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PM Kakar speaks at ECO summit Killers of Gaza children following Pharaoh's path: PM

Tells the ECO leaders that the incessant and lethal Israeli bombardment on Gaza was a deplorable act calling for international condemnation

DNA

TASHKENT: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday strongly denounced the Israeli bombardment in Gaza and drew a historical comparison, highlighting similarities between Israel's actions and those of Pharaoh in their tragic impact on children. The prime minister, in his address at the 16th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), urged the member countries to rally the efforts to hold Israel to account for its incessant and lethal bombing on the Palestinian people. In his wide-ranging address, he raised the issue of Gaza humanitarian crisis twice and reiterated condemnation of killing of children and women, and targeting the hospitals by Israeli forces. "With the elimination of children, I recall in the history when Pharaoh, on the advent of the Moses' birth killed children. And now, unfortunately, the people who claim to be the followers of Moses, are following the path of Pharaoh," he remarked. Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, Caretaker Commerce Minister Gohar Ejaz, and Caretaker Communications Minister Shahid Ashraf Tarar accompanied the prime minister in the summit held at the Tashkent Convention Center. He told the ECO leaders that the incessant and lethal Israeli bombardment on Gaza was a deplorable act calling for international condemnation. The prime minister said the situation needed to be addressed as per the resolutions of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and United Nations Security Council (UNSC). He urged the member countries to push for a ceasefire and support the call for the provision of humanitarian aid, besides rallying efforts to hold Israel to account. He urged the participating countries and

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PM Kakar, Azerbaijan President meet

DNA

TASHKENT: The Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar today held a meeting with President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on the sidelines of the 16th Summit of Economic Cooperation Organization being held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The two leaders reviewed the progress in bilateral relations especially in the domain of trade, defence and energy. Prime Minister Kakar welcomed the announcement of direct flight operations of Azerbaijan Airline (AZAL) to Pakistan terming it a positive development in people-to-people exchanges and to advance two-way business and tourism. Prime Minister Kakar and President Aliyev discussed common challenges including Islamophobia and climate change and the critical role of ECO to promote regional cooperation and collective prosperity. Global and regional developments including the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and persistent Indian atrocities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K) were also discussed. Prime Minister Kakar reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, especially with respect to Karabagh.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar meets with President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on the sidelines of the ECO summit. - DNA

Gazans bury their dead in orchards and football fields

DNA

GAZA STRIP: Before he fled his home in northern Gaza, where intense fighting now rages between Israel and Hamas, Mahmud al-Masri had a grim job to do: bury his three brothers and their five children in a nearby citrus orchard. With his home area turned into a war zone, the bereaved 60-year-old farmer had no choice but to dig makeshift graves and hastily bid farewell to his relatives killed in an Israeli strike. "We had to bury them there in the orchard because the cemetery is in the border zone where tanks are coming in, and it's very dangerous," Masri said. "I will transfer the bodies when the war is over." Masri, who is now holed up with his family in a hospital in southern Gaza, lived in a two-storey house in Beit Hanoun in the semi-rural northeast of the Gaza Strip, not far from the border fence with Israel. Masri decided initially to ignore Israeli warnings to flee south when war broke out after the October 7 Hamas attacks that killed 1,400 people inside Israel, according to Israeli officials. Two weeks of heavy bombardment changed his mind and he resolved to get his wife and children out when the fighting intensified and fears of a massive ground invasion grew day by day. Now - more than four weeks into the brutal war - upwards of 10,500 people, again mainly civilians, have been killed in Israeli bombardments of Gaza, according to the Hamas-run health ministry. Masri told his story to AFP as he and his immediate family sheltered in an overcrowded hospital in the south. He recalled that he was forced to bury his brothers and

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Death toll in Gaza rises Israel to begin 4-hour pauses in northern Gaza: White House

Pauses emerged out of discussions between US and Israeli officials in recent days

NEWS DESK

RAMALLAH: Israel will begin four-hour pauses in northern Gaza starting on Thursday to allow people to flee hostilities, the White House said in what it called a step in the right direction. White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said the pauses emerged out of discussions between US and Israeli officials in recent days, including talks US President Joe Biden had with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Gaza death toll rises 0,812 Palestinians, including 4,412 children, martyred since Oct 7. At least 10,812 Palestinians, including 4,412 children, have been martyred in Israeli strikes on Gaza since Oct 7, the health ministry in Hamas-controlled Gaza said on Thursday. Britain's interior minister escalated a dispute with London's police force on Thursday over the handling of a planned, large pro-Palestinian march on Armistice Day, accusing officers of taking a softer stance towards left-wing causes. Home Secretary Suella Braverman has taken a tough line on the tens of thousands of protesters who have gathered in London since the Hamas group's October 7 attack on Israel, calling them

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Italy sends hospital ship to aid Palestinians

DNA

ROME: Italy is sending a hospital ship to the Middle East to aid Gaza's Palestinian population, which is expected to arrive "in a couple of days", the defence ministry told AFP on Thursday. The navy ship "Vulcano", which is equipped with operating rooms, is carrying 30 medical staff and is heading initially to Cyprus, according to details published by the ministry. It is expected to arrive "in a couple of days, weather permitting", a defence ministry spokesman told AFP, without confirming how close the ship would get to Gaza. Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani told a press conference in Paris on Thursday the ship would "be outside Gaza waters as quickly as possible, ready to admit and take care of injured civilians".

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Briefs

Pak position on Palestine clear

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Thursday said that Pakistan's position on Palestine was "consistent and crystal clear". The minister wrote this on the social media platform sharing a video clip of Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar's address at the Economic Cooperation Organization Summit in Tashkent in which he strongly denounced the Israeli bombardment of Gaza. PM Kakar drew a historical comparison, highlighting similarity between Israel's barbaric bombardment of Gaza Strip and Pharaoh's brutalities with children becoming their main casualty.

Sana chides Zardari on PM statement

DNA

LAHORE: With the upcoming general elections inching closer, PML-N senior leader Rana Sanaullah said Thursday that PPP Asif Ali Zardari has the right to block the path of "Lahore's prime minister" and pave the way for a premier from Larkana. Talking to journalists in Lahore, Sanaullah said that the people would decide the next PM and hoped that their decision would be acceptable to all of them. His remarks came as the scathing verbal showdown between the PPP and PML-N - two former allies in the previous PDM led coalition govt - intensified since the ECP had announced to hold elections in the country on Feb 8, 2024.

To tackle smog issue Punjab govt revises the lockdown plan

The decision will remain in effect in Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Gujranwala Narowal, Hafizabad and Sialkot

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Thursday revised the lockdown imposed in multiple districts of the province due to the prevalent smog. In its amended notification, the Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department of the province notified that call centres and international information technology companies will be allowed to operate during the lockdown. While markets in the eight smog-hit districts will be allowed to operate today and tomorrow; however, shopping malls and markets will be closed on Saturday and Sunday. The notification also states that cinema halls, restaurants and gyms will remain open today as per routine. The decision will remain in effect in Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Gujranwala Narowal, Hafizabad and Sialkot. A day earlier, an environmental and health

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CM visits Allama Iqbal's mausoleum

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi honored the legacy of Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal on Iqbal Day. He offered prayers for the nation's progress, peace, and the liberation of oppressed people in Gaza and Occupied Kashmir. He laid floral wreath on the mausoleum of Allama Muhammad Iqbal, offered Fateha, and pen down reflections on Iqbal's message of peace and brotherhood. Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad led the prayer, emphasizing the importance of embracing Iqbal's ideas for success. Various officials, including Provincial Ministers and the IG Police, joined the commemoration. - APP

IMF wants Pak to tax agri, real estate sector

According to FBR sources, the tax collection plan has been shared with the global lender's team and IMF will recommend further measures after reviewing plan

MONITORING REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has urged Pakistani authorities to bring agriculture, real estate, and retail sectors into the tax net during an ongoing review of the \$3 billion standby arrangement. According to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) sources, the tax collection plan has been shared with the global lender's team and the IMF will recommend further measures after reviewing the plan. During the talks, both sides identified potential areas for bridging financing shortfalls and agreed on further measures if FBR failed to achieve the tax collection target. The sources said FBR is mulling imposing a fixed tax on retailers, however, the IMF is reluctant to accept such a

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'No plans to prolong, increase IMF standby deal'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar ruled out the possibility of Pakistan requesting the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to increase the timeframe or the size of the Standby Arrangement (SBA), while government high-ups to also advise on materialising the external financing gap once a successful review is completed, media reported on Thursday. Following their arrival to Pakistan on November 2, officials from the Fund are negotiating with Islamabad to strike a

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Pakistan to 'send back registered refugees' also

So far, 80,000 immigrants from Balochistan have left Pakistan

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: As a crackdown on illegal foreigners continues in Pakistan, the government plans to send back registered migrants as well after deporting the undocumented settlers, Balochistan's caretaker Minister for Information Jan Achakzai said on Thursday. "So far, 80,000 immigrants

from Balochistan have left Pakistan. After this, [we] will send back the registered refugees as well," Achakzai said while addressing a press conference in Karachi. The minister said that the foreigners living in Pakistan should have the authentic documents. Hundreds of thousands of foreigners have got fake identification cards, he added. "We have not taken the responsibility of the illegal residents. The crackdown on the illegal migrants will continue," Achakzai said, while warning the government in Afghanistan against giving harsh statements. "Pakistan knows how to crush all kinds of terrorism."

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PUC unites Friday Sermons against terrorism threat

PUC Chairman Ashrafi had called upon religious scholars and leaders from all schools of thought to use their Friday Sermons to vehemently condemn extremism and terrorism

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : On the appeal of the Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC) and its allied parties, Ulama and Mashaykh are set to deliver impactful Friday Sermons under the banner of Paigham-e-Pakistan.

PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, along with prominent figures such as Allama Ziaullah Shah Bukhari, Pir Naqib-ur-Rahman, Maulana Muhammad Khan Laghari, Allama Arif Wahidi, and others, had called upon religious scholars and leaders from all schools of thought to use their Friday Sermons to vehemently condemn extremism and terrorism. Ashrafi who is also the Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and the Pa-

kistani Diaspora in Middle East and Islamic Countries, urged Ulama and Mashaykh to articulate a unified message against extremism and terrorism, issuing a collective statement and presenting consensus religious decrees (Fatwas) during their Friday Sermons. He also encouraged educating the general public about the importance and benefits of this united stance.

Expressing his commitment to societal reform and the eradication of terrorism, he asked the religious scholars and leaders to play a substantial role from the pulpit and arch of their respective mosques. He vowed to collaborate closely with state institutions to achieve the common goal of putting an end to extremism and terrorism.

Rejecting any tolerance for terrorism within Islam, Ashrafi empha-

sized that "those who attack the state of Pakistan, its armed forces, security institutions, and the general public are acting against Islamic teachings and are considered enemies of the country." He asserted that the state and the Pakistan Army had the right to take action against elements posing a threat to the stability and security of the country and targeting its people and institutions. Ashrafi said the Friday sermons, backed by this united front of religious leaders, would not only denounce terrorism but would also serve as a rallying cry for a collaborative effort between the religious community and the armed forces. He acknowledged the sacrifices made by the brave soldiers of the Pakistan Army and national security agencies in the recent terrorist incidents.



Pakistan Navy Station Commander at Lahore, Commodore Sajid Hussain reviewing the Guard during Change of Guard Ceremony at Mausoleum of Allama Iqbal.—DNA

Pak launches Yatra Booking Portal for Sikh pilgrims

DNA

LAHORE: Chief Minister of Punjab inaugurated the booking portal for Sikh pilgrims to Nankana Sahib yatra and other sacred Gurdwaras in Pakistan. On the instruction of the Punjab's CM, the first religious tourism program was launched to facilitate the Sikh pilgrims and promote interfaith harmony.

Through this portal, Sikh pilgrims around the world are able to access online hotel booking services, transportation, and hire security services making their pilgrimage planning more efficient. The inclusion of security services ensures a safe and secure journey for Sikh pilgrims; however, the Sikh pilgrims will get VIP status during their tour to Pakistan. Addressing to media, CM Punjab Mohsin Naqvi stated that Sikh pilgrims will receive warm hospitality, ensuring a fulfilling and memorable experience during their religious journey. He assured to provide the best possible facilities to the Sikh pilgrims. In order to enhance the security of religious tourists, the CM Punjab announced the establishment of a tourism police in Punjab. Dr Mimpal Singh - a member of the Parbandhak Committee - expressed gratitude for the establishment of the Sikh Yatra Booking Portal and lauded CM Naqvi's efforts in this initiative. "Sikh pilgrims visit Pakistan four times a year but with the inauguration of this portal, the Sikh yatra can become more convenient for our community."

