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Govt striving hard for women empowerment

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Jordan's King urges world to push for ceasefire

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Head brings India to their knees: Head

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Briefs

Muslim world should cut ties with Israel

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has called on Muslim countries to sever political ties with the Israeli regime for "at least a limited period of time" amid the occupying entity's ongoing genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip. The Leader made the remarks after touring an exhibition showcasing the latest achievements of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force at the Ashura Aerospace University of Science & Technology on Sunday. "The Muslim governments should cut their political relations with the Zionist regime at least for a limited period of time," the Leader said. Ayatollah Khamenei also urged nations to persist with their protests to prevent the oppression of the Palestinian people from fading into oblivion. He said the developments in Gaza and the continuation of Israel's atrocities there blew the lid off many hidden facts, including the Western support for racial discrimination.

PML-Q to maintain its position

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Muslim League-Q President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain stated that he would make alliance decisions while maintaining his political stance in the elections. He emphasised the ongoing party discussions on this matter and urged political parties to recognise the need for tangible actions over mere rhetoric, stressing the importance of fostering reconciliation in the country. Shujaat also stressed the critical need for tolerance in society, highlighting the role that political leadership should play in promoting it. During a meeting with his party's Lahore General Secretary Nadeem Pahlwan, discussions included possible seat adjustments in elections and campaign activities.

PTI denounces Nawaz-Blome meeting

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The spokesperson for PTI has strongly rebuffed the statement released following the meeting between United States Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome, and convicted individual Nawaz Sharif. The spokesperson denounced the contents as a significant intrusion into Pakistan's internal matters. According to the PTI representative, the declaration appears to be part of a larger conspiracy, echoing previous efforts to undermine the democratically elected government of Imran Khan. The spokesperson emphasized Sharif family's history of compromising national interests for power, alleging that Nawaz consistently traded constitutional and democratic values with both internal and external entities.

Qatar PM says

Challenges remain to hostage deal

The challenges facing the agreement are just practical and logistical," Sheikh Mohammed said

DNA

DOHA: Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said on Sunday he had growing confidence that a hostage deal between Israel and Hamas would be reached, adding challenges that remained were "very minor." "The challenges facing the agreement are just practical and logistical," Sheikh Mohammed said at a joint press conference with European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell in Doha. His comments followed a Washington Post report, citing people familiar with the deal, claiming that Israel, the United States and Hamas militants had reached a tentative agreement to free dozens of women and children held hostage in Gaza in exchange for a five-day pause in fighting. However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US officials said no deal had been reached yet. "The efforts are still ongoing ... and we communicate with both parties, whether it's with the Israelis or with Hamas, and we see there is a good progress especially happened in the last few days," said Sheikh Mohammed. "The deal is going through ups and downs from time to time throughout the last few weeks. But I think that you know I'm now more confident that we are close enough to reach a deal that can bring the people

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Al-Shifa a 'death zone', says WHO

Dozens kidnaped in Israeli Occupation Forces raids in West Bank

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: The Israeli onslaught against the people of Gaza continued for the 44th consecutive day on Sunday with hospitals in the narrow enclave ceasing to function amid bombardment on refugee camps and United Nations-run schools. The World Health Organization described Gaza's largest hospital Al-Shifa as a "death zone" announcing plans to evacuate the last remaining patients while the Israeli army said it was expanding operations to destroy Hamas. Meanwhile, Israeli bombardment targeting hospitals, refugee camps, schools and residential areas in north and south Gaza is ongoing round the clock allowing for no

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Australia win WC title Head brings India to their knees

SPORTS DESK

AHMEDABAD: Australia won the ICC World Cup 2023 after beating India by six wickets in a one-sided manner at the Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad, on Sunday. The mighty Aussies clinched their record-extending sixth World Cup, at least four more than West Indies and India who have two titles each in their trophy cabinet. Travis Head starred for the winning side by scoring a remarkable century as the left-handed batter stood tall despite his side losing three early wickets. Head trashed Indian bowlers on all parts of the ground and scored 137 runs on 120 balls with 15 fours and four sixes, showing no mercy on their opposition. Head was greatly supported by a calm and composed Marnus Labuschagne as the right-hander started his innings slowly and played while rotating the strike, providing Head the room to find the moments and hit boundaries. The two batters built a formidable 192-run partnership which guided Australia to yet another title triumph. Earlier, Pat Cummins's decision to field, primarily to avoid operating with a dewy ball in the night, bemused many but Australian bowlers, aided by some superb field-



ing, stifled their opposition. Put into bat, India rode battling half-centuries by KL Rahul and Virat Kohli to post a below-par 240 all out in exactly 50 overs at a packed Narendra Modi Stadium. India captain Rohit Sharma had been playing tone-setting knocks in their batting template in the tournament and it was no different in the final despite the early loss of Shubman Gill. Rohit smashed three sixes in his entertaining 47 but fell just before the end of the powerplay. The opener stepped out against Glenn Maxwell but miscued his shot on the offside as Head ran backwards from cover to take a tumbling catch to get rid of the India captain. Kohli (54) hit

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US lawmakers for 'suspension' of assistance to Pakistan

We are concerned about future restrictions on freedom of religion and belief, the lawmakers warned

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Eleven members of the US Congress, in a letter to US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, have urged the Biden administration to withhold future US assistance to Pakistan, until the country restores constitutional order and holds free and fair elections. The lawmakers requested a legal determination from the Department of State under the Leahy Laws and Section 502(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act to assess if US-origin security assistance had facilitated human rights violations in Pakistan. "We further request that future security assistance be withheld until Pakistan has moved decisively toward the restoration of Constitutional order, including by holding free and fair elections in which all parties are able to participate freely," they wrote.

The country's moves to further strengthen the blasphemy law also figured prominently in the letter, which warned Secretary Blinken that the proposed changes would be used to further tighten the noose around smaller religious groups and minorities. "We are extremely concerned about the passing of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2023 which will strengthen the existing blasphemy law, which has historically been used to persecute religious minorities," the lawmakers wrote. They pointed out that the bill, which is yet to be signed by the president, was "passed in haste despite repeated calls from many lawmakers for a thorough parliamentary procedure." The letter also pointed out that on Aug. 16, eight days after the bill was passed, a mob desecrated churches and set fire to homes of Christians in Jaranwala. It also referred to reported protests against the bill, including by

the Shia community in Gilgit-Baltistan. "Religious persecution remains rampant in Pakistan, and we are concerned about future restrictions on freedom of religion and belief should this Bill become law," the lawmakers warned. The move was initiated by Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, who is one of the champions of Muslim causes in the US Congress. Other signatories include Frank Pallone Jr, Joaquin Castro, Summer Lee, Ted W. Lieu, Dina Titus, Lloyd Doggett and Cori Bush. Most of them are members of the progressive group within Congress, which played a key role in highlighting the Palestinian issue in Washington and also participates in protest meetings and rallies held to demand an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. In its latest report on Pakistan, the US Commission on International Religion

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SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Alvi signing the Palestine Solidarity Wall on the occasion of the annual Foreign Office Women Association Bazaar, on Sunday. More pictures on Page 03. - DNA

Blast claims 3 in Balochistan

DNA

KECH: Three people travelling in a car were killed in an explosion on Sunday in Hoshab tehsil of Balochistan's Kech district, officials said. Kech Deputy Commissioner Hussain Jan Baloch told media that the incident took place near the Balgatar area, adding that it had claimed the lives of three people. He said Levies personnel reached the site of the incident and shifted the bodies to Turbat Hospital. DC Baloch added that investigations were under way to ascertain whether the explosion was caused by a mine planted in the ground or by an improvised explosive device planted by the roadside. On Oct 31, a policeman and four labourers were killed and two others were injured in an attack on a police station in Turbat.

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Zardari says country moving towards transparent elections

Major parties have, however, repeatedly complained about denial of level playing field in run-up to polls

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Asif Zardari, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chairman, Sunday assured the country is moving towards transparent elections as he termed the present environment "favourable" for polls. "The country is moving towards transparent elections," he said, in a statement. The senior politician also expressed confidence in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to ensure fair and transparent conduct of the elections, slated to be held on February 8 next year. The country is finally approaching a crucial general election after five roller-coaster years comprising a dwindling economy, political instability and terrorism challenges. Major political parties in Pakistan have welcomed February 8 as the next election's date, but have also

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Rivals can see Nawaz becoming next PM

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: Amid attacks from its opponents, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Information Secretary Marriyum Aurangzeb has said that her party's political rivals can see that Nawaz Sharif will become the prime minister after the February 8 elections. Addressing a press conference in Lahore on Sunday, the former federal minister said that the PML-N's manifesto will be to provide relief to the people.

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CM Naqvi opens Cardiology project

ABBAS HASHMI

MULTAN: Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday pledged the timely completion of ongoing projects and emphasized the need for continued efforts to ensure the efficient delivery of healthcare services to the masses. Following the inauguration of the Institute of Cardiology's expansion project in Multan, Mohsin Naqvi

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Encouraging job-oriented business imperative for poverty alleviation

PESHAWAR: The career options vary from person to person as per their choice, as some would opt only for government jobs, others would try their luck to get settled abroad, and some would go only for entrepreneurship—to become job creators instead of job hunters. Initially, it does not seem easy to launch a business as it carries the possibility of financial risks, but it is also possible to generate handsome revenue, as was true for Akhsaar Ali (38) who lived a satisfied life after entering the solar panel business in Peshawar, where he employed six laborers for assistance. Known as Akhsaar Lala in the solar panel market at Dalazak Road, the motivated youth wakes up early in the morning and comes to his shop after performing fajr prayer and breakfast along with his two younger brothers, Tariq Ali and Younas Khan, before going for installation. "I entered the solar panel business in 2010 after my several applications were rejected by the public and private organizations owing to lack of professional experience, and I rented a shop for Rs 1000 per month at Pabbi, Nowshera, after seeing the people's positive response towards the installation of solar panels in the wake of long hours of load-shedding in the peripheries of Peshawar and Nowshera districts," he told APP.—APP

Police always ready to serve citizens: IG

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr Usman has appreciated the CIA and Operations Wing teams for successful operation against dangerous dacoits/robbers who took families hostage in a house in the Iqbal Town area of provincial capital. IG Punjab said that the police team responded immediately to the call of 15, excellent coordination and teamwork were ensured between the CIA and the operations wing to counter the robbers. He said that despite the fierce firing by the robbers on the police, police team responded very actively and killed all the robbers in counter-firing. IG Punjab said that the Punjab Police is always alert to protect the life and property of the citizens, and will not leave any stone unturned to eradicate the anti-national and criminal elements. He directed the police teams to be on high alert to protect the life and property of the citizens and to spare no effort in fighting crime and public service. Rs12 lakh distributed for cops' treatment Inspector General of Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, is continuing the priority measures for the health welfare of the police force and their families, in continuation of which another Rs12 lakh were distributed for the health welfare of police force. According to the details, Ghazi driver of Nankana Police Constable Syed Qayyum Shah was given 03 lakh rupees for treatment. Injured constable M Munir Akhtar of Rahim Yar Khan was given Rs03 lakh for medical expenses.—DNA

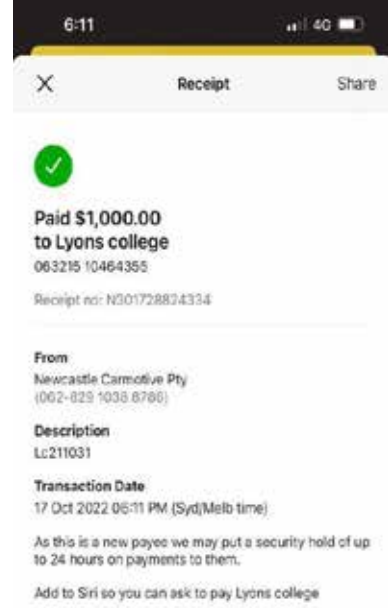
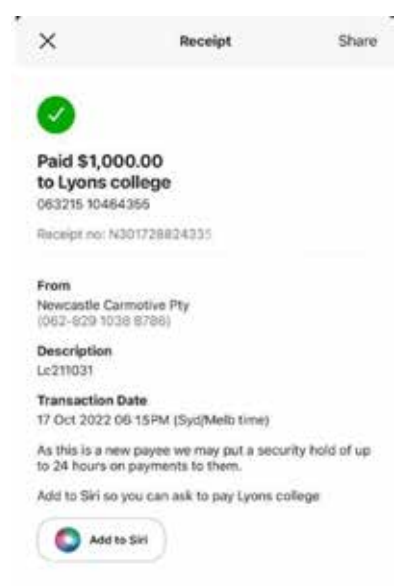
Fake institutions offering Australian education visas fleecing students

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The pursuit of an Australian education is a dream for many aspiring students worldwide, including those in Pakistan. Unfortunately, amidst the genuine aspirations, there is a growing concern about fraudulent agencies exploiting the aspirations of Pakistani students by offering fake services for Australian education visas. These unscrupulous operators jeopardize the dreams of students and tarnish the reputation of Australian education in the eyes of the international community.

In recent years, a number of fake agencies in Pakistan have surfaced, claiming to provide foolproof services for securing Australian education visas. These entities often promise guaranteed visa approvals and quick processing times, preying on the desperation of students seeking to study in Australia.

These agencies may also claim to have exclusive partnerships with Australian universities or colleges, offering admission to fictitious courses. In reality, there is no affiliation, and the students end up with non-genuine enrollment, putting their visa status



at risk.

Australian Educational Counsel (AEC) Sahiwal is one such institution which, reportedly has made huge sums by offering visas to students. Unfortunately, this institute despite extracting huge money has failed to

arrange visas for the students. A student Bilal Ali s/o Muhammad Ali has complained that he had paid required amount to the above-mentioned agency but even then, no visas has been arranged for him. Now when they approach the agency nobody is there to

entertain them, he accused. Bilal, a dedicated student, expressed his aspiration to pursue studies in Australia, highlighting his impressive educational background. He revealed that his parents, committed to supporting his dreams, sold their agricultural land to

secure the necessary finances. Subsequently, they entrusted those funds to a specific company for the purpose of facilitating Bilal's overseas education. However, to their disappointment, the agreed-upon time frame passed without the company fulfilling its commitment to send Bilal abroad for his studies. This unexpected delay has left Bilal and his family in a state of concern and frustration, as they had made significant sacrifices and arrangements in anticipation of this educational opportunity. It may be mentioned here that the Australian government is aware of these fraudulent activities and has been working to address the issue. It has issued warnings through its official channels, cautioning prospective students in Pakistan about the risks associated with relying on unauthorized agents for visa assistance. While the dream of studying in Australia is entirely attainable for Pakistani students, caution must be exercised to avoid falling victim to fraudulent schemes. By being vigilant, conducting thorough research, and using official channels, aspiring students can protect themselves from unscrupulous individuals and ensure a legitimate and successful pursuit of their educational goals in Australia.

The 37th annual general meeting and conference of the PSDE

MEHTAB PIRZADA

The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) is hosting the 37th Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE), addressing the critical theme of "Breaking the Aid-Debt Chains." This distinguished event, in collaboration with Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU), Multan, is scheduled to take place from November 20 to 23, 2023.

In the face of chronic fiscal challenges, persistent political uncertainty, and ongoing inflationary trends, Pakistan finds itself grappling with domestic and international financial obligations. PIDE's 37th PSDE Conference serves as a platform to address the pressing need to evaluate Pakistan's financial constraints and fiscal challenges, exacerbated by excessive government spending without sustaina-

ble feasibility assessments. While Pakistan has historically sought foreign aid to finance trade gaps and domestic development, decades of policy failures necessitate practical reforms and policy prioritization. The 37th PSDE Conference aims to deliberate on how international financing aligns with domestic growth agendas and seeks sustainable solutions to economic challenges, especially in the context of recent environmental catastrophes like devastating floods.

A crucial aspect to be explored during the conference is the assessment of government spending at various tiers and revenue realization against potential over the last decade. This evaluation, encompassing federal, provincial, and local levels, is vital for achieving consolidated fiscal balances and efficient governance. The role of local governments, a fundamental pillar of governance, will be scruti-

nized for its continuity and efficiency, especially in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and fostering social inclusion.

The 37th PSDE Conference will bring together economists, social scientists, policymakers, businesspersons, and various stakeholders on a single platform to deliberate on these pressing issues facing Pakistan's economy. It also provides an opportunity for young scholars to engage in the debate and learn about Pakistan's economy. Through keynote lectures, panel discussions, debates, and research papers, the conference aims to generate immediate, medium, and long-term policy steps to break the cycle of fiscal despair. The objective is to foster sustainable growth for Pakistan without resorting to quick fixes in the form of debt or aid. The highlights of this year's conference include the Quaid-i-Azam Lecture by Prof. Jeffery

Sachs of Columbia University, a special invited lecture on "Social Equity and Economic Reforms" by Luis Felipe Calva of the World Bank, a special invited lecture by Prof. Abid Aman Burki of LUMS on "Aid Effectiveness Revisited in the Context of Pakistan", a special invited lecture on "Fiscal Management for the Revival of the Economy" by Faisal Rasheed of the Oxford Policy Management, 6 panel discussions on various themes pertinent to the revival of Pakistan's economy, and technical papers on various topics.

The cohorts of PSDE's 37th Annual Conference, organized by PIDE, include the World Bank Group, UNICEF, RASTA, the Bank of Punjab, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, Saudi Pak Agricultural and Industrial Investment Company, and BZU School of Economics.

Rift within businessmen panel: Progressive panel enters FPCCI elections

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The ruling Businessmen panel in the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) is experiencing a significant internal divide even before the elections. The split into factions has dealt a major blow to the BMP. In recent months, the Businessmen Panel has witnessed significant internal discord, particularly among Sindh leaders. A faction within the panel is actively seeking to remove BMP Chairman Anjum Nisar from his position. Exploiting Anjum Nisar's personal engagements, this group

has made arbitrary decisions without Core Committee approval, bypassing the established process. Efforts by BMP Secretary General Haji Ghulam Ali to reconcile the differences within the group have proven unsuccessful. The factionalism within BMP has raised deep concerns among Anjum Nisar's supporters, fearing adverse effects on group due to the internal conflicts.

"The leading members of BMP have announced the formation of a new group, the Businessmen Progressive Panel, demonstrating their commitment to actively participate in the FPCCI

elections, setting aside internal differences. The majority of members are reported to share like-minded views. Notable BMP leaders involved in organizing the group include Khurram Ejaz, Shabbir Mansha Churra, Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Adeel Siddiqui, and Haji Yasir."

The Businessmen Progressive Panel was officially announced during the last members' meeting. Members unanimously agreed to entrust leadership to the youth, emphasizing the need for young leadership instead of retirees within the panel. The meeting was attended by 36 voters for

the upcoming FPCCI elections, along with a significant number of supporters. They vowed that under no circumstances would they allow Tariq Saeed's panel to be hijacked. They expressed their commitment to liberating BMP from individuals with capitalist and dictatorial mindsets, even if it requires their utmost efforts.

The meeting unanimously appointed former FPCCI Vice President Khurram Ijaz and Adeel Siddiqui as coordinators, empowering them to make comprehensive preparations for active participation in the upcoming FPCCI election.

Naqvi urges people to wear facemasks for week

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday said that in view of deteriorating air quality, the Punjab government had made wearing of facemasks mandatory for a period of one week.

In his message on X, previously Twitter, he said that prioritizing health was a collective responsibility of the provincial government and the people. "Please follow the guidelines in order to keep the community safe," he asserted.

Naqvi said that that decision was taken for all smog-affected districts of

Punjab in view of the deteriorating air quality. "Prioritizing health is our collective responsibility. Please adhere to the guidelines for a safer community," he urged the people in a post on his X account.

According to the notification, issued on behalf of the health secretary, smog posed a serious and imminent threat to public health in all age groups. "Hence, it is necessary to take all possible safety measures for prevention and control of airborne diseases," it stated, adding that all citizens would wear masks during all kinds of outdoor activities. The order, it said, would be implement-

ed across Lahore division, including Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhupura and Kasur districts; and Gujranwala division, including Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot, Narowal, Hafizabad, and Mandi Bahauddin districts. These areas, according to the notification, had the highest air quality index.

The wearing of masks has been made mandatory for a week – from November 20 to 26. For months now, the above-mentioned cities of Punjab, specifically Lahore, have been reeling with hazardous levels of air quality due to the onset of smog, or the 'fifth season', as it is called, towards the end of the year.

Islamabad women's chamber condemns Israel's actions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad (Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry) Founder President Samina Fazil has said that in this hour of difficulty, they express deep and unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people against Israel's atrocities and human rights violations in Palestine. She strongly condemns the international powers, the United Nations and the OIC to play their role for the solution of



the Palestinian issue, permanent peace and humanitarian aid. He expressed these views while addressing the meeting of Islamabad Women's Cham-

ber of Commerce and Industry. Founding president Samina Fazil said that in this critical moment, we stand with our Palestinian brothers and sisters and people with solidarity, compassion and hope. He condemned in the strongest possible terms Israel's atrocities, oppression and siege on the Gaza Strip, which resulted in a grave humanitarian tragedy. He said that the solution of Palestine and Kashmir issue is indispensable for lasting peace in the world. In this difficult time.

UN FAO's 40 ambitious projects to revolutionize agri in Pak

MUDASSAR IQBAL

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) on Sunday unveiled a dynamic portfolio of 40 diverse projects strategically dispersed across various regions of Pakistan. These initiatives, with varying scopes, financial parameters, and target audiences, underscore the FAO's commitment to fortifying the agriculture and food security sectors in the country. In an exclusive panel interview with the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), Country Representative Florence Rolle and Assistant FAOR (Programs) Dr. Aamer Irshad highlighted the proactive role of the FAO in numerous initiatives and programs aimed at strengthening Pakistan's agriculture and food security sectors. These initiatives span a spectrum, including

enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainability, supporting livestock and fisheries development, and implementing food security programs to alleviate hunger and malnutrition. The FAO's involvement extends beyond traditional agricultural support. The organization actively engages in sustainable natural resource management, providing humanitarian assistance during emergencies, and collaborating closely with the Pakistani government on policy development. Additionally, the FAO supports research and innovation while helping Pakistan adapt to the challenges posed by climate change.

Rolle outlined FAO's 2023-2027 priorities with Pakistan: enhancing food availability, strengthening climate-responsive planning, and improving

agricultural value chains. The focus includes nutrition policy, climate frameworks, support for enterprises, disease control, and women's empowerment in agriculture. She explained that project selection is based on a thorough consultative process, aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2027. The FAO's Country Programming Framework (CPF) for 2023-2027 involves consultations with relevant ministries, departments, academia, UN agencies, and resource partners at both federal and provincial levels. Highlighting the FAO's commitment to accountability, Rolle underscored the presence of a robust monitoring and evaluation system with units in Islamabad and across provinces. This

system plays a pivotal role in shaping program effectiveness by providing guidance based on lessons learned. Discussing assessment methods, Dr Aamer Irshad emphasized the efficiency and accuracy of modern scientific tools, particularly satellite technology, in evaluating crop damage. Rolle acknowledged challenges in assessing areas adjacent to large riverine regions and reiterated the FAO's advantage in utilizing satellite technology in such scenarios. As a UN agency, the FAO collaborates closely with governments worldwide, operating primarily in partnership with government entities at federal and provincial levels. The organization also engages with academic institutions, research organizations, and NGOs, employing a versatile approach tailored to the

specific context and needs of each project. Aamer discussed the Living Indus initiative, a government-backed endeavor where the FAO serves as the technical lead. In addressing threats to the Indus basin, she emphasized the pivotal role of mass involvement, particularly among the youth, in mobilizing support and creating awareness. Touching upon the crucial role of youth in agriculture, Rolle emphasized their significance in driving economic growth. She highlighted the need to attract educated youth to the agriculture sector, noting the sector's evolution toward precision farming, digital technologies, satellite monitoring, and research-based practices. Dr Aamer Irshad emphasized the necessity of modernizing the sector to make it more appealing to the younger generation.

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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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Monal.....0334-5421812



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Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
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Motorway Police.9270601-20
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Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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MH.....5611116
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RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



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Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

PFOWA annual charity bazaar

Late breast cancer diagnosis causes 44,000 deaths annually in Pakistan: Begum Alvi



ABID RAZA/DNA

ISLAMABAD, First Lady Begum Samina Alvi said on Sunday that nearly 44,000 women die of breast cancer every year in Pakistan due to late diagnosis and stressed that thousands of women and their families could be saved if it was diagnosed at an earlier stage, with chances of survival up to 98 percent. However, she regretted that there was a lack of awareness about the early symptoms of this disease in Pakistan. As a result, the disease kept spreading silently and proved fatal. The first lady was addressing the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association's (PFOWA) annual charity bazaar. The spouses of Islamabad-based diplomats organized stalls on the occasion depicting the culture, cuisine, and artifacts of their respective countries. The proceeds of the charity bazaar will be used for the welfare of the low-income staffers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Begum Alvi said that they had started a comprehensive, inclusive, and nationwide breast cancer awareness campaign. "One of the major challenges before us was to convey our message to women living in far-flung areas of the country. Most of the cancer cases in Pakistan were reported in the third or fourth stages, which not only made the treatment painful and expensive but also reduced the chances of survival. Apart from this, mammography, ultrasound, and screening facilities are either lacking in our country or these facilities are very expensive," she added. Referring to autism, children with disabilities, and the importance of early detection of breast cancer issues, she said that these initiatives hold immense importance, as they have the potential to save many lives. About progress on public awareness, Begum Alvi said that they had reached out to millions of mobile users across the country with the help of ring-

back tone and messages, and in this year, over 140 million SMS on breast cancer had been sent to mobile users in Pakistan. She said that now the number of cancer cases in the third and fourth stages has decreased in different hospitals in Pakistan, while the reporting of cancer cases in the first and second stages has increased. Now, mammography, ultrasound, and screening facilities are being provided at subsidized rates in different hospitals across the country, and the number of these facilities has also increased, she added. Similarly, the first lady said they had worked to shatter misconceptions, foster inclusivity, promote inclusive education and rehabilitative services, and ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWDs). "One of our aims was to bring about behavioral change in society towards them, create sensitivity in our society towards their issues, and make them feel part of

the mainstream," she added. The first lady also urged the provision of skills, training, and jobs to persons with disabilities as per their aptitude and skillset. The first lady said that they had also asked international experts on disability to contribute their energies to train teachers to impart education to children with disabilities. She opined that children with different abilities should be given the opportunity to learn and grow with other children because, in this way, they would be socialized and society would also become more aware of their special needs. About the issue of mental health and early counseling, she said that they were taking the initial steps towards building healthier communities and trying to educate the people that mental health was an important aspect of their overall health and well-being. "As per one estimate, almost 24 million people in Pakistan need mental health counseling and

services," she shared. The first lady alluded to the acute shortage of mental health facilities and trained professionals in Pakistan and said that they were making efforts to connect with trained overseas Pakistani professionals and international experts, asking them to donate their time and expertise to train and advise people in Pakistan. "Similarly, artificial intelligence, chatbots, and IT tools are being used in Pakistan to extend mental health counseling services and advisory services to people in need," she maintained. She appealed to the media to continue to talk about such issues and continue to create awareness through programs, talk shows, morning shows, dramas, news bulletins, and public service messages. The first lady also congratulated members of PFOWA, the Foreign Service community, the diplomatic corps, and private organizations for their unwavering support and contributions to the success

of this event. She appreciated PFOWA for its significant contributions to social welfare and said that the annual charity bazaar served as a testament to their unwavering dedication. Speaking on the occasion, Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Syrus Sajjad Qazi said that the annual charity bazaar featured handicrafts and cuisines from different parts of the world, and the proceeds of the bazaar would go to the charitable activities of PFOWA. He also commended the social welfare endeavors of PFOWA. Patron PFOWA Shaista Jillani said that the event was a manifestation of PFOWA's commitment to making a positive difference in society and serving the people in need. President PFOWA Sharaz Syrus Qazi, in her remarks, said that PFOWA had been endeavoring for the last 70 years to serve the people in need and contributed to the flood victims in Pakistan as well as the people of Gaza and earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria.

CDA initiates studies for recycling of capital's solid waste

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has initiated studies for recycling and disposal of the capital's solid waste intending to reduce environmental pollution which is posing a threat to the health of the general public. "The detail of studies included waste characterization studies, waste generation studies, situational analysis report, municipal solid waste (MSW) collection, haulage, treatment and disposal, rapid assessment report of landfill sites Islamabad and communication and behaviour change strategy," an official told APP. The Urban Unit Lahore carried out studies during the period from January to March 2023 with a total cost of Rs. 21.926175 million. However, this is an unfortunate fact that CDA

has been unable to develop an international system for solid waste disposal, in the capital owing to land availability and legal issues. The authority is working on developing a system whereby it will be initiating a mechanism of solid waste minimization, reuse, segregation at source and recycling of waste keeping in view the standards for optimum disposal using the method of landfilling. These activities will take an approximate time of one year. It is also pertinent to mention here that CDA launched a pilot project to segregate solid waste last year to reduce environmental pollution and use items for recycling on a commercial basis. It is a critical requirement since it enables recycling,

reuse, treatment, and scientific disposal of different components of waste. Sorting out waste makes it easier to understand how to reduce general waste output, identify items that can be reused, and set aside others that should be recycled. Waste segregation practices and a workforce that understands the importance of sorting waste prevent items suitable for recycling from being thrown away with general waste. Approximately 700 tons of solid waste are collected and transported by the Sanitation Directorate and Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) from the federal capital daily. The waste segregation also makes it easier to apply different processes-composting, recycling, and incineration.—APP

Two wanted members of bike lifter, thief gang arrested

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police Bhara Kahu police team apprehended two wanted members of bike lifter and thief gang involved in a series of bike lifting and theft incidents and recovered stolen motorbike and valuables from their possession, a public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police had started a crackdown against criminal elements involved in car and bike lifting incidents in order to save the precious lives and property of citizens. Following these directives, the police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending two wanted members of a bike lifter and theft gangs involved in a series of bike lifting and theft incidents.

CDA completes 90 percent work of installation of new led lights, repair of old street lights

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has completed almost 90 percent work of the installation of new LED lights, and repair and maintenance of old street lights along the streets, service roads, and main avenues of the federal capital. "The authority has already allocated funds in this regard last month which will not only help to ensure proper lighting arrangement on these roads and streets but also control the criminal activities in the capital," a CDA official told APP. The official said the shortage of street lights in different sectors of the federal capital caused a recent increase in street crimes, prompting residents to raise the issue with the relevant authorities. He said the CDA was also taking concrete steps to ensure the provision of urban facilities to the city dwellers and maintenance of infrastructure, including the installation of street lights, road carpeting and resolving water-related issues, neglected in the past. "Special attention is being given to the completion of the remaining development works in the sectors I, G, H and D series, provision of civic facilities, and facilitating the home builders in these sectors in pursuance of the directives of Chairman CDA Capt (R) Anwar ul Haq," he said. Now, he said the work of installation of streetlights in the main roads and within the sectors would ensure proper lighting management in sectors, G-7, G-8, G-9, G-10 I-11, I-10, I-14. Work in sectors I-16, D-12 and others is also in full swing, he added.—APP

Railways Police arrest around 3,843 accused over violations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways Police claimed to have arrested a total of 3,843 accused due to their involvement in violations of rules and laws and also registered some 3,563 cases against them in eight Railways divisions over one year. "Around 641 cases were registered in Peshawar Division, 561 in Rawalpindi, 1,037 in Lahore, 321 in Mughalpur work-shops, 389 in Multan, 206 in Sukkur, 343 in Karachi, and 65 in Quetta Division," official sources in the Ministry told media. They said the Railways Police Help Desks had been established at all the major railway stations across the country, and the performance of the Railways Police has been quite satisfactory during the last year. "The Railways Police has handed over 199 missing boys and 73 girls to their parents and 267 boys, 159 girls, and 47 women who ran away from home to their parents or siblings and the welfare organizations," they added. The sources said the lost luggage worth about Rs 14.21 million for 2,267 passengers was handed over to them. Besides, 11,213 passengers were also provided with other facilities like first aid, wheelchairs, and stretchers. Regarding the performance of the railway police, they said, "Police are performing duties efficiently despite the limited resources, and the performance of the railway police will be further improved to the optimum level during the next year."

ECP gets 2,000 laptops from HEC for ROs, DROs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In pursuance of the agreement, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had signed with the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the former has received 2,000 laptops from the latter as the general elections, 2024 are approaching fast. As per sources, the ECP had decided to give laptops to the returning officers (ROs) as well as district returning officers (DROs) so that they could perform their duties with ease. It was after feeling helpless in the face of coalition government's reluctance to hold elections despite its order, the Supreme Court (SC) finally on November 3, 2023 said that enough was enough and ordered the government to ensure the conduct of general elections on February 8, a day after President Arif Alvi and Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja unanimously agreed on the aforementioned date during a meeting held at the President's House.

Govt praised for establishing the Industrial Advisory Council

DNA

ISLAMABAD: FPCCI's presidential candidate, Atif Ikram Sheikh, lauded the government for setting up the Industrial Advisory Council and assured the full cooperation of the business community. Headed by the Federal Minister of Industry and Production, Gohar Ejaz, the council comprises reputable personalities who will advise the government to boost industrial production in the country and tackle issues confronting industrialisation proactively, he said. Atif Ikram Sheikh, who has also served as VP FPCCI, Chairman PVMA and President ICCI said in a statement issued here today that Muhammad Ali Tibba, Fawad Ahmed Mukhtar, Raza Mansha, Aamir Fayyaz Sheikh, Waqar Ahmed Malik, Abdul Samad Dawood, Shehbaz Yasin Malik, Shahzad Asghar Ali, Syed

Haider Ali, Farooq Naseem, Ahsan Bashir and Sameer Chinoy have been included in the council. Moreover, the council members include all the provincial chief secretaries, including the chief secretaries of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, the finance secretary, the commerce secretary, the industry and production secretary and the chairman of FBR. He said the council would meet every week and submit a report in 10 weeks, adding that the business community is pinning high hopes on them. The business leader said that the industry is a struggling sector in Pakistan that needs the attention of policymakers as it can resolve the issue of employment, borrowing and forex earnings. He informed that Pakistan's exports were \$25 billion in 2013. These are around \$30 billion in 2023. Imports were \$ 43 billion

in 2013 against \$ 70 billion in 2023. If the exports and imports had kept the same pace, the trade deficit would have been around \$13 to \$15 billion annually. Due to almost stagnant exports, they ranged between \$ 18 and \$ 25 billion. Thus, if the exports had kept pace with the import increase, the foreign loans of Pakistan would have been \$80 billion to \$100 billion less with a foreign exchange rate of around Rs 100 to 120 per dollar. In comparison, Bangladesh exported \$45 billion worth of clothing in 2022. This South Asian country's was around \$25 billion in 2013. India's annual textile exports stood at \$44.4 billion in FY2022. In 2013, they were around USD 24 billion. If we had followed in the footsteps of our South Asian neighbours, our exports would have been around \$45 billion.

Briefs

NDRMF to launch special web portal

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF), Bilal Anwar, announced on Saturday that the Fund will host over two dozen activities at the global climate summit COP28 in Dubai. Additionally, a special web portal will be launched to live telecast the events and share updates for media reporting and information dissemination to the public. Anwar chaired his first media face-off with environmental journalists to brief them on the Fund's transition from a disaster risk reduction financing facility to a proactive multi-stakeholder institution. He discussed the Fund's recent preparations for participation in COP28, scheduled to take place in Dubai, UAE, from November 30 to December 11, 2023. Highlighting the significance of the COP forum as an international platform, Anwar emphasized that negotiations held at COP have global legal implications for climate preservation. The Fund has issued a special newsletter and developed a dedicated website to centralize information related to the country's delegation activities, ensuring a continuous flow of information, public engagement, and inclusivity.

Court Notice

In the court off Mr. Chaudhry Amin, Additional and Sessions Judge, Wazirabad

Title: Civil Appeal Muhammad Salim son of Nawab Deen Qum Ansari Bazria Mukhtar Khas Muhammad Salim son of Muhammad Yusuf Qum But Resident of Mahalla Ansariyan Gakhar Mandi Tehsil and District Wazirabad vs

Muhammad Fazil, deceased Bazria Qaimqam, heirs Muhammad Asghar, Muhammad Arshad, Muhammad Afzal, Muhammad Akhtar, sons of Muhammad Fazil, Balqis Bibi, widow of Muhammad Fazil, Saira Bibi, daughter of Muhammad Fazil, Ogun Jat Cheema, residents of Mahalla Ansariyan, Gakhar Mandi Tehsil, District Wazirabad, Hamad Ashraf Qum Jat Cheema, Naem Ahmad, son of Abdul Kareem Qum Ansari, Uzmi Kulsom, daughter of Muhammad Javed, Qom Guraiya, Resident of Par Gakhar Mandi, Atta Muhammad, son of Ghulam Muhammad Qum Ansari, Ziaullah, son of Ahmed Khan Qum Jat Cheema, resident of Mohalla Salamatpura, Imran Qaisar, son of Muhammad Yusuf Qum Kashmiri, Naem Tahir, son of Nawab Din, resident of Mohalla Ansari, Gakhar Mandi Tehsil, District Wazirabad.

The public is informed everywhere through newspaper advertisement that if anyone has any excuse against the claimants, he/she should appear in this court on 1-12-2023 at 9:00 am to follow the case and answer the case, otherwise the action will be taken unilaterally. No excuses will be accepted later. The handwritten letter and seal issued by the court.

Sino-Pak workshop on livestock disease control

According to the report, as a manifestation of their recent commitment, the Department of Pathology at the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Faisalabad, and China Agriculture University in Beijing had jointly organized the Workshop on Control of Major Livestock Diseases

DNA

ISLAMABAD, Nov. 18 (): Pakistan and China acknowledged the untapped potential for agricultural cooperation, this was noted at a Workshop on major Livestock Disease Control held in Faisalabad.

The workshop was the part of third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. During the workshop, Pakistan and China acknowledged the untapped potential for agricultural cooperation within the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Both sides agreed to enhance collaboration in areas including "crop cultivation, animal and plant disease prevention, agricultural mechanization, technology exchange, and trade in agricultural products". According to the report, as a manifestation of their recent commitment, the Department of Pathology at the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Faisalabad, and China Agriculture University in Beijing had

jointly organized the Workshop on Control of Major Livestock Diseases". Pakistani and Chinese experts shared their views on the control of major diseases in animals in Pakistan. The inaugural session of the seminar was chaired by Professor Dr. Farzana Rizvi, Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science. In her opening remarks, she highlighted the significance of collaborative efforts in addressing the challenges faced by the livestock industry, underscoring the importance of sharing expertise

and fostering cooperative strategies for disease management. Professor Dr. Cheng He from China Agriculture University shared his expertise on preventive veterinary medicine and innovative measures for major animal disease control. Dr. He, who has contributed to zoonotic infection originating from animal industry and human health, shared his experiences with the participants and highlighted Sino-Pakistan cooperation in animal sciences. The ten-member Chinese experts shared their

experiences with Pakistani counterparts regarding major diseases in animals. They highlighted key areas for Sino-Pak cooperation in the livestock sector. Dr. Sajjad Hussain, Director of General Research, Livestock Department Punjab highlighted key areas of cooperation between China and Pakistan, informed the participants about the prevalence of the Congo virus in animals, and detailed the initiatives undertaken by the government of Punjab to address this issue.



ISLAMABAD: Nov 18-Youngsters are participating in the different games during the "Family Gala" at Indonesian Embassy in Federal Capital. —ONLINE

Mafia finalises nationwide sugar crisis plan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Sunday that the sugar mills mafia has prepared for a new sugar crisis in the country to reap illegitimate profits. Like last year, the mafia aims to rob people with low incomes of at least one hundred billion rupees amid skyrocketing inflation, he said. He informed that a new plan had been made

to export five lakh tonnes of surplus stock, and efforts are being made to get permission for it. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that after getting the permission to export sugar, the prices would be increased in the local market on one pretext or another to plunder the populace. Last year, the government granted permission to export sugar on the pretext of surplus sugar, increasing the prices in the local market. A

price hike in the presence of surplus stock defies market logic. He warned that sugar millers should not be allowed to export sugar this time; otherwise, they would engineer an artificial crisis for which the masses would have to pay. He said the crushing season is starting, but the governments of Sindh and Punjab need to be on one page. The official purchase price of sugarcane in Punjab is 400 rupees per maund, while in Sindh, it has been fixed at 425 rupees, which has

caused instability in the market. The farmers of Punjab want the same rate as Sindh, but they need to be heard. Due to this price difference, the farmers of Punjab will suffer a loss of up to twenty thousand rupees per acre, which is unbearable for them. Shahid Rashid Butt said that this year, the positive results of action against hoarders and profiteers had come out. Still, the sugar mill owners got away with it, and there is little possibility of any effective action against them in the future.

Cutting educational expenses through novel methodologies

ISLAMABAD: As continuously increasing education expenditures were reaching beyond parents capacity, experts believe that modern and novel teaching methodology could be one of panacea to address this issue. In a tug of war between the parents and owners of private educational institutions, either the students miss the opportunities of quality education or the lives of their parents become miserable. The owners, despite earning significant profit, are often seen complaining of extra expenditures in running their institutions due to the price hike of essentials. If, for a moment, their claims were accepted, there could have been no justification for them to continue with this business if there was no profit. But they go with it, and the easy way to recover their expenditures is to shift the burden to parents through an increase in fees. Therefore, educational experts have come up with the notion of adopting proper planning, the use of the latest technologies, and a systematic approach to reducing education costs at schools. For them, it might initially seem counterintuitive to invest in new technology. However, choosing the right software and tools can reduce the need for working capital and minimize the use of material resources. "In many cases, private institutions are charging hefty amounts, and the government should actively engage with them to get fee structures rationalized," remarked former Vice Chancellor Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) Dr. Shahid Siddiqui. "When they are earning millions of rupees, the chargeable amount is becoming unbearable even for middle-class parents, while kids of poor people cannot even think of studying at these institutions." "The government and the owners of private institutions should sit together and think out a way forward to address this issue," he added. He pleaded in favor of the idea of distant learning through the latest online techniques and said.—APP

PTDC's remarkable achievements highlighted in promoting country's tourism

He said that Minister of State for Tourism, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Wasi Shah had unveiled that TIC would set up at Gawdar International Airport to facilitate the tourists about their destination

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) has made remarkable achievements in the tourism industry and its promotion by marketing country's natural landscape, history, culture and archaeological sites being providing facilities to tourists. Talking to APP, the PTDC official said that the corporation was working effectively according to the vision to develop the tourism sector as a national priority in a sustainable and acceptable manner, taking full advantage of regional and international trends and developments. He said, "PTDC is projecting the country as a tourist friendly destination in bringing Pak tan amongst top five tourist destinations of Asia and marketing of tourist places at home and abroad through tourism show and exhibitions to generate revenue." "Tourism sector is contributing a lot to national exchequer as well," he added. The official said, "The tourism organization is to act as a catalyst in encouraging the private sector to play active role in tourism promotion and development." It was developing infrastructure and services within the country to facilitate the tourists. He said, "It has already established Tourist Information Centers (TIC) at various airports to provide accurate information to foreign and local tourists." He said that Minister of State for Tourism, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Wasi Shah had unveiled that TIC would set up at Gawdar International Airport to facilitate the tourists about their destination. He said, "PTDC with collaboration of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has kicked off an effective cleanliness campaign at various parks of the federal capital to ensure neat and clean environment to attract large number of tourists in a healthy ambience." Official said the campaign launched aimed at ensuring clean environment to urge the tourists to maintain cleanliness at tourist spots of the capital city as a number people from various parts of the country through to the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi for recreation and tourism purposes.—APP

Trade Associations urge CDA to focus on development works in markets

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Presidents of market associations of Islamabad during a meeting at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) showed concerns that the CDA is not doing any development works in markets due to which the traders are facing lot of problems and urged that the CDA should focus on development works in all major markets to facilitate the growth of trade activities. Addressing the office bearers of market associations, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that traders are paying various taxes to the CDA and are making significant contribution to its revenue, therefore, it is the responsibility of the civic body to develop markets on modern lines for smooth growth of trade activities. He said that with the efforts of ICCI, CDA has allocated spaces in various markets for the installation of filtration plants and assured that ICCI would keep pushing CDA for the uplift of markets. He said that ICCI in collaboration with market associations is planning to organize a winter festival in Islamabad and hoped that all markets would fully cooperate in making the festival successful.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that unity among traders is the key requirement to get their issues resolved and assured that the ICCI would keep fighting for their cause. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI said that the business community is the main stakeholder towards the revenue generation of the CDA and the civic body should compensate them by ensuring better development of all the markets. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari is making all out efforts for resolving the key issues of the business community and assured that he would continue to work closely with the CDA to start the needed development works in the markets. Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi former President ICCI, Ajmal Baloch President and Akhtar Hussain Secretary General Aabpara Market, Shehzad Shabbir Abbasi President Super Market F-6 Markaz, Asad Aziz President Jinnah Super F-7 Markaz, Raja Hassan Akhtar President Blue Area, Azhar Iqbal President Melody Market, Syed Altaf Hussain Shah President.

13th Pakistan mountain festival from Dec 2

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: All set to kick off a 10-day long 13th edition of Pakistan Mountain Festival to mark the International Mountain Day with the Margalla Hills Trail-3 hiking, clean-up, and mountain biodiversity talk on December 2. It would be followed by a live painting competition on the theme "Mountain Ecosystem" at the Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) Rawalpindi on December 4. Other events will include exhibition of paintings, Pakistan Mountain Youth Forum, screening of documentaries, and mountain products and cultural showcasing. Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed who is the founder of Pakistan Mountain Festival too, briefing about the series of events said: The festival will conclude with a grand combo of events including a conference on mountain conservation, sustainable tourism and cultural Heritage in the Changing Climate. Other attractions of the grand event will be mountain food stalls, handicrafts, folklore, cultural and musical performances by the troupes from Gilgit, Baltistan, Hunza, Chitral, and Swat. Munir Ahmed said as many as twenty best professionals will be given away 4th Pakistan Mountains Pride Awards (PAMPA) while some will receive Friends of Mountains Awards (FOMA). National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) and Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) have consented to support the grand ceremony of awards. The Pakistan Mountains Pride Awards (PAMPA) are dedicated to the five living legends in their fields and given to the best professionals that have devoted their lives for the mountains and its natives. The Pakistan Mountains Pride Awards include one Agostino Da Polenza Mountain Conservation Award, four Shoaib Sultan Khan Mountain Community Development Awards, two Nazir Sabir Mountaineering Awards, one Ashraf Aman Sustainable Mountain Tourism Award, two Ustad Jan Ali Mountain Music Awards. PPAF launched four Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) awards last year. From this year onward, we are including the Raja Changez Sultan Himalayan Odyssey Award for the artist that has been passionately painting mountains over the years, Munir Ahmed said. Speaking about the objectives of the Pakistan Mountain Festival (PMF) and Pakistan Mountains Pride Awards (PAMPA) Munir Ahmed said: Usually, we don't see the gradual impact of climate change on life, livelihood and as a stress on the ecosystems and natural resources until any big disaster happens. Only then, mountains and its people get due attention. On the other hand, the mountain landscape and culture are changing too while the folklore and heritage also remains neglected. Not much is done to consistently mainstream the mountains downstream where the actual decision-makers are sitting. People living downstream play a key role for the mountain inhabitants. So, they shall constantly be reminded of the mountain issues, and the mountain culture and heritage conservation.

Tourists to use precautionary measures due to dense fog

ISLAMABAD: Tourists thronging from various parts of the country to Punjab's historical and religious sites should use safety and precautionary measures to avoid untoward incidents due to dense fog. Speaking to media, the Pakistan Tourism Development Authority (PTDC) official said that an advisory had been issued by the National Highways and Motorways Police as dense fog had gripped all parts of the province. He said the provincial government had launched an emergency to save the lives of the people and announced a holiday in educational institutions while markets remained closed in Punjab on Saturday. He further said the government advised the tourists to stay indoors and refrain from unnecessary travel from one place to another, adding that tourists might face various diseases due to smog waves. Officials said that the purpose of closing the motorways in foggy hours during the night is to prevent mishaps and protect the lives of tourists. He said the tourists were requested to complete their journey and reach their destinations before the onset of fog, adding that they should use fog lights in vehicles to avoid untoward incidents. It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan, a land of unparalleled beauty and diverse landscapes, has long been a hidden treasure in the world of tourism. Its majestic mountains, serene valleys, arid deserts, and lush green plains offer a wealth of experiences for adventure seekers and nature enthusiasts.—DNA

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'Safe zone' not the remedy for cycle of violence

Even as reports appeared on Saturday saying that Israel, Hamas and the United States had reached a tentative agreement on a five-day pause in the fighting in Gaza to enable the freeing of dozens of hostages from Hamas' control, Israel attacked the al-Fakhoura school and the Tal Azzatar school in the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza, with reports of dozens killed. Both schools are run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and were sheltering many people when they were bombed by Israel. The attacks have been viewed as a deliberate insult to the UN, its relief organizations and its humanitarian values, and constitute a new violation against civilians in Gaza, particularly after the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling for a humanitarian pause in the fighting, the first resolution passed since the conflict erupted on Oct 7. The countries that have influence on either side in the conflict should waste no time in intensifying their mediation efforts. If the reported agreement can be translated from words on paper into actions in Gaza, as well as securing the release of the hostages, it would also provide a window of opportunity for the besieged Palestinian enclave to receive humanitarian aid and a chance for a more permanent cease-fire to be brokered. While the Israelis have shown their ability and resolve to achieve their objective of "cleansing" at least northern Gaza for a future "safe zone", force will not bring an end to the cycle of violence that characterizes the animosity between the two sides. Without respecting the will of the Palestinian people, the "safe zone" Tel Aviv is trying so hard to establish will only be wishful thinking. It should draw the right lessons from the on-and-off conflict between the two peoples since the 1948 Palestine war. The root cause of the Palestinian question lies in the long delay in realizing the Palestinian dream of an independent state and the failure to redress the historical injustice suffered by the Palestinian people. There is no shortage of injustices in the world, but the injustice done to the Palestinian people has dragged on for over half a century. Founding a State of Palestine is the crux for the Palestinians and Israelis to coexist in peace and for the Arabs and Jews to live in harmony. Only when the two-state solution is fully implemented can the Middle East truly enjoy peace and Israel enjoy lasting security. The right way to advance the two-state solution is to resume peace talks as soon as possible, rather than having a pause that will only be a respite in the violence.



China-Japan ties can take meaningful turn for the better

Good China-Japan ties are not just in the interest of the two countries, but also in the interest of regional peace and development. But Tokyo's actions in relation to historical issues and its wrong perception of China, which has been encouraged by Washington, has made improving ties difficult. Will China-Japan relations realize a turn for the better? This will undoubtedly be the hope of many in both countries and Asia as well after the meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting in San Francisco last week. The fact that the leaders of the two countries discussed thorny issues such as the Taiwan question, the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water from the damaged nuclear power plant in Fukushima, as well as economic ties between the two countries suggests that both sides are serious about trying to improve bilateral relations. Notably, a "strategic relationship of mutual benefit" was mentioned in their discussions. In a joint statement in 2008, the two countries agreed to pursue a "mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests" designed to ensure frequent leadership exchanges on issues such as security and economic cooperation. But the phrasing has been used less frequently in recent years as differences between the two countries on issues such as territorial claims, trade tensions, Japan's rhetoric on the Taiwan question and what Japan has said or done in favor of Washington's strategy to contain the rise of China have damaged the ties between the two neighbors. Talk of a "strategic relationship of mutual benefit" in this meeting is obviously a positive development, and it would be a boon for the two countries, and beyond, if that was to materialize. That both sides agreed to try to resolve the issue related to the Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water through consultations certainly sends a message that both sides attach importance to improving bilateral ties. This year marks the 45th anniversary of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan. Xi said the treaty, in a legal form, stresses opposition to hegemony and sets the overall direction for peaceful bilateral cooperation. It is a momentous milestone in the history of the two countries' relations. Xi also said that the two sides should view each other's development in an objective and rational manner. His remarks hit the nail on the head. Japan needs to recognize that China's development will only provide more opportunities for Japan's economic growth and vice versa. Japan also needs to be aware that however developed China becomes, China will not seek hegemony, which has been verified by what it has done in its cooperation with countries under the Belt and Road Initiative framework. It is imperative for Japan to realize that it will not benefit by joining the United States in its geopolitical game, which will only cause damage to the foundation of China-Japan relations and lead to regional tensions. There is more than enough reason for China and Japan to meet each other halfway in promoting their bilateral ties for the lasting peace and development of Asia and the world at large.

Does Pakistan exist on this planet ?

Qamar Bashir



They're leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) to revolutionize automation and predictive analytics, while pushing the boundaries of quantum computing to solve previously insurmountable problems. Meanwhile, on the frontier of scientific innovation, high-precision biotechnology and genetic engineering are making significant strides, propelling breakthroughs in medicine, agriculture, and other critical sectors, including pioneering gene editing techniques to combat genetic diseases

Aitzaz Ehsan, an esteemed parliamentarian and lawyer, offered a thought-provoking perspective when he remarked that "Pakistan lives on another planet." His statement resonates with a sentiment suggesting that in Pakistan, constitutional adherence and the rule of law often take a back seat, with brute power seemingly overtaking these principles. While some may contest this broad assertion, there's an undeniable perception that corruption is not merely a problem but a normalized aspect of the system. Elections, to some extent, seem more of a ratification rather than a choice by the people, where the upcoming government appears pre-selected. The parliament often functions as a formality in passing laws, frequently overridden without repercussions. Significant decisions are made and executed without involving the civilian government, raising concerns about transparency and accountability. Moreover, the value of competency and merit appears diminished, and the nation's priorities seem disconnected from global standards and critical issues. While Pakistan grapples with its ongoing challenges and existential issues, the global landscape is sprinting ahead in a fervent pursuit of cutting-edge technologies. Countries worldwide are actively engaged in the creation, management, and utilization of vast troves of big data. They're leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) to revolutionize automation and predictive analytics, while pushing the boundaries of quantum computing to solve previously insurmountable problems. Meanwhile, on the frontier of scientific innovation, high-precision biotechnology and genetic engineering are making significant strides, propelling breakthroughs in medicine, agriculture, and other critical sectors, including pioneering gene editing techniques to combat genetic diseases. While Pakistan's research institutions grapple with financial constraints and face challenges even to disburse salaries to their employees, the global research and development community is forging ahead, engineering crops resilient against pests and diseases, thereby bolstering food production in developing nations. Moreover, the relentless pursuit of renewable energy sources and cutting-edge energy storage solutions is steering sustainability efforts, complemented by materials science innovations crafting sturdier and lighter materials. The Internet of Things (IoT) is ushering in smarter cities and industries, while space technologies carve paths into new frontiers of resource exploration. Concurrently, biomedical innovations are refining personalized medicine, