue to stay with the provincial government. The military will not get any profit or share in the revenue to be mopped from corporate agriculture farming."

## All options are on the table against Israel: Nasrallah

### "The great Al-Aqsa Storm Operation was decided and implemented 100 percent Palestinian," Nasrallah said

NEWS DESK

BEIRUT: Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah has said that all options are on the table against Israel, urging the Zionist regime to stop its aggression against Palestinians in Gaza immediately. Speaking in a televised speech on Friday, Nasrallah repeated that Hezbollah is ready for all possibilities. The Hezbollah chief said whoever wants to prevent a regional war, must quickly stop the Israeli aggression against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Addressing the US deployment of warships in the region, Nasrallah said Hezbollah is not intimidated. He said that the Lebanese resistance movement entered the battle against Israel on October 8, the day after Palestinian resistance movements launched its surprise attack against Israeli occupation forces. Nasrallah said the daily exchange of fire with Israeli forces along the Lebanese border might seem modest but it is very important, calling it unprecedented since 1948. The Hezbollah chief said that 57 Hezbollah fighters have been martyred so far. Nasrallah made the remarks in his first address since the Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip began on October 7. He blamed the United States for the aggression the Israeli regime is perpetrating against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. He also said that Operation Al-Aqsa Storm was carried out entirely by Palestinian resistance movements.

"The great Al-Aqsa Storm Operation was decided and implemented 100 percent Palestinian," Nasrallah said. "Absolute secrecy is what ensured the success of the Al-Aqsa Storm operation on October 7," added the chief of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement. "We were not bothered by Hamas's concealment of the October 7 attack plan," he stated. "Conditions in Palestine in recent years have been extremely harsh, especially with this extremist, foolish, stupid, and savage [Israeli] regime," he said. "The Operation Al-Aqsa Storm led to an earthquake in [Israel]," he said. "It has strategic and existential repercussions and will leave its effects on the present and future of [Israel]," he stated. He said that what is happening in Gaza shows Israel's foolishness and inability because what it is doing is killing children and women. The Hezbollah leader called Israel "frail" and said that for a whole month, it has been unable to record a single military achievement. Nasrallah offered "condolences and congratulations" to the families of those killed in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. "This is a seamless battle at the human, ethical and religious levels. It's the most evident, the most honest and the most noble," he stated. "Our true strength lies in our firm belief, unshaken conviction, our devotion and commitment to the cause," the Hezbollah chief said. Nasrallah began the speech by praising "the fallen martyrs" of Hezbollah and the other resistance groups fighting Israel, as well as the civilians killed.

## Iqbal Day: Public holiday announced

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has declared November 9, Thursday, as a public holiday on account of Iqbal Day. "November 9, Thursday, will be a public holiday across the country," said a notification issued by the Cabinet Division on Friday. November 9 is observed as "Iqbal Day" across the country to mark the birth anniversary of Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal. This year would be his 146th birth anniversary. Dr Iqbal played an instrumental role in inspiring millions of Muslims across the sub-continent to seek an independent homeland where they could practice Islam freely. The day would dawn with special prayers in mosques for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan. Popularly known in Pakistan and other parts of the world as "Poet of the East", Dr Iqbal was born in Sialkot on November 9, 1877. Iqbal was an acclaimed poet and philosopher. He is credited with writing poetry and using his political influence to demand the creation of a separate homeland for Muslims. His Allahabad address of 1930 was a watershed moment in pre-partition politics.

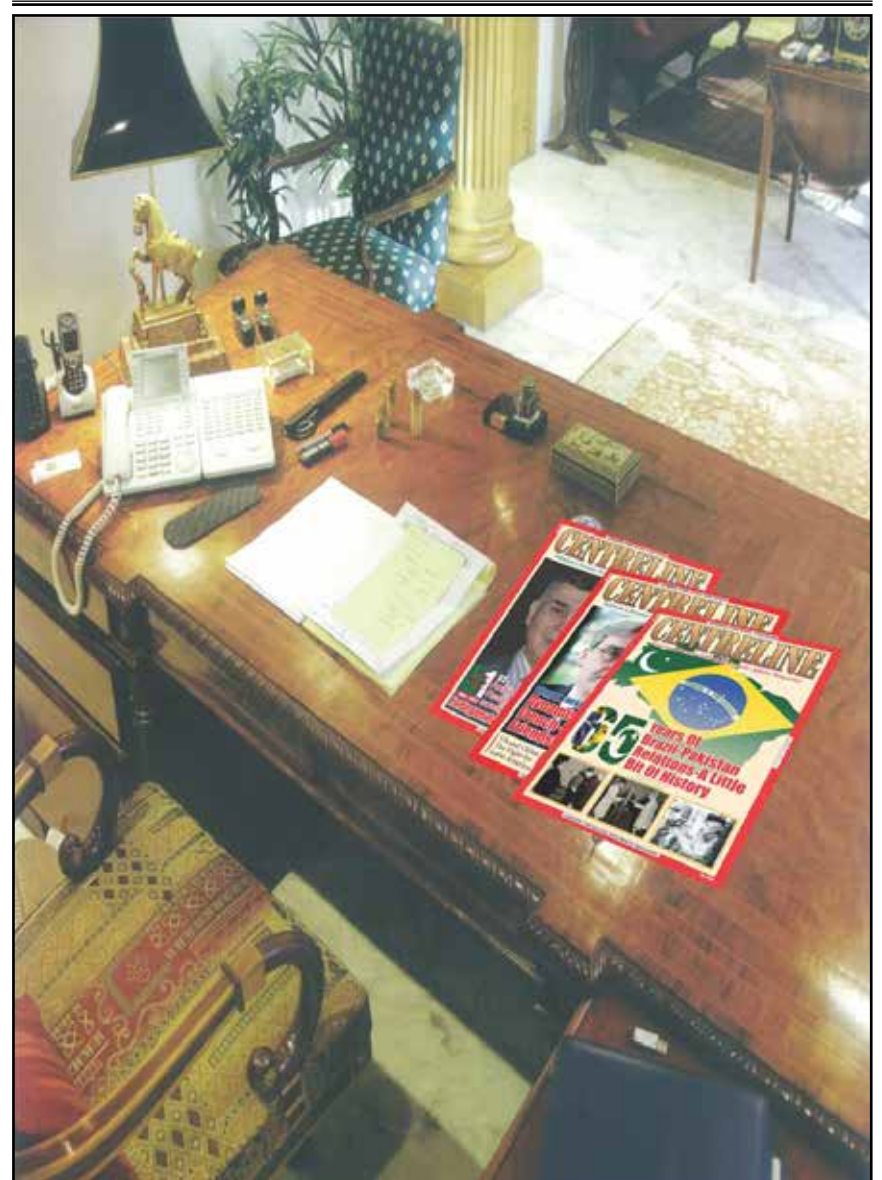
## LHC directs sealing factories causing air pollution

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court on Friday directed the authorities to seal the factories causing air pollution. Commissioner Lahore Muhammad Ali Randhawa appeared in the court of Justice Shahid Kareem on the petition filed by a common citizen Farooq Haroon. The LHC gave a ruling to seal the factories emitting black smoke. "The factories would not be unsealed till the submission of affidavit by the owners," ruled the LHC. It added that the factories would be demolished in case of non-compliance. The commissioner Lahore told the court that indiscriminate action would be taken against the smoke-emitting vehicles. "We have directed the traffic police to impound the vehicles causing smog in the city," said commissioner. The court said in its remarks that we are now on the right track but the PDMA was earlier in slumber.

## Court unsatisfied with IGP's justification

LAHORE: The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar on Friday failed to provide the court with a satisfactory answer about designer Khadija Shah's arrest despite repeated queries. The Lahore High Court's (LHC) Justice Ali Baqar Najafi inquired the IGP over Khadija's arrest in a third case after being granted bail. "Why was she arrested again? Why was the bail order delayed, and why wasn't she interrogated during custody?" the court inquired while asking for a guarantee that the designer would not be arrested in another case if she is granted bail for the third time. The court was hearing a plea by Khadija, seeking contempt proceedings against police high-ups for deceiving the court regarding her arrest in a third case, despite a report mentioning only two FIRs against her. IGP argued that due process was followed in Khadija's arrest and claimed that there is "a lot of evidence which proves the involvement of Khadija Shah in the May 9 riot cases". Justice Najafi noted that the IGP's report was "unsatisfactory". However, the court persisted and asked why the designer was arrested in a third FIR, right after being granted bail in two cases by the LHC's division bench. "Why did the police wait till the decision of the accused's bail? What are the actual reasons?" Dr Usman claimed that the case of May 9 riots is a "sensitive one" and said, "Developments occur with each passing minute. After conducting an investigation, the police found Khadija's involvement in another case." - DNA



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