Ajmal Baloch criticizes Punjab's smart lockdown

Due to the storm of inflation, business has shrunk by forty percent. Shahid Ghafoor Paracha - Khalid Chaudhry Punjab government should reconsider the cruel decision. Sheikh Riaz - Aslam Bhli

DNA

ISLAMABAD :President of All Pakistan Anjuman Tajran and Traders Action Committee Islamabad Ajmal Baloch - Secretary Information of All Pakistan Anjuman Tajran Khalid Chaudhry. Vice President of All Pakistan Anjuman Tajran and President of Anjuman Tajran Okara Sheikh Riaz - General Secretary Waheed Bhaller - Anjuman Tajran Faisal Abad President Aslam Bhli - General Secretary Rana Ayub Manj - Anjuman Tajran Sialkot President Ehsanul Haque Butt - President of Anjuman Tajran Kasur Haji Akram Mughal - General Secretary Asif Khokhar - President Anjuman Tajran Sheikhupura Amjad Nazir Butt - Pres-

ident of Anjuman Tajran Gujranwala and Deputy of Anjuman Tajran Gujranwala - Secretary General Irfan Chaudhry has said that the storm of inflation has also engulfed the businessmen of Pakistan. People's purchasing power has been depleted while businesses have shrunk by 40%, making it difficult to meet business expenses. Business costs have also increased. The government has also increased taxes on traders. The increase in gas and electricity rates and the price of petroleum products and the high flight of the dollar have broken the back bone of the businessmen. In such circumstances, shutting down other five cities of Punjab including Lahore for three days in the name of smart lockdown is tantamount to business hos-

tility. The business community also does not accept the business decision. Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi should limit himself to day-to-day affairs. And instead of eliminating smog from Punjab, don't put the traders on the target of oppression and abuse. He has demanded caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar to take notice of Punjab government's decision to close businesses. Millions of people will be affected by this cruel decision. Shutting down business in the name of smog is extremely cruel. Even during Corona, which was a global epidemic, businesses were not completely shut down. Ajmal Baloch further said that businessmen should not be forced to protest.

Sindh CM pays homage to Allama Iqbal

KARACHI: Sindh Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar, Thursday, said that the people of Sindh pay homage to the great philosopher and Poet of the East, Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal. The CM, in his message on Iqbal Day, said that people of Indo-Pak sub-continent acknowledge Allama Iqbal's academic, intellectual and political services. Poet of the East presented the concept of a moderate and enlightened Islamic society, he said adding that the teachings of Allama Iqbal presented a composite set of solutions to the contemporary issues as well. The Sindh CM said that Allama Iqbal was a great supporter of Pan-Islamic unity and he had reverence and affection for Palestine. For the glorious permanence of Pakistan, we have to move forward with unity, Justice (retired) Maqbool Baqar urged.

Govt knows how to crush terrorism

DNA

KARACHI : Balochistan Information minister Jan Achakzai said that government has known how to tackle the terrorism. Addressing a press conference, he said that the nation should stand united with the armed forces. The minister categorically sated the illegal and undocumented resident should be handed over to Afghan. "We have not any contract with the illegal migrant. Two hundred Pakistani are martyred every year. Afghan authorities should not have made the harsh statements. The registered refugees would also be sent back. Till now 80000 illegal Afghans have left Pakistan," the minister highlighted, adding that over 1000 immigrants had been detained and sent back to Balochistan". The minister said the process of sending the immigrants back to their homeland would be accelerated in the coming day. As many as 10000 immigrants were being sent back to Afghanistan through the Chaman border. —DNA

UBG ready for FPCCI election preparations unveiled

They will not give an escape route, Khalid Tawab, will become an iron wall in front of illegal measures, Hanif Gohar

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI :President of United Business Group (UBG) Zubair Tufail has said that United Business Group (UBG) has made complete preparations for the election to be held on December 30 next month and we are in full contact with our voters. UBG always brought the problems of the business community to the government and went to every level to solve them and in the future, Atif Ikram Sheikh will go to every door to relieve the business community from the problems. He expressed these views in Karachi. I said while addressing the meeting of UBG (Sindh) Core Committee. UBG Sindh Zone Chairman Khalid Tawab, Secretary General (Sindh Region) Hanif Gohar and others also

addressed while Syed Mazhar Ali Nasir, Gulzar Feroze, Ahmed Chennai, Malik Khuda Bakhsh, Abdul Sami Khan, Mian Arshad Farooq, Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Shaheen Ilyas Sarwana, Malik Sohail Hussain, Sheikh Umar Raihan, Saeda Bano, Haji Jamaluddin Achakzai, Shahzadombin, Ishtiaq Baig, Muslim Mohammadi, Noor Ahmad Khan, Farhanur Rehman, Farzana. Bernie and other members were also present. Khalid Tawab said in his address that despite all the illegal measures, we will not give the businessmen panel an escape route. Unfortunately, the leaders of the businessmen panel in their lust for power have attacked the FPC. The honor of CI has been scattered and the position of the federation that we had built around the world

has been pushed into the blind ditch again by the elected officials from the businessman panel in the greed of power, but Atif Ikram Sheikh is a strong candidate of UBG. Hanif Gohar said that, the current leadership of the Federation Chamber of Commerce is trampling the trade organization laws, by establishing a controversial election commission, they started conspiracies to get desired results. Have been done but now we will become an iron wall in the face of illegal actions. The members of the core committee also gave some suggestions to the UBG leadership in the meeting, while President Zubair Tufail and Khalid Tawab took other important responsibilities including contacting the voters. Hand over the strings.

Promote Mechanization in Agri to enhance productivity

LAHORE : Four days international workshop on improving agricultural productivity through mechanization concluded here on Thursday. The international workshop was arranged by the National Productivity Organization (NPO) in collaboration with the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), Japan.

International participants from APO member countries including Turkey, Mongolia, Fiji, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal and Bangladesh and along with local participants attended the workshop while resource speakers Takashi Fujimori from Japan, Isara Chaopisit from KASSETSART University, Thailand., and Engr. Mahmood Riaz Director Design and Development at Agricultural Mechanization Research Institute Multan, Pakistan. The workshop was aimed at promoting understanding of the latest technologies and measures for mechanization in agriculture, policies and frameworks to support mechanization on small farms. Farm mechanization is viewed as a package of technology to ensure timely field operations, increased productivity, reduced crop losses and improved quality of grain or product. The speakers addressing the closing ceremony of the event were of the viewpoint that It is timely to identify how Agriculture can benefit from private and public support mechanisms to attain sustainable long-term growth. Agricultural mechanization plays a strategic role in improving agricultural production and productivity in developing countries. Addressing the event as guest of honor, Engineer Ahmed Sohail, Director General Agriculture (field), government of Punjab said that they are working on early solution of the issues like high number of taxes and duties to facilitate agricultural sector and farmer as economy cannot grow in the presence of such issues. Addressing the event as chief guest, Mr Kashif Anwar, President Lahore chamber of Commerce and Industry lauded the role of APO in the development of Asia-pacific region and added: it was time to revitalize our commitment to achieve its vision of inclusive and innovation-led productivity growth in the region. Working in tandem with APO, Pakistan will be able to find solutions to long-standing issues of the productivity, he added.

Mr Toshinori Mitsunaga, program officer, APO Tokyo, Japan expressed his gratitude to the government for its efforts to continue the productivity movement and appraised the participants about the APO's journey of success stories and major achievements in the region. CEO NPO, Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry thanked guests and participants for their presence adding that Agri mechanization has the potential to encourage youth to become involved in the sector and support small-scale growers—DNA

Impact of Climate Change on Food Security In Pakistan

The government should encourage the use of digital technologies, modern farming techniques, efficient farm mechanization and crop diversification

ANIQA NASEEM

Climate Change means long-term alteration of Earth's weather patterns. Severe heat waves, droughts, floods and change in monsoon rain patterns have severely impacted Pakistan's agricultural production. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned that the frequency of such extreme weather conditions will increase in the future, causing a severe risk to Pakistan's

food security. According to UNESCAP, Pakistan could lose more than 9 per cent of its annual GDP (Gross Domestic product) due to climate changes. In recent years, heavy rainfalls in the harvesting season have increased the onset of floods. The floods of 2010 were the worst disaster in Pakistan's history as the country faced a loss of \$10 billion while its food insecurity increased by 10%. Although the Climate change has caused widespread damage, the agriculture is

one of the most affected sectors. The heavy rains of 2019 resulted in severe floods. In July 2019, approximately 1.3 million people were experiencing a food crisis in seven drought-affected districts in Sindh. It has also been predicted that climate change will cause new diseases of cash crop which will pose a new Challenge to the agriculture sector. A study shown that in Pakistan climate change will decrease agricultural Productivity by 8-10% till 2040 and wheat will be






one of the major losers. Another study predicts that the worst impact of climate change will be seen in Wheat and rice (especially Basmati rice) crops in the coming years. It is predicted that wheat yield will decrease by 6% and the Basmati rice yield will fall by 15-18%, except for the northern areas. Therefore Pakistan must needs to take serious steps to mitigate this problem. First of all, it needs to map the vulnerability across the agro-ecological zones be-

cause every zone has its own dynamics. Second, the country needs to introduce the concept of climate-smart agriculture. Third, the government will have to strengthen the research and development system, as most of the climate-related problems are unpredictable and this system can help to minimize the impact. The government should encourage the use of digital technologies, modern farming techniques, efficient farm mechanization and crop diversification.

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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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Bomb Disposal.....15
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Emergency Ambulance.....1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
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MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
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Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Indonesia, Pak have potential to enhance bilateral ties

Senior Vice President, ICCI Faad Waheed said that Pakistan and Indonesia have huge potential to explore new sectors to further streng

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) organized a farewell dinner in honor of H.E. Adam M. Tugio, Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan. Additional Secretary Foreign Affairs Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, High Commissioner of Malaysia H.E. Muhammad Azhar Mazlan, Ambassador of Azerbaijan H.E. Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan H.E. Yezhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Philippine H.E. Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, Ambassador of Nepal H.E. Tapas Adhikari, dignitaries, journalists and a large number of the business community attended the dinner. ICCI and the business community proposed to give the highest civil award of Pakistan to the Ambassador of Indonesia for his extraordinary services to strengthen the bilateral ties between Pakistan and Indonesia in economic, trade, political, diplomatic and other fields. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of Indonesia H.E. Adam M. Tugio said that Indonesia and Pakistan have huge potential to increase their trade and economic ties and the role of business communities of both sides is significant in this regard. He said that there are many potential sectors in both the countries including tourism, trade, technology, energy and agriculture through which both



countries can expand their relations. He said that Indonesia and Pakistan are connected by historical religious ties and we have to transfer this legacy to our next generations. He said that the best memories of his life are associated with Pakistan. This country is extremely hospitable and it is unparalleled in its natural beauty. He said that his experiences as the ambassador of Indonesia in Pakistan were wonderful. The business community here has a lot of potential, and it is hoped that the leadership of Pakistan's business community, especially the ICCI, will play an active role in further strengthening the economic and trade relations between Indonesia and Pakistan. He is grateful to the ICCI for organizing such an excellent farewell function in his honor. There are strong possibil-

ities of Pakistan-Indonesia direct flight being operational and by finalizing it soon, direct air connectivity will be established between the two countries. The free trade agreement between Pakistan and Indonesia will be finalized soon after which mutual trade between the two countries will increase further. He has done a lot of work to increase the mutual relations of the people in both the countries and more work is needed on this. Indonesia can be a gateway for Pakistan in ASEAN countries and in the same way, Pakistan can develop trade routes for Indonesia in South Asia and Central Asian countries. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce said that Indonesia should promote Pakistan as a full dialogue partner in ASEAN in order to enhance the economic

and trade ties between both sides. He said the role of the business community is very important in increasing trade relations between Indonesia and Pakistan and assured that ICCI would play a significant role in this regard. Tourism, IT and textiles are important sectors for strengthening mutual economic and trade relations in both countries. The mutual trade between Pakistan and Indonesia, which is \$4.5 billion dollars, needs to be further increased, for which ICCI will play its important role. The trade between ASEAN and Pakistan is currently \$11 billion, which is very less than its potential and more work is needed to improve it. He hoped that Adam M. Tugio will play his best role to improve the image of Pakistan in future.

Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that direct flights and free trade agreement between Pakistan and Indonesia is the need of the hour and its implementation is inevitable. He said that the economic and trade relations between the two countries will increase with the direct flights while the mutual relations would also be further improved. Additional Secretary MOFA Rizwan Saeed Sheikh said that Pakistan and Indonesia can help each other in providing trade corridors. He said that the geo-strategic location of both countries can strengthen their geo-economic benefits. He said that Indonesia can play a key role in facilitating Pakistan to get full dialogue partner status with ASEAN and the membership of ASEAN Regional Forum. Senior Vice President, ICCI Faad Waheed said that Pakistan and Indonesia have huge potential to explore new sectors to further strengthen bilateral economic ties. ICCI Goup Leader Khalid Malik said that Indonesia and Pakistan are connected in historical and religious relations, and we want to further deepen these relations between them to achieve mutual benefits. Vice President ICCI Engineer Azharul Islam said that he recently visited Indonesia with a trade delegation and there are plenty of opportunities to increase bilateral trade between the two countries.

AIOU's ASA, EWA congratulate Dr Nasir

ISLAMABAD: Academic Staff Association (ASA) and Employees Welfare Association (EWA) of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) congratulated Prof Dr. Nasir Mahmood on his appointment as the permanent Vice Chancellor of AIOU for the next four years and expressed full confidence in his leadership. Both the associations assured their full cooperation on behalf of faculty and employees to Dr. Nasir Mahmood for the development of the university. President ASA, Dr. Iqbal Ahmed and President EWA, Yasir Mehmood welcomed the decision of appointment of Dr. Nasir Mahmood and said that a good leadership was needed for the development and bright future of AIOU and now we have got that.—APP

EIGHTEEN refutes PRA's allegations

ISLAMABAD: EIGHTEEN is the project of Elite Estates Private Limited (EEPL). Majority shareholding (80%) in EEPL is owned by one of the world's leading development entrepreneurs, Mr. Naguib Sawiris. Being a project of renowned international real estate developers, EIGHTEEN follows all the applicable laws, rules and regulations. EIGHTEEN is an active and responsible taxpayer and diligently pays all applicable.—APP

US CDC delegation meets Health Minister

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Atlanta led by Dr Richard Franka, representative of Global Immunization Division called on Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan. During meeting they discussed mutual areas of interest for cooperation in health sector. The delegation also included Acting Country Director of CDC in Pakistan, Dr. Jude Tuma as well as Ms. Suzzane Powel from the US Embassy. The minister was accompanied by Iftikhar Shalwani, federal Secretary Health and Dr Rana Muhammad Safdar, Strategic Adviser IGH-CDC. Dr Nadeem Jan thanked US CDC for long-standing collaboration and technical assistance provided to the country for immunization, Polio eradication, capacity building

of public health workforce as well strengthening of public health labs in Pakistan. The minister made mention of the contributions of CDC trained Field Epidemiologists in disease detection and response, Polio eradication as well as the recently encountered COVID-19 pandemic. Sharing his vision and priorities of the government to protect the health of most vulnerable populations, the minister updated the delegation about initiatives being undertaken to improve essential immunization coverage across Pakistan and plan to interrupt the Polio transmission the soonest possible. "The national leadership is committed to use all its strengths and resources to contain all vaccine preventable diseases and finally confine Polio virus to the history books." "Failure in this

respect is not an option and we shall ensure it through accountability across the board," the minister said. Dr Nadeem Jan stressed the need to adopt an integrated service delivery approach and urged the global community to extend support during the last miles toward eradication. Richard Franka, CDC delegation lead appreciated the government's commitment as well as the unprecedented support being extended to valiant frontline health workers by Pakistan's law enforcement agencies. While appreciating the progress made, Dr Richard emphasized the need to modify strategies based on updated risk assessment and urged ongoing impact evaluations of interventions being implemented in priority zones. "The CDC truly believes in government leadership and shall remain supportive of the locally tailored strategic approaches to address challenges being faced in priority areas", Richard stated. Secretary Iftikhar Shalwani also apprised the delegation of country's plan to host Global Health Security Summit during January 2024 and invited CDC leadership to the same. The delegation welcomed the initiative and assured of appropriate level representation. The delegation was also informed about the government's plan to embark on Hepatitis elimination and addressing widely prevalent maternal and child malnutrition. Both sides agreed to further strengthen the existing collaborations besides carrying forward the Pak-US strategic health dialogue addressing jointly identified priority areas.—DNA

WB- Punjab Govt collaboration to bring prosperity

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) Shahzad Ali Malik Thursday said the World Bank's collaboration with the Punjab Government in the agriculture sector would usher an era of prosperity for farmers through bumper crops. Talking to a delegation of progressive farmers, he said the World Bank had reaffirmed its commitment for a sustainable agricultural revolution in Punjab through a "game-changing collaboration with the Punjab Government", according to a news release. The PHHSA chairman said a delegation from the World Bank's Review Mission recently visited Multan, marking a significant milestone in the "Revolutionary Plan for Sustainable Agricultural Development" in the province. He said according to official sources, the primary objective of the visit was to inspect the modern drip and solar systems strategically deployed throughout the region. In the five-year project, out of its total cost of Rs 68 billion, the World Bank was offering Rs 45 billion. Shahzad Ali Malik Sitar-I-Imtiaz said the project would have "a profound impact on the agricultural landscape in the region". "It is also poised to mitigate the effects of climate change, ushering in modern irrigation systems, creating an attractive environment for private sector investments, and facilitating the growth of profitable agriculture. Remarkably, over 1.3 million rural farmer families will directly benefit from this project," he added.—DNA

EIGHTEEN refutes PRA's allegations

DNA

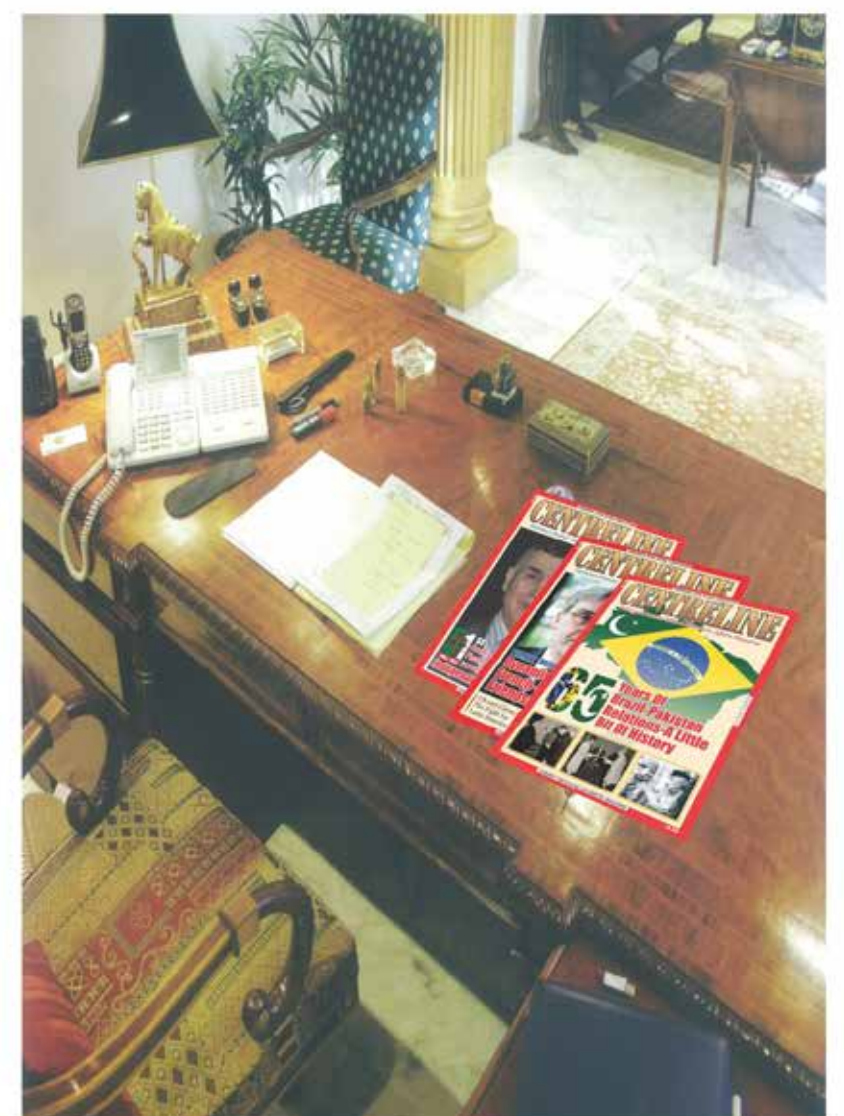
Islamabad: EIGHTEEN is the project of Elite Estates Private Limited (EEPL). Majority shareholding (80%) in EEPL is owned by one of the world's leading development entrepreneurs, Mr. Naguib Sawiris. Being a project of renowned international real estate developers, EIGHTEEN follows all the appli-

cable laws, rules and regulations. EIGHTEEN is an active and responsible taxpayer and diligently pays all applicable taxes, whether federal, provincial, or local, and is committed to full compliance in term of taxes. In 2019, the Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) approached EIGHTEEN for analysis and scrutiny of its tax documents. At EIGHTEEN, we maintain an open and transparent relationship with the tax authorities and therefore, we fully cooperated with PRA's audits and inquiries,

providing all necessary documentation to support our tax compliance. PRA accordingly gave its clearance to EIGHTEEN's tax submissions to the PRA until 30 June 2021. Even after that, EIGHTEEN has continued to deposit all taxes, whether to the FBR, the PRA, or other tax authorities. On 7 November 2023, PRA's officials came to EIGHTEEN's offices, without any prior notice and on the next day, issued a Show Cause Notice to EIGHTEEN alleging that EIGHTEEN had not paid certain taxes to the PRA. Even though the said Show Cause Notice gave EIGHTEEN until 22 November 2023 to reply to the allegations, the notice was leaked on the same day to various media outlets along with allegations from the PRA that EIGHTEEN is involved in tax evasion.



ISLAMABAD: A foreigner woman is enjoying the ride of the camel during the annual 10 Days Lok Mela 2023 at Lok Versa in Federal Capital.—Online



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Briefs

Solangi for following Allama Iqbal's philosophy, teachings

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Thursday called for following the philosophy and teachings of Allama Iqbal. In his message on the birth anniversary of the great philosopher and poet, while paying homage to Allama Muhammad Iqbal, he said his philosophy and thoughts were a beacon of light for the entire humanity. "Iqbal taught the young generation to create their own world instead of depending on others by giving a passionate message of independence", Murtaza Solangi added. Iqbal made a practical effort to awaken the Muslims from their slumber for their true identity, Murtaza Solangi added. "The solution to the multifaceted challenges we face today lies in the universal teachings of Iqbal", Murtaza Solangi remarked.

IRSA releases 110,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 110,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 53,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1515.79 feet and was 115.79 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 26,100 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1194.30 feet, which was 144.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 8,300 cusecs and 37,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 64,900, 40,400, 35,600 and 7,100 cusecs respectively. —APP

PAF pays tribute to Poet of East on his birth anniversary

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) on Thursday released a video based on the iconic poetic verses of the Poet of East Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal to pay tribute on his 146th birth anniversary. "The short documentary features Shaheen (Eagle), which has made a remarkable mark by showcasing Pakistan's largest effort ever. The expo, which has been held annually in Shanghai since 2018, is a major platform for promoting international trade and cooperation, according to a report published by China Economic Net (CEN) on Thursday. "Pakistan's active participation in this prestigious event highlights its commitment to strengthening economic ties with China, Pakistan's second largest export destination, and exploring new avenues of collaboration," said Hussain Haider, Consul General in Shanghai. One of the key highlights of Pakistan's participation in the 6th CIIE is its focus on promoting its diverse range of export products. From leathers and surgical instruments to agricultural goods and handicrafts,

China's food imports to reach \$140 bn in 2023

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China has become the largest food importer in the world, and the total amount of food imports to China is estimated to reach \$140 billion in 2023. This is as per 2023 China Food Import Report first released in 2023 China Import Food Summit. The Summit was hosted by China Chamber of Commerce of I/E of Foodstuffs, Native Produce and Animal By-Product, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday as a supporting activity of the ongoing 6th China International Import Expo (CIIE) since 2018, this year's China Import Food Summit is themed by "Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability". "The Chinese government attaches great importance to the development of the food and agricultural product industry. While ensuring food safety, we will further open the market, give play to the role of international trade.



ISLAMABAD: A view of the hails during heavy rain fall in Federal Capital. —ONLINE

Samina for rehabilitation action plan for abled persons

She said that as per estimates, there were 2.4 billion people or one-third world population with health conditions who could benefit from rehabilitation

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Samina Alvi on Thursday, stressing the importance of rehabilitation services, said their scope needed to be extended to differently-abled persons. She was speaking at the closing ceremony of the preparation of the Strategic Action Plans for the promotion of rehabilitation services in Pakistan. The five-year comprehensive and inclusive action plan is being developed by the Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination, provincial health departments, World Health Organization, and ReLaB-HS at the levels of federal and provincial governments, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Begum Alvi said rehabilitation services played

an important role in the health sector and helped the people suffering from illness, accident or disability, return to normal lives. She mentioned that the scope of rehabilitation services should be extended to all the people, including the persons with disabilities. "These services", she said, "include paying attention to speech and occupational therapy, and vocational rehabilitation, including the provision of assistive technology. She said differently-abled people constituted 10 to 12 percent of the country's population and could play a positive role in the society if provided with assistive technology, rehabilitation services

and access to mobility. She emphasized raising awareness in the society to mainstream the differently-abled persons and end their deprivation by providing them equal rights and services. Samina Alvi termed disability a global public health issue, which, she said, required a positive approach by the society to accommodate such people through skilled education and job opportunities. She called for a national campaign to make aware the differently-abled persons and their parents about the special job quota at the federal and provincial levels. She also urged the private sector to provide jobs to such people to make them

useful members of the society. Head of Mission WHO Dr Palitha Mahipala appreciated the First Lady for spearheading national awareness campaigns on breast cancer, and rights of persons with disabilities. He emphasized the need for embedding the rehabilitation services into the healthcare system and improving the people's access to them. He said that every person needed rehabilitation services to avoid further complications and recovering quickly after treatment. WHO's Technical Advisor Pauline Kleinitz informed the audience that the rehabilitation "optimises function and helps the people perform daily activ-

ities, besides improving the quality of life". She said that as per estimates, there were 2.4 billion people or one-third world population with health conditions who could benefit from rehabilitation. She said that WHO was providing necessary advice and assistance to improve the availability of rehabilitation services to fulfill the unmet needs all around the world, especially in the countries like Pakistan. Director General Health Dr Baseer Achakzai and Global Coordinator of ReLab-HS Dr Zia Dawar also spoke on the occasion. The representatives of WHO, and public health professionals from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and AJK attended the consultative session.

Poliovirus found in environmental samples of six districts

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Health here Thursday confirmed the presence of polio-virus in environmental samples of six districts. According to spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, four samples were from Karachi and two were from Chaman. He said, "Polio-virus has also been found in one sample each from Peshawar, Kohat and Nowshera." He said, "The virus belongs to the YB3A virus cluster in Afghanistan." He said, "Every child is at risk due to the presence of the virus especially for children under five years of age as this virus can make them disabled for life." Caretaker Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan said, "There is no cure for polio, and only vaccines protect children." He said, "I request parents to welcome polio workers coming to their homes." Dr Nadeem Jan urged parents to must take polio drops to their children to protect them from lifelong disability. He said, "The polio surveillance system in Pakistan is working effectively." "The proof of which is given by the immediate confirmation of the presence of the virus," he added. Dr Nadeem Jan said, "The government is ensuring measures to eradicate polio on a coordinated basis." —DNA

Zardari pays tribute to Allama Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: President of the Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Asif Ali Zardari paid glowing tribute to the national poet, Allama Muhammad Iqbal on his birth anniversary. In his message on 'Iqbal Day', he said that the national poet gave consciousness to the Muslims of the subcontinent through his poetry. "Iqbal was a democratic figure whose poetry is a philosophical journey that needs to be understood who, through his poetry, exposed those who tried to spread mischief under the guise of religion." —APP

Pak participates in CIIE with its largest effort ever

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani exhibitors are participating in the ongoing 6th China International Import Expo (CIIE) being held from 5th to 10th November in Shanghai, which has made a remarkable mark by showcasing Pakistan's largest effort ever. The expo, which has been held annually in Shanghai since 2018, is a major platform for promoting international trade and cooperation, according to a report published by China Economic Net (CEN) on Thursday. "Pakistan's active participation in this prestigious event highlights its commitment to strengthening economic ties with China, Pakistan's second largest export destination, and exploring new avenues of collaboration," said Hussain Haider, Consul General in Shanghai. One of the key highlights of Pakistan's participation in the 6th CIIE is its focus on promoting its diverse range of export products. From leathers and surgical instruments to agricultural goods and handicrafts,

Pakistan has showcased its rich cultural heritage and economic potential. Pakistan's pavilions, adorned with vibrant displays and innovative products, have attracted the attention of exhibitors and visitors alike. Recognizing the significance of CIIE, the Pakistani Ministry of Commerce has extended its full support to the participating businesses. Various incentives, including financial subsidies and facilitation services, have been provided to ensure a successful exhibition experience. This proactive approach by the government was widely appreciated by the Pakistani exhibitors and further enhanced Pakistan's image as an attractive investment destination. CIIE is one of the biggest signs of the opening up of the Chinese economy. It is encouraging that China's "dual circulation" development model provides more space for international high-quality imports, Haider said. Pakistan's exports to China in September have surged by an impressive 100.5% compared to the corresponding month during the previous financial year, which bodes well. The CG said the country needs to sustain its exports to China

and take advantage of the opening up of the Chinese economy and the free trade agreement that offers a lot of concessions. Since the beginning of this year, the two countries have signed protocols on export of boiled beef, dried chillies and dairy products from Pakistan to China, achieved access to fresh cherries from Pakistan to China and reached an agreement on export of animal skins from Pakistan to China. The Pakistani Ministry of Commerce is assisting more Pakistani companies to meet the import requirements of the General Administration of Customs of China for the aforementioned categories and expanding the export of more quality products such as surgical instruments and sports equipment. The Consul General also highlighted the importance of trade exhibitions and fairs as platforms for promoting Pakistani products in China. He urged Pakistani exporters to participate in such events to showcase their products and establish direct contacts with potential Chinese buyers as these interactions provide an opportunity for both sides to explore potential collaborations.

Kashif urges diversified approach to PKR reserves for stability, growth

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis, in the ever-changing landscape of global economics, Thursday called for adopting a more diversified approach to Pakistani currency reserves that can contribute significantly to stability and growth. Speaking at a seminar on 'Importance of Diversification of Currency for Pakistan' held under the aegis of the Gold Ring Economic Forum, a strategic think tank, he suggested considering the inclusion of currencies like the Renminbi (RMB) and the Russian Ruble (RUB) in its foreign exchange reserves, according to a news release issued here. He said, "The Chinese renminbi, being one of the world's major reserve currencies, is widely used in international trade, providing numerous benefits such as increased trade opportunities, reduced currency risk, and enhanced economic collaboration with China, one of Pakistan's significant trading partners." He said similarly, incorporating the Russian Ruble would foster stronger economic ties with Russia, opening doors for bilateral investments, joint ventures, and strategic partnerships. "Diversifying our currency reserves will not only mitigate the risks associated with relying heavily on a single currency but also provide Pakistan with the flexibility to adapt to changing global economic dynamics," he remarked. He said, "By embracing a multi-currency approach, Pakistan can enhance its economic resilience, attract foreign investments, and promote international trade, ultimately leading to sustainable economic development." —DNA

4th Sino-Pak Agriculture Forum starts at UAF

ISLAMABAD: The 4th Sino-Pakistan Agriculture Forum organized by Institute of Horticultural Sciences Faculty of Agriculture, the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad started at the Center for Advanced Studies here on Thursday. Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security and research Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik, Provincial Minister for Agriculture SM Tanveer, Vice-Chancellor University of Agriculture Faisalabad Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan, Vice-Chancellor PMAS Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, Prof Dr Muhammad Naeem attended the forum in person. Professor/President Huazhong Agriculture University, China, Dr Zhaohu Li, Professor/Vice President Graduate School, Chinese Academy Dr Zheming Li, Professor/Vice President Xinjiang Agriculture University China Dr Chen Yong, Professor/President Qingdao Agriculture University, China Dr Tian Yike participated online. Addressing the ceremony, Federal Minister for National Food Security Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik hailed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between University of Agriculture and Chinese University and said that it would help to exchange researchers, students and scientists of both sides and share their experience in different fields especially in agriculture. He also termed the Pak-China friendship and coordination in different fields' exemplary. He said that the government was making utmost efforts to enhance per acre wheat production in the country and hoped that Pakistan would get a double bumper crop during harvesting season and huge foreign exchange would save. He said that the University of Agriculture (UAF) was the leading varsity of the country in agriculture research. It has recently started a wheat campaign by including the students, researchers and scientists to enhance per acre wheat production and he was very optimistic the wheat campaign would give fruitful results. He said that per acre wheat production had increased from 25 mounds to 37 mounds as a result of the research by the scientists. Now, the scientists were making research to develop new varieties of the wheat seeds which would have the potential of producing crop upto 90-100 mounds per acre, he said. He said that the government was ensuring availability of inputs like fertilizer and quality seeds to the farming community in time. —APP

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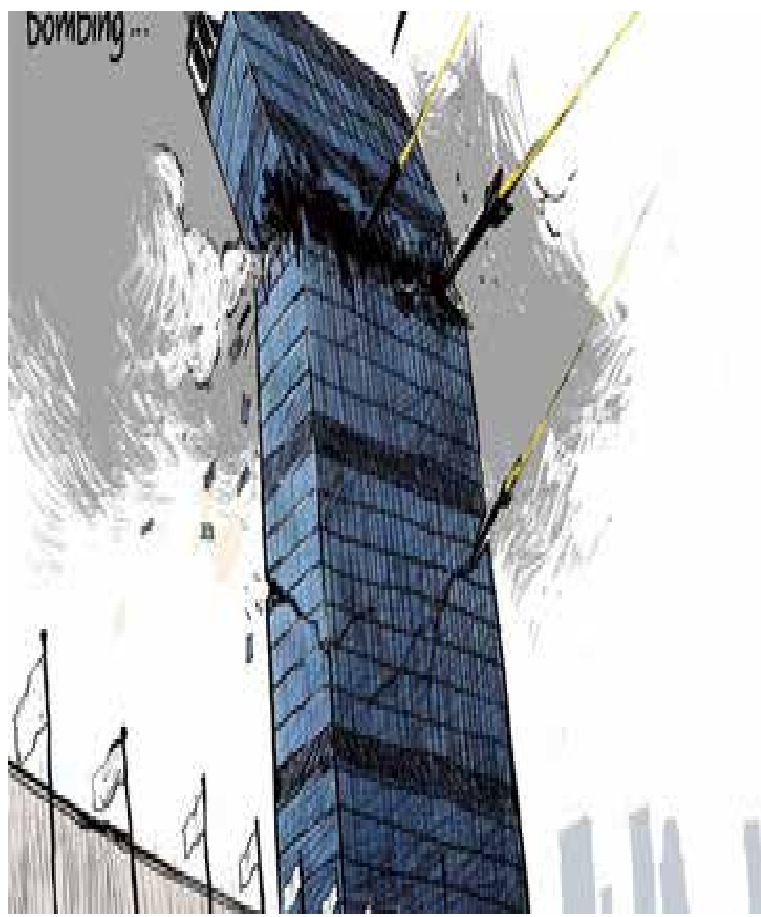
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Balancing Gaza march: Legal considerations needed

Political demonstrations are frequently controversial. Any issue that can mobilise tens of thousands of people is likely to involve fierce passions, and provoke strong reactions. In a democracy, those are insufficient grounds for a ban. That is why the Metropolitan police have resisted ministerial pressure to withdraw permission for a Palestinian solidarity march in central London this weekend. Sir Mark Rowley, the Met commissioner, has taken the view that Saturday's march does not pose a threat to public safety. Downing Street has very reluctantly, and perhaps only temporarily, deferred to that judgment. Rishi Sunak has expressed his objection in terms of the date. A rally on Armistice Day would be "disrespectful", according to the prime minister. Whether or not that is true – and the march organisers have tried to accommodate such sensitivities in their choice of route – respectfulness is not a measure of public order. There would be few public demonstrations on any issue if the threshold for a ban were set at breaches of a prime minister's sense of decorum. The more extreme view was expressed by the home secretary, Suella Braverman, who has described pro-Palestinian gatherings as "hate marches". That is a conflation of justified horror at the plight of civilians suffering and dying under Israeli bombardment in Gaza with support for Hamas and its murderous agenda for annihilating the Jewish state altogether. If Ms Braverman does not recognise a difference between those propositions she is not qualified to comment at all. If she is wilfully blurring the distinction, she is guilty of fomenting division and stirring intercommunal suspicion, making her plainly unfit for public office. There is a mode of violently anti-Israel rhetoric that shades into antisemitism and then attaches itself to the cause of Palestinian solidarity. And it only takes a few hateful placards to worry Jewish people, who are still reeling in shock and grief at the atrocities perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October. There is also a tendency for the malicious amplification of fringe views by propagandists of the far right who seed suspicion of terrorist sympathy around any humanitarian cause supported by British Muslims. The overwhelming majority of attenders at pro-Palestinian marches are there to express peaceful solidarity with Gazans and to demand a ceasefire. These are complex sensitivities for politicians to manage. The correct approach begins with a careful choice of language and an aspiration to promote mutual understanding. It requires the disruption of vicious cycles of rage and misrepresentation that end up radicalising opinion on all sides. It means minimising needless political provocation. Ms Braverman prefers the opposite approach, which is consistent with a pattern of treating any political situation as a platform for the advancement of personal ambition in the Conservative party. That is shallow politics at the best of times. In the context of war in the Middle East, it is reprehensible. The police don't welcome controversial demonstrations, while recognising that the law allows them. In that respect, the Met's view that Saturday's march should go ahead is more reliable than political interference from the cabinet. There are times when a requirement of public safety supersedes the right to protest.

Cyberspace unites: Facing global challenges

President Xi Jinping addressed the opening ceremony of the 2023 World Internet Conference Wuzhen Summit via video link. In his speech, Xi stressed that the international community needs to deepen exchanges and practical cooperation to improve public access to information-based services, bridge the digital divide, and ensure the development of the internet benefits people's livelihoods. Xi put forward the idea of a community with a shared future in cyberspace at the second WIC in 2015. The proposal has since garnered widespread international recognition and is all set to be raised to a new stage as it can help address the development deficit and security challenges troubling the world, while enhancing mutual learning among civilizations. The great achievements China has made in using the internet to improve its governance, people's livelihoods and fulfill its international responsibility ever since Xi put forward the vision of a global cyber community have demonstrated how the digital revolution can be positively transformative. With that referential experience to draw on, the new stage of building a community with a shared future in cyberspace should prioritize the forming of a more equal and inclusive cyberspace. Xi stressed that China is willing to share with other countries its experience, and is willing to work with all parties to implement the Global Artificial Intelligence Governance Initiative and promote the safe development of AI. This cutting-edge technology has already merged with industries and people's social lives through the internet, but it is not without risks. Likewise, although the internet has profoundly changed the way people live and work and vigorously promoted social progress, problems such as the unbalanced development of the internet, and imperfect rules and disorder in the cyberspace have become increasingly prominent. That's why Xi called for the concerted efforts of all countries to crack down on cybercrimes, strengthen data security and personal information protection, and properly respond to the risks and challenges brought by sci-tech development. The strengths of the internet need to be leveraged to fill the development gaps in individual countries as well as in the world. But that has never seemed to be on the agenda of some developed countries that are accustomed to their first-come, first-served privileges in the real world, and expect the same in cyberspace. Some are even willing to weaponize their know-how and technology advantages to defend their privileged position, turning cyberspace into a new arena for their geopolitical games. All countries should be wary of that. Which is why Xi urged all countries to respect cyber sovereignty, an individual country's way of internet governance, and oppose any that seek hegemony, bloc confrontation and an arms race in cyberspace, all of which pose new threats to world peace and development.

The changing global geopolitical dynamics and the global order

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer


When power is spread out more evenly in the world, the system can switch big changes for better. The system needs change to keep growing and develop. As it changes, it creates new parts. These new parts make the system work better because they become really good at what they do. One interesting example of this is the Gateway region. Eastern Europe is becoming a place that connects different parts of the world. In the future, the Middle East might also become a Gateway. And in the next few decades, about thirty

The world's political system change over time is a bit like how living things grow and develop. It is a complicated system with different parts that work together. Sometimes, there's an imbalance in power between different parts of the world, like big countries having more power than others. When power is spread out more evenly in the world, the system can switch big changes for better. The system needs change to keep growing and develop. As it changes, it creates new parts. These new parts make the system work better because they become really good at what they do. One interesting example of this is the Gateway region. Eastern Europe is becoming a place that connects different parts of the world. In the future, the Middle East might also become a Gateway. And in the next few decades, about thirty more Gateway states might appear. These are small countries that will break away from bigger ones to help the world system connect and work together. These gateways help the system to adapt change, interplay and relationship among countries. Today geopolitical tensions have arisen which depend on a complex interplay of different factors. Diplomacy, conflict resolution and international cooperation play important roles in managing and reducing these tensions. Currently, the United States holds the position of the world's sole superpower. Over the next decades, the country will adopt new strategies to maintain affordable electricity. This strategy bears similarities to isolationism, as the United States will refrain from significant involvement in regional military conflicts. Instead, it will provide support to its allies through supplies, training and limited airpower, opting for a more indirect approach to addressing regional issues in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. This strategic shift is expected to help the United States maintain its global hegemony. In Europe, the European Union (EU) may undergo dissolution or redefinition as a smaller trading zone covering a reduced portion of the continent. The current free

trade structure appears unsustainable due to member states, particularly Germany, becoming overly reliant on exports. This dependence leaves their economies highly susceptible to fluctuations in demand beyond their borders. Germany may experience an economic downturn due to inevitable export market fluctuations, leading to its diminished influence in Europe by 2040. This decline may open up opportunities for Central Europe, notably Poland, to become a more significant regional power. Russia will continue to grapple with the repercussions of relatively low oil prices. The income derived from this sector has been essential for maintaining internal stability. With a significant reduction in this income, Russia may either transform into a confederation or experience separatist movements by 2040, raising important questions regarding the future of its nuclear arsenal. In Asia, as China's competitiveness in export markets wanes, high unemployment will become a major concern for the Chinese government. To prevent an economic downturn, the government may seek to consolidate its power and embrace authoritarian measures. Nevertheless, China's diverse regional setting will present challenges to such centralized control. Consequently, by 2040, China may experience a return to regionalism marked by a degree of chaos. As China weakens, a power vacuum in East Asia may emerge, which Japan is well-positioned to fill, given its robust economy and significant military capabilities? In the Middle East, it is difficult to foresee an end to or effective control of Islamic extremism. Instead, it may continue to expand its influence and territory. Turkey and Iran are the only regional actors with the potential to counter these extremist groups, but Iran may not take any such action. Given the ambitions of these extremist groups to reinstate the caliphate, Turkey may find itself compelled to intervene militarily to safeguard its borders. This military and economic assertion by Turkey may lead to a resurgence of a regional power reminiscent of the Ottoman Empire, positioning Turkey as the dominant regional force by 2040.

The future geopolitical environment is marked by a complex interplay of factors that will shape global dynamics over the next decades. The United States, as the current sole global power, is poised to adopt a new strategy resembling isolationism to maintain its dominance. Europe faces potential challenges as the European Union may redefine itself, while Germany's economic vulnerability could shift the balance of power in the region. In Russia, weakened oil prices could lead to internal fragmentation, raising concerns about the future of its nuclear arsenal. In Asia, China's economic decline may usher in a return to regionalism and give rise to Japan as a leading power. Meanwhile, the Middle East continues to grapple with the persistence and expansion of Islamic extremism, with Turkey potentially reasserting itself as a dominant regional force. The evolving geopolitical landscape will demand careful diplomacy, conflict resolution, and international cooperation to address these emerging trends and strains in the years to come. The dominant theme can be seen playing out over the course of the next decades is increasing disarray in Europe and Asia. It is expected the prolonged stability in North America with U.S. rivals working to increase their footholds in Latin America. Despite the growing instability in Eurasia, also expect to see three regional powers emerge: Japan, Turkey and Poland. These countries will be outliers in an otherwise fragmented Eastern Hemisphere. The changing global geopolitical scene is a dynamic and ever-evolving phenomenon that presents both opportunities and challenges for nations around the world. As new powers rise and traditional alliances shift, the need for diplomacy, cooperation and adaptability becomes increasingly paramount. In this period of interconnectedness and interdependence, it is essential for nations to recognize the importance of multilateral cooperation, embrace sustainable and inclusive policies and work towards a more peaceful and prosperous global future. The complexities of the 21st century demand creative solutions and a commitment to shared values, as we navigate the shifting tides of global geopolitics in a manner that promotes peace, stability and prosperity for all.

Gaza: Are there any winners?

One thing is for sure: as Benjamin Netanyahu said after the Hamas attacks on Oct. 7, Israel's response "will change the Middle East" – perhaps the only words of wisdom the Israeli prime minister has uttered since this crisis began. Indeed, the first change may be in the occupant of his office. Polls show Netanyahu's personal approval rating having slumped to 27 percent, there are protests outside his home over what Israelis overwhelmingly view as a security lapse on his watch, and a raft of media opinion pieces hold him personally responsible – as Haaretz put it: "The disaster that befell Israel ... is the clear responsibility of one person: Benjamin Netanyahu." Second, as previously predicted in this column, the Hamas leaders who declared victory on Oct. 7 and thought that by holding hostages they could negotiate better terms have now put the world in a situation where it needs to negotiate only limits to the Israeli reaction – which, after long years of experience and five wars since 2006, Hamas should have known was never going to be proportionate. This is not to say that Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestinian land and the continuing undermining of Palestinian rights is not to blame for the escalation to where we are today – but rather that whatever strategic gain Hamas wildly imagined it would achieve is not materializing. In other words, no matter how this ends, the current leaderships of both Hamas and Israel are finished – a fitting end for a couple who have for so long been unlikely tag-team partners in their unwavering commitment to

expelling them and their leaders from Gaza (while completely disregarding legal, humanitarian and political consequences) they will have "killed only the combatants but not the cause" – as Queen Rania of Jordan told Becky Anderson in her CNN interview. So, are there any winners? Well, apart from extremists finding justification in the current events to attack mosques and synagogues; there is a hopeful argument that the intensity, severe casualties and ugliness of this war – and its already global ramifications – will now force the international community to accept that no more patch-up solutions are possible. The only way to ensure this doesn't happen again is finally to have a just and fair peace that gives Palestinians land, freedom and hope. As argued here before, now is the time to double down on peacemaking efforts, and this starts with ending the illegal occupation – a hard ask given that the only country with genuine influence over Israel has vetoed even a ceasefire. Indeed, as if we did not know this before, when the current US government shamelessly supports an occupying power that has killed more than 10,000 Palestinians in Gaza, many of them children, it no longer holds the moral high ground to preach to others about not doing enough to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In the end, no one put it better than UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres when he said: "The nightmare in Gaza is more than a humanitarian crisis. It is a crisis of humanity."

–Sourced by Arab news.

Faisal J. Abbas

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Briefs

Killers of Gaza children following...

FROM PAGE 01
the international community to rally behind to have a humanitarian corridor so that the unfortunate and defenceless people of Palestine could be helped out. Prime Minister Kakar also apprised the regional leaders of the unabated Indian atrocities in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, and emphasised the ECO countries to support Kashmiris in achieving their right of self-determination. He also touched upon the issues of intolerance, violence and xenophobia, and called upon the ECO members and international community to work for building legal deterrence against Islamophobia while maintaining mutual respect, and harmony and co-existence. The prime minister is on a two-day visit of Uzbekistan mainly to attend the summit, besides engaging with the leaders of different countries to discuss mutual cooperation.

IMF wants Pak to tax agri, real...

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proposal. The lender has demanded Pakistan seek a timeframe from provinces for bringing the agriculture sector into the tax net. The IMF was also briefed on the tax policy and management task force under the purview of the tax regulator, sources said adding that the global mender urged Pakistan to achieve tax collection target. Pakistan and the IMF high-ups have continued parleys for striking a staff-level agreement under the \$3 billion SBA programme from November 2 and the talks would conclude on November 15, 2023. If the lender is satisfied with Pakistan's performance during the review, a second tranche of \$700 million is expected to be disbursed by December. Caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar and the IMF's Mission Chief Nathan Porter led the delegations of both sides and also held one-on-one meetings during this week. A day earlier, the finance minister ruled out the possibility of making any requests to the IMF to increase the timeframe or size of the \$3 billion SBA programme.

'No plans to prolong...

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staff-level agreement under the \$3 billion SBA programme. These talks will end on the 15th of this month. The delegations for these talks, from the IMF and Pakistan, were led by the finance minister and the lender's Mission Chief Nathan Porter, both of whom also held one-on-one meetings during the week. The News asked Dr Akhtar if there was a possibility of Pakistan requesting the IMF to increase the SBA programme from March to June 2024 and jacking up the size from the existing \$3 billion to \$3.5-\$4 billion, the minister categorically replied, "No". To another query regarding the external financing gap, the minister replied that she would advise after the review. Another official who is privy to the ongoing talks with the IMF said that the programme loans from the multilateral creditors including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) were linked with the successful ongoing review of the IMF programme.

Gazans bury their dead...

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nephews in the orchard because the incessant bombing and incursions by Israeli soldiers meant his family could not reach Beit Hanoun's cemetery. He put bricks on the ground to mark where his relatives lay. But he added that he had since learned that Israeli military bulldozers had destroyed his house and said: "I don't know if the graves are still there as nothing is being spared."



ISLAMABAD: Players of Nishtar and Rising Stars Hockey Club posing for a picture after a camping activity at the Lotus Lake, Lok Virsa.—DNA

NZ crush SL to diminish Pakistan's semi-final hopes

They strengthened their fourth position in the standings with 10 points in nine matches and a decent net run rate of 0.74

SPORTS DESK

ENGALURU: New Zealand's all-round brilliance propelled them to crush Sri Lanka by five wickets and bolstered their chances to reach the ICC World Cup 2023 semi-finals. Chasing a modest 172, New Zealand achieved the total for the loss of five wickets and 160 balls to spare and further improved their net run-rate. They strengthened their fourth position in the standings with 10 points in nine matches and a decent net run rate of 0.74. Former champions Pakistan, who

are in fifth position with eight points in as many matches will now need to win their last ICC World Cup 2023 fixture against England with a massive margin of as low as 287 runs to go past New Zealand in the standings. But it was not the easiest of run chases for New Zealand as they lost five wickets to complete the pursuit despite a commanding start. Glenn Phillips (17) and Tom Latham (2) then made sure there were no more hiccups in the run chase and steered New Zealand over the line in the 24th over. Opening batter Devon Con-

way remained the top-scorer for New Zealand with a 42-ball 45. He was followed by his opening partner Rachin Ravindra, who scored 43 and Daryl Mitchell (43). Angelo Mathews led the bowling attack for Sri Lanka with 2/29 in his four overs, while Maheesh Theekshana and Dushmantha Chameera made one scalp each. New Zealand captain Kane Williamson opted to bowl first and his bowlers justified the decision reducing Sri Lanka to 70-5 inside the first ten overs. Sri Lanka's opening batter Kusal Perera

was the only batter who posed a threat to New Zealand's brilliant bowling, scoring a majority of the team's total. He scored a blistering 51 run-knock from 28 balls, with the help of nine boundaries and two sixes. Sri Lanka further slipped to 105-7, bringing Maheesh Theekshana to the ground with New Zealand eyeing to wrap things up quickly. Theekshana stood on the other end, as he lost two partners before Dilshan Madushanka joined him and together they knitted a cautious 43-run partnership for the last wicket from 87 balls.

Theekshana played his career-best knock in ODI cricket, scoring an unbeaten 38 runs from 91 balls with the help of three boundaries, while his partner Madushanka scored 19, his highest individual in any form of cricket. Rachin Ravindra finally ended the frustrating partnership, as Madushanka got caught behind, thus ending the Sri Lankan innings at 171. Trent Boult topped the wickets chart for New Zealand, while Ravindra, Lockie Ferguson and Mitchell Santner picked two wickets each.

Canada off to a strong start in BJK Cup

DNA

SEVILLE: Canada swept hosts Spain 3-0 in the Billie Jean King Cup finals on Wednesday, to get off to a strong start in Group C. Earlier, Italy scored an impressive 2-1 win over France in their opening Group D tie, winning both singles rubbers. Canadian rookie Marina Stakusic, 18, beat Rebekha Masarova 6-3, 6-1 in a brilliant display, before Leylah Fernandez edged Sara Sorribes 7-6 (10/8), 7-6 (9/7) to clinch the tie. Stakusic, ranked 258th in the world, made light work of Masarova, who is 65th for her first victory over a top 100 player. "I feel amazing, I'm super happy with my performance today, I just tried to have great energy from the beginning and just show I belong here," said Stakusic. "It's my best victory for sure... the Canadian fans motivated me so much today, and the Spanish fans too, I like any noise. For me it was very motivating."

As impressive as Stakusic was, Masarova made 33 unforced errors and was



far from her best. It left the pressure on team-mate Sorribes' shoulders and perhaps that told as she spurned three set points in the tie-break before Fernandez eventually snatched an exciting first set. Sorribes failed to convert two more set points in the second set tie-break and

Fernandez triumphed. "There are something that I need to work on but my Canadian team-mates and my Canadian cheering squad here did what they had to do, gave me positivity and helped me in the tough moments," said Fernandez. "That was extremely tough, I tried to stay focused on

just one point at a time." Eugenie Bouchard and Gabriela Dabrowski polished off the sweep with a 6-2, 7-5 doubles win over Sorribes and Masarova. France clawed back a point in the doubles against Italy, who also won both their singles rubbers. Jasmine Paolini beat France's Caroline Garcia 7-6 (8/6), 5-7, 6-4 in a thrilling battle after Martina Trevisan beat Alize Cornet 2-6, 6-2, 6-2, earning Italy the tie. Garcia and Kristina Mladenovic then earned a 5-7, 6-2, 10-6 win over Trevisan and Elisabetta Cocciaretto. Four-time winners Italy have now beaten France in five of their last seven meetings, edging this battle between two of the four ever-present countries at the tournament, along with Australia and Great Britain. Trevisan came back forcefully from a set down to triumph in the first singles rubber. "I'm very happy to bring the point to my team, when I play for Italy, for my country, it's always special," she said. Cornet said she was unwell in the second set. "I was feeling pretty good before and during the first set," she explained.

England aims redemption against Pakistan

NEW DELHI: Ahead of their final match against Pakistan, England captain Jos Buttler said the team has shown a desire to "put things right" in India at the ongoing ICC Men's World Cup 2023. The England skipper said the team is determined to secure a spot in the 2025 Champions Trophy with a top-eight finish, Reuters reported. The 2019 champions earned a 160-run win over the Netherlands in Pune on Wednesday to end a five-match losing streak and climb off the bottom of the standings to seventh place on four points. Ahead of the bottom three - Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Netherlands - on net run rate, England head to Kolkata for their final match against fifth-placed Pakistan, who will host the next edition of the eight-team Champions Trophy. "We haven't performed the way we wanted in this whole trip and we'd like to leave India putting in a proper performance," Buttler told reporters. "I think everyone's been frustrated, but the guys have stayed tight... the guys probably trained as hard as they trained all trip, which shows the level of commitment and desire to put things right. "Not playing for what we wanted to be playing for, but a really vital match for us in the grand scheme of things. "It's great to be heading there with something on the line," he added. Schedule of remaining World Cup matches November 10: South Africa vs Afghanistan @ Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad November 11: Australia vs Bangladesh @ Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium, Pune. November 11: England vs Pakistan @ Eden Gardens, Kolkata November 12: India vs Netherlands @ M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru November 15: Semi-final 1 - First place vs fourth place @ Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai November 16: Semi-final 2 - Second place vs third place @ Eden Gardens, Kolkata November 19: Final - Winner of Semi-final 1 vs winner of Semi-final 2 @ Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad.—Agencies

Punjab govt revises the lockdown...

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emergency had been declared in Lahore, Gujranwala, and Hafizabad divisions for four days due to the prevailing smog conditions. Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi made the announcement during a press conference on Tuesday when the air quality index (AQI) in the city measured 390, falling under the category of hazardous. At this AQI level, the city maintained its position as one of the most polluted cities with citizens experiencing a hazy and smoggy atmosphere throughout the day. The air quality was severely poor, making it nearly impossible to breathe normally outdoors. Naqvi addressed the media, highlighting discussions in a detailed cabinet meeting. The meeting revealed that schoolchildren were experiencing eye and respiratory problems due to the prevailing conditions.

Israel to begin 4-hour...

FORM PAGE 01

"hate marches" and "mobs" that threaten the Jewish community. Critics in opposing parties and her own have accused her of stoking division and undermining the police. They also question her commitment to free speech after she questioned why some public gatherings should not be banned when they are offensive. "I do not believe that these marches are merely a cry for help for Gaza," Braverman, who is on the right of her party and is the minister in charge of policing, wrote in The Times. "They are an assertion of primacy by certain groups - particularly Islamists - of the kind we are more used to seeing in Northern Ireland."

Italy sends hospital ship to aid...

FROM PAGE 01

The navy ship would be followed "in the next few days" by an army field hospital, Defence Minister Guido Crosetto said on Wednesday - efforts he said were "a concrete sign of the humanitarian aid our country is sending to the Gaza Strip". In a comment to the press, cited by AGI news agency, Crosetto said he believed "an initiative of this type will be welcomed by Israel as much as by the Palestinians". "No-one can have anything to say about a humanitarian act." The ministry is ready to send out other medical personnel once the hospital is up and running, including three anaesthetists, two surgeons and eight critical care nurses, it said in a statement. The Gaza Strip has been under bombardment by Israel since the October 7 attack by Hamas.

PCB accepts Inzamam resignation as chief selector

He voluntarily stepped down from his position on 30 October 2023 in order to offer the PCB the opportunity to conduct a transparent inquiry

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has accepted the resignation of Inzamam-ul-Haq as chief selector. The PCB spokesperson said that Inzamam-ul-Haq's resignation has been accepted as the chairman of the national men's selection committee and junior selection committee and will announce his replacement in due course. He voluntarily stepped down from his position on 30 October 2023 in order to offer the PCB the opportunity to conduct a transparent inquiry about the conflict of interest allegations, PCB spokesperson added. A five-member fact-finding

committee has been formed by the board to investigate allegations regarding conflict of interest reported in the media about the team selection process. The findings of this inquiry will be submitted to the PCB Management promptly. Earlier today in



an interview with a private news channel, Inzamam lashed out at the PCB management saying his counsel sent an email to the cricket board but neither they responded nor called the former cricketer for meeting. He said that "PCB chairman tried to save himself in his interview by issuing statements instead of talking to me" Inzamam added. Inzamam-ul-Haq is accused of being a stakeholder in a certain players' agent firm. It was also said that he selected the World Cup 2023 squad keeping in view the firm's interests. Haq also resigned as the chairman of the national men's selection committee and junior selection committee.

"I am stepping down from the post to offer the PCB the opportunity to conduct a transparent inquiry about the conflict-of-interest allegations raised in the media. If the committee finds me not guilty, I will resume my role as the chief selector" Inzamam-ul-Haq said in a statement. While talking to a private TV channel, Inzamam-ul-Haq said that he is ready for any inquiry that the Pakistan Cricket Board wants to conduct regarding his days as chief selector but is resigning for questions were raised about the transparency in the selection process for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 amid the team's failing campaign.

Briefs

SA president deploys army to tackle illegal mining

JOHANNESBURG : South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has authorised the deployment of 3,300 army personnel to help combat illegal mining activities, Ramaphosa's office said in a statement on Thursday. The deployment of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), which is expected to cost about 492 million rand (\$26 million), is aimed at maintaining law and order under "Operation Prosper". Vincent Magwenya, Ramaphosa's spokesperson, said in the statement. The SANDF was previously deployed in 2019 to the Western Cape province to fight gang violence under the same operation. "Members of the SANDF will, in cooperation with the South African Police Service, conduct an intensified anti-criminality operation against illegal mining across all provinces, from 28 October 2023 until 28 April 2024," the presidency said. Mining industry body The Minerals Council South Africa says illegal mining takes place at both disused and active mines and has dimmed South Africa's attractiveness as an investment destination.—APP

China, US achieve positive climate results

DNA

BEIJING : China said Thursday that climate talks with the United States in California had yielded "positive results" after the world's two largest greenhouse gas emitters met ahead of the COP28 summit in Dubai.

The negotiations between US climate envoy John Kerry and his Chinese counterpart Xie Zhenhua "ended successfully" on Wednesday, Beijing's Ministry of Ecology and Environment said.

The two sides "engaged in a comprehensive, in-depth exchange of views and achieved positive results on developing bilateral climate change cooperation and action", it added.

Sony defies challenges, boosts forecast

TOKYO : Japanese electronics titan Sony lifted its full-year net profit and sales forecasts on Thursday, citing strength in the company's gaming, music and image-sensor sectors.

But the firm admitted it faced headwinds and some observers said there were concerns about the hit to the bottom line caused by Hollywood strikes and underwhelming PlayStation 5 sales. Sony said it saw net profit hitting 880 billion yen (\$5.8 billion) in the year to March 2024, up from the previous projection of 860 billion yen. Annual sales were seen at 12.4 trillion yen, compared with a previous estimate of 12.2 trillion yen. "Sales are expected to be higher than the August forecast mainly due to higher-than-expected sales in the Game & Network Services, Music and Imaging & Sensing Solutions segments," Sony said in a financial statement. A weaker yen helped boost the gaming and music sectors, with the latter also buoyed by "an increase in revenues from streaming services", it said. Gaming has consistently been one of Sony's main driving forces, with the firm aiming to sell 25 million units of its new PlayStation 5. While partially offset by an expected decrease in demand among automotive and industrial infrastructures, sales in the image-sensor sector were projected to be robust thanks to favourable foreign exchange rates, the firm said. Still, Sony's net profit for July-September sank 29 percent from a year earlier to 200 billion yen. For the six months to September, net profit dropped 23 percent year-on-year to 417 billion yen.—APP



GILGIT: High Commissioner of UK Jane Marriott visits a farm during her recent visit to Gilgit-Baltistan.—DNA

Pakistani delegation visits SCO platform in China

Both parties also pledged to facilitate nongovernmental exchanges between China and Pakistan, as well as among other SCO member states

DNA

BEIJING: A Pakistani delegation led by Ali Hussain, vice president of the Pakistan House Economic and Business Advisory Committee, visited

the Trade and Economic Multifunctional Platform for SCO Countries in Chongqing, China. Hu Kaiqiang, the Secretary-General of the Platform, received the delegation and held a meeting. During the meeting, Hu Kaiqiang in-

troducted the Platform's 16 industry working committees covering sectors such as culture, tourism, education and healthcare. Ali Hussain hailed the Platform's efforts in facilitating international collaboration in different sectors and expressed

the intention to cooperate. As a research institution specializing in international affairs and policy, we have extensive connections with international think tanks that can provide valuable expertise and insights for collaboration. We

also seek to establish connections with the Platform's think tank, fostering exchanges and cooperation in international affairs." Following the constructive discussions, Pakistan House and the Platform reached an agreement to further

promote cooperation in cross-border settlement and precious metal. Both parties also pledged to facilitate nongovernmental exchanges between China and Pakistan, as well as among other SCO member states.

Police clash with 25,000 protesters in BD

GAZIPUR :Up to 25,000 garment workers clashed with police in Bangladesh on Thursday, officials said, as protests rejecting a government-offered pay rise forced the closure of at least 100 factories outside Dhaka. A government-appointed panel raised wages on Tuesday by 56.25 percent for the South Asian nation's four million garment factory workers, who are seeking a near-tripling of their monthly wage. Bangladesh's 3,500 garment factories account for around 85 percent of its \$55 billion in annual exports, supplying many of the world's top brands including Levi's, Zara and H&M. But conditions are dire for many of the sector's four million workers, the vast majority of whom are women whose monthly pay starts at 8,300 taka (\$75). Police said violence broke out in the industrial towns of Gazipur and Ashulia outside the capital after more than 10,000 workers staged protests in factories and along highways to reject the panel's offer. "There were 10,000 (protesting) workers at several spots. They threw bricks and stones at our officers and factories, which were open," Mahmud Naser, Ashulia's deputy industrial police chief, told AFP. "One of our officers was injured. We fired rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse the workers," Naser said. He said more than 100 factories were shut down in Ashulia and surrounding areas. Thousands of workers also clashed with the elite Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and police at Konabari and Naurjore in Gazipur, with police using batons and tear gas to drive them into alleys, AFP correspondents at the scene said. "Some 15,000 workers blocked the road at Konabari, and vandalised vehicles and other properties. We had to disperse them to maintain law and order," Gazipur municipality administrator Sayed Murad Ali told AFP. At least two injured workers were taken to hospital, police said. The workers are seeking a wage rise to 23,000 taka and unions representing them have rejected the panel's increase as "farfical". Police say at least three workers have been killed since the wage protests broke out in key industrial towns last week, including a 23-year-old woman shot dead on Wednesday. At least six police officers have also been injured in the protests. Unions say the panel's wage increase fails to match soaring prices of food, house rents and schooling and healthcare costs. They have also accused the government and police of arresting and intimidating organisers. "Police arrested Mohammad Jewel Miya, one of the organisers of our unions.—DNA

Ukrainian forces hold line in Avdiivka

NEWS DESK

KYIV :Russian forces, their numbers swelled by reserves, tightened their vise around the shattered eastern city of Avdiivka but Ukrainian forces are holding defensive lines, Ukrainian military officials said. The Russian military has focused on eastern Ukraine after failing to advance on Kyiv in the early days of Russia's February 2022 invasion and their troops have been pounding Avdiivka since mid-October. Online videos show apartment buildings reduced to shells, with 1,500 of its 32,000 pre-war residents remaining. Anton Kotsukon, spokesperson for the 110th separate mechanized

brigade, said Russian forces were massed on three sides of the town. "They are building up reserves. They've brought in about 40,000 men here along with ammunition of all calibres," Kotsukon told national television. "We see no sign of the Russians abandoning plans to encircle Avdiivka." Russian forces, he said, were "playing cat and mouse," sending up "huge numbers" of drones while deploying artillery forces to secure a better picture of the town's defenses. General Oleksandr Tarnavskyi, head of Ukraine's southern group of forces, said troops around Avdiivka were "stoutly holding their defenses." Avdiivka has become a symbol of Ukrainian resistance. It was seized

briefly in 2014 when Russian-backed separatists captured chunks of eastern Ukraine, but Ukrainian troops retook it and built up fortifications. Local officials said the Russians were holding back on a "third wave" of assaults after a week of heavy rain. "The third wave hasn't started yet, but they are preparing for it," Vitaliy Barabash, head of the town's military administration, told the national TV. "Today is already the second day when the weather is favorable for this." Ukrainian forces regard Avdiivka as a gateway for future advances to recapture territory in the east — the large Russian-held town of Donetsk is 20 km away. But Ukrainian analysts suggest Russia has little to gain

in a protracted drive that has already sustained high losses. "This task now has a more political nature, given the losses the Russian army has already suffered here," military analyst Denys Popovych told NV Radio. "Unfortunately, this task will continue. There will be a third wave of attacks. And a fourth." Ukraine's military launched a counteroffensive in June in the south and east, but the advances have been much slower than a campaign last year that recaptured stretches of the northeast. Russian accounts of the fighting noted strikes against Ukrainian positions near Bahmut, a town captured by Moscow's forces in May after months of battles. Reuters could not verify battlefield accounts from either side.

China urges G7 to stop 'inciting confrontation'

WEB DESK

BEIJING : China expressed strong dissatisfaction with China-related comments made by G7 foreign ministers and urged the bloc to stop inciting confrontation, its embassy in Japan said in a statement on Thursday. A two-day G7 foreign minister meeting held in Tokyo end-

ed on Wednesday and mainly called for humanitarian pauses in the Israel-Hamas war to allow in aid and help the release of hostages. In a joint statement, the G7 nations also urged China to address its non-market policies, not to assist Russia in its war against Ukraine, to keep the peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and to allow a high level of autonomy for Hong Kong.

"China will resolutely counter any smear campaigns from external forces," the embassy said, adding it strongly protested against other countries' intentions to curb China with regards to Taiwan. President Tsai Ing-wen, of the democratically governed Taiwan island, said she would continue to work with G7 members toward a free and open Indo Pacific. Critical

comments on Taiwan and Hong Kong have long riled Beijing, which considers such criticism as outside interference in its domestic affairs. Democratically governed Taiwan, which China considers as part of its territory, is the most sensitive issue. Taiwan rejects Beijing's claim. Some Western nations have also regularly reminded Beijing to better protect Hong Kong's democratic principles, freedoms and autonomy, which they say have weakened after the implementation of a national security law in 2020.

Blinken warns N. Korea, Russia military ties

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned Thursday that military ties between North Korea and Russia are "growing and dangerous"

FOREIGN DESK

SEOUL : Heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula, suspected North Korean cooperation with Russia in its war on Ukraine and concerns about China's growing aggressiveness are topping U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's agenda as he visits South Korea. Blinken was in Seoul on Thursday for talks with South Korea's leadership following a G7 foreign ministers meeting in Japan on Wednesday in which the group reviewed much of what he will discuss. The G7 "strongly condemned" North Korea's ballistic missile tests as well as its alleged arms transfers to Russia, which are both in violation of UN Security Council resolutions against the North. Even before Blinken's ar-

ival, North Korea's official news agency, the Korean Central News Agency, condemned the visit as well as one by US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, who travels to Seoul next week, describing them as "warmongers" bringing a "new war cloud" to Asia. Tensions between the Koreans are at their highest point years as the pace of both Pyongyang's weapons tests and South Korea's combined military exercises with the United States have intensified in a tit-for-tat cycle. Blinken began his talks in Seoul with a meeting with South Korean National Security Adviser Cho Tae-yong, where they discussed the growing threat posed by North Korea and its alleged provision of military equipment and munitions to Russia to help fuel Russian President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine, State De-



partment spokesperson Matthew Miller said. They also discussed the importance of US-South Korea cooperation to addressing global challenges, including "instability in the Middle East," Miller said in a statement. Blinken was also scheduled to meet South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and his Foreign Minister Park

Jin. In Japan, the G7 took specific aim at North Korea and its intensifying military relationship with Russia. "We reiterate our call for the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and demand that North Korea abandon its nuclear weapons, existing nuclear programs, and any other WMD and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner in accordance with all relevant UN Security Council resolutions," the ministers said. North Korea has been supplying artillery shells and other munitions to Russia in recent months to fuel its war efforts in Ukraine, US and South Korean officials have said, and they suspect that Kim could be seeking Russian technologies and other assistance in return to upgrade his own military. Both Pyongyang and Mos-

cow have denied the accusations that North Korea has been providing Russia with munitions. Unsurprisingly, the G7 rejected the denials. "We strongly condemn arms transfers from North Korea to Russia, which directly violate relevant UNSCRs," the ministers said. "We urge Russia and North Korea to immediately cease all such activities." On China, the G7 adopted a very similar line to that held by the US — that members are willing to work productively with Beijing as long as it respects international rules and regulations. "We underscore that China has a responsibility to uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter in their entirety," the ministers said. "We remain seriously concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas.

2023 to be warmest year on record

DNA

UNITED NATIONS :The World Meteorological Organization (WMO), a Geneva-based UN agency, said Wednesday that 2023 is "almost certain to be the warmest year on record" after October smashed temperature highs. The agency said that for the calendar year to date, the global mean temperature is the highest ever recorded, 1.43 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and sea ice in the Antarctic remains at record low levels. WMO said it expects the warming El Nino climate pattern to last at least until April 2024, contributing to a further spike in temperatures. The Head of WMO, Petteri Taalas, said that as El Nino's impacts on global temperature typically play out in the year after its development, next year "may be even warmer". While El Nino occurs naturally, it takes place in the context of climate change fuelled by "increasing concentrations of heat-trapping greenhouse gases from human activities," Prof. Taalas stressed. He warned that extreme weather events such as heatwaves, drought, wildfires, heavy rain and floods will be worse in some regions. "That is why WMO is committed to the Early Warnings For All initiative to save lives and minimize economic losses," he added. The previous warmest year on record was 2016 due to a "double whammy" of an exceptionally strong El Niño and climate change.

Kenya repays \$300 million bond

NAIROBI : Kenya will in December pay back \$300 million of a \$2 billion Eurobond that falls due next June, President William Ruto said on Thursday. The East African nation is being watched closely to see how it handles the bond due to its growing debt repayments, weakening currency and a surge in yields that has effectively locked out many frontier economies from markets. "I can now confirm ... with confidence that we will and we shall pay the debt that has become a source of much concern to citizens and markets," Ruto said in his State of the Nation address to parliament. Kenya's government is spending roughly half its revenue on debt-servicing, squeezing public finances.

Tokyo stocks open higher

TOKYO :Tokyo stocks opened higher on Thursday following rallies in some high-tech shares on Wall Street, with investors also eyeing retreating Treasury yields. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index was up 0.65 percent, or 208.67 points, to 32,375.15, in early trade, while the broader Topix index added 0.46 percent, or 10.56 points, to 2,316.51. The dollar fetched 150.89 yen, against 151.00 yen on Wednesday in New York. Wall Street stocks ended the day without major movement, with the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index ticking up 0.1 percent to 13,650.41. The market in Japan was "expected to take cues from some gains in Wall Street high-tech shares, and start higher," senior market analyst Toshiyuki Kanayama of brokerage Monex said. "The focus will be whether Nikkei will maintain the upward momentum even after a round of buying in the morning," Kanayama said. While the yield on the two-year Treasury note rose to 4.9 percent, that of the 10-year note tumbled to 4.5 percent on Wednesday afternoon. Despite "a proximate downswing in bond yields, stocks aren't showing significant relief," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said. "This shift in market sentiment may suggest that the focus has shifted from concerns about inflation to worries about economic growth." Among major shares in Tokyo, Toyota edged up 0.09 percent to 2,759.5 yen and Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing climbed 0.83 percent to 35,110 yen.—Agencies

Briefs

Seven killed in Lodhran accident

DNA

LODHRAN: Seven people, including children and women, were killed in a deadly collision between a speeding truck-trailer and a loader-rickshaw on the National Highway near Lodhran on Thursday, rescue officials said.

According to them, the unfortunate incident occurred when the speeding truck-trailer ran over the loader-rickshaw carrying labourers, killing seven of them, including children and women.

Soon after the mishap, police and rescue teams reached the spot. The police team partially cordoned off the National Highway. The injured were shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment, while the bodies of the dead were moved to a morgue for autopsy. Doctors at the hospital stated the condition of the injured was critical.

Pakstriving for accomplishment of SDG-4

ISLAMABAD: Interim Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindh presented Pakistan's perspective during a high-level debate of the 42nd UNESCO General Conference on Thursday.

Sindh stated that Pakistan had been striving to accomplish the SDG-4 (education) and was working diligently to ensure that every child had access to quality education. He also highlighted Pakistan's active participation in the revision process of the 1974 recommendation aimed at advancing equitable and universal education for global peace, harmony and development.

Sindh assured the participants of the caretaker government's commitment to the preservation and promotion of the rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Pakistan. The minister also expressed grave concern over the situation in Gaza, and regretted the double standards that were eroding the sanctity of the international laws and the UN charter. Calling for an immediate ceasefire, Sindh reaffirmed Pakistan's full support for the Palestinians. - APP

Pak to 'send back registered refugees' after illegal migrants

"We have not taken responsibility of illegal residents," Balochistan's interim Info Minister Jan Achakzai says

DNA

QUETTA: As a crackdown on illegal foreigners continues in Pakistan, the government plans to send back registered migrants as well after deporting the undocumented settlers, Balochistan's caretaker Minister for Information Jan Achakzai said on Thursday. "So far, 80,000 immigrants from Balochistan have left Pakistan. After this, [we] will send back the registered refugees as well," Achakzai said while addressing a press conference in Karachi. The minister said that the foreigners living in Pakistan should have the authentic documents. Hundreds of thousands of foreigners have got fake identification cards, he added.

"We have not taken the responsibility of the illegal residents. The crackdown on the illegal migrants will continue," Achakzai said, while warning the government in Afghanistan against giving harsh statements. "Pakistan knows how to crush all kinds of terrorism." The minister said that Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan have nosedived recently, but at the same time he noted that the deterioration in the relationship came as the nation was picking up the dead bodies. Referring to an intelligence-based operation in the Sambaza area of Balochistan's Zhob district on October 31, in which six terrorists were killed, he said all of them were Afghans. Quoting caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, Achakzai said that the stats from the last two years - since the interim Taliban government took over Afghanistan - suggest a 500%



rise in suicide bombings in Pakistan and a 60% rise in all over terrorist incidents. He also mentioned the trading of illegal American arms in Afghanistan's black market as a "national security threat", saying that the same illegal arms were also used in the attack on the PAF base in Mianwali. He said that the handful of terrorists present in the Afghan sanctuaries are using US arms against our people. Coming down hard on the Afghan government,

Achakzai said that all of the sanctuaries and terrorist training centres are operating under the Afghan authorities' noses. "When you talk on the rhetoric level that our soil is not being used. It is a fact that Afghan soil is being used against us," he asserted. The minister said that Pakistan has been hosting Afghans for the last 40 years but now it is expelling them today, so no one should have any problem with this. "We expect Afghanistan to do the same and send back the Pakistanis living there illegally," he added. He said that the country has to assert its sovereign right, which is making sure that any migrant living in Pakistan is documented. "And if we want to send anyone back, we are not supposed to take the consent from their [country's] foreign offices for doing so. It is our sovereign decision that Pakistan has taken as a state," he said. Responding to a question, Achakzai said that the Afghan government doesn't even have a plan B for this issue so it is their problem how they deal with the deportation. The minister went on to say that 800 people are fleeing every other day. Around a thousand migrants have been sent back after taking them in custody from Balochistan, he added. Achakzai then lauded the Sindh government for cooperating with the Balochistan government in the action. He further stated that the provincial government is deporting 10,000 undocumented Afghans through the Chaman border on a daily basis. He also told the media that 100,000 fake identity cards have been blocked from two regions of Balochistan. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) is swiftly working to block such cards, he added.

Myanmar army suffers big losses

DNA

YANGON: The military-installed president of Myanmar has warned that the country is in danger of breaking apart if the government cannot control fighting which has broken out in Shan State.

Former General Myint-Swe, who was appointed after a coup in 2021, was speaking at an emergency meeting held by the ruling military council to address a series of co-ordinated attacks by anti-military insurgents which have inflicted serious losses on the armed forces.

Three ethnic insurgent armies in Shan State, supported by other armed groups opposing the government, have overrun dozens of military posts, and captured border crossings and the roads carrying most of the overland trade with China. It is the most serious setback suffered by the junta since it seized power in February 2021. After two-and-a-half years of battling the armed uprising it provoked with its disastrous coup, the military is looking weak, and possibly beatable.

Gen Hamid Faiz victimised Imran's ex-aides: Aleem



DNA

TAXILA: Istihkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) President Aleem Khan has claimed that former spy chief Lt Gen (retd) Faiz Hamid victimised the now-IPP leaders during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-led government in a bid to become army chief. Addressing a public rally in Punjab's Taxila on Thursday, Aleem lashed out at PTI chief Imran Khan, saying that false cases were registered against his daughter and party's patron-in-chief Jahangir Tareen during the PTI government. Referring to the former first lady's close friend, the IPPP president "Farah Gogi was actually making a Naya Pakistan" instead of Imran. "Imran Khan is not sincere with his offspring. The one who is not even sincere with his children how

Addressing the rally, IPP leader Tareen said their party will certainly make "Naya Pakistan"

can he be loyal to us," he remarked. Speaking about the former PM's rhetoric of making Pakistan a Madinah-like state, Aleem said his wife Bushra Bibi was "filling coffers" while Imran was asking them to follow the principles of the state of Madinah. He also criticised the PTI's much-touted billion tree tsunami project, saying "billion trees leaves were eaten by goats".

The IPP president also hailed Ghulam Sarwar Khan for quitting PTI to join the IPP, saying his joining gave impetus to his party. Addressing the rally, IPP leader Tareen said their party will certainly make "Naya Pakistan". He said the IPP will give priority to the masses' issues and they will think about their issues later.

"We must use our words wisely and must not speak ill of anyone," Tareen remarked. He also thanked Ghulam Sarwar Khan for joining the IPP. Aleem along with Tareen, Khan's former close aides, launched the IPP party in June this year after they both developed differences with the PTI chief. Several PTI leaders including Fayyaz ul Hassan Chohan, Firdous Ashiq Awan, Murad Raas, Ghulam Sarwar Khan among others have joined the IPP since its launch on June 8 earlier this year.

Punjab govt revises lockdown

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Thursday revised the lockdown imposed in multiple districts of the province due to the prevalent smog. In its amended notification, the Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department of the province notified that call centres and international information technology companies will be allowed to operate during the lockdown. While markets in the eight smog-hit districts will be allowed to operate today and tomorrow; however, shopping malls and markets will be closed on Saturday and Sunday. The notification also states that cinema halls, restaurants and gyms will remain open today as per routine. The decision will remain in effect in Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Gujranwala Narawal, Hafizabad and Sialkot. A day earlier, an environmental and health emergency had been declared in Lahore, Gujranwala, and Hafizabad divisions for four days due to the prevailing smog conditions. Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi made

the announcement during a press conference on Tuesday when the air quality index (AQI) in the city measured 390, falling under the category of hazardous. At this AQI level, the city maintained its position as one of the most polluted cities with citizens experiencing a hazy and smoggy atmosphere throughout the day. The air quality was severely poor, making it nearly impossible to breathe normally outdoors. Naqvi addressed media, highlighting discussions in a detailed cabinet meeting. The meeting revealed that schoolchildren were experiencing eye and respiratory problems due to the prevailing conditions. The cabinet was informed that four times more crop burning was occurring in India than in Pakistan, contributing to the challenges faced by the region. Decisions made during the meeting included implementation of Section 144 in three districts of Punjab, along with the closure of schools, colleges, and all govt departments. Additionally, a holiday on November 9 was declared, resulting in the closure of educational institutions and government offices from Thursday to Sunday in specific districts, including the Lahore division, Wazirabad, Gujranwala and Nankana Sahib. Naqvi urged citizens to wear face masks and asked them to give Lahore some respite by staying indoors during this period. He emphasised that these measures were temporary and would be strictly enforced, with strict actions against violators.



TASHKENT: The Caretaker PM Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses the 16th ECO Summit. - DNA

Rift in Sindh caretaker cabinet widens

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (retd) Maqbool Baqar on Thursday lambasted provincial Health Minister Dr Saad Niaz for "failing to improve the performance of healthcare facilities" after he accused the former of "interfering" in his department. Differences over the cancellation of a multibillion-rupee tender have created serious rifts between Baqar and Niaz. Sources told Dawn that the tender, which pertains to the purchase of four robotic systems for the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), Gambat Hospital and Liaquat University of Medical Sciences Hospital, was last month cancelled by the caretaker health minister on the grounds that the robot-assisted procedures were too costly and should not be used for routine surgeries. The sources that an influential party was involved in the tender process and certain quarters were allegedly pressuring the health minister to change his mind. Apparently, they

said, the chief minister was not satisfied with the health minister's objection and on Tuesday he had paid a visit to the Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT) and received a briefing on the utility of robotic surgery there. The source said that senior government officials had conveyed to the health minister to reverse his decision as the tender was floated during the tenure of the previous PPP-led government and that the caretaker set-up was not authorised to take such a decision. On Wednesday night, the health minister issued a statement, saying the decision to stop the purchase of robots was taken in the light of expert surgeons. He claimed that irregularities were also noted in the purchase of robotic systems. "I have informed the chief minister of the whole situation. Even, then he interfered in the matter. The chief minister took a unilateral decision and went to SIUT and kept us uninformed about the whole situation. "We are trying to improve the state of healthcare in the little time given to us for which we need support of the chief minister

and not interference," Niaz stated. A statement issued by the Chief Minister House on Thursday said that Niaz had "failed to improve the performance of health facilities under his department and was highly offended when he was made accountable". The statement said that the interim health minister had issued "irresponsible and baseless statements" which needed to be clarified. It said that CM Baqar had visited offices, schools and health facilities with the aim of "improving their performance". "The chief minister, keeping in view the poor and pathetic condition of the health facilities, decided to convene four meetings to review their performance as he reviewed the management of schools, colleges, and revenue offices. "Surprisingly, the health minister had three review meetings concerning his department cancelled. Finally, when the fourth meeting was held, he did not attend it," the statement said. It also alleged that Niaz was trying to post his "favourite health secretary" so that he could "carry forward his personal agenda".

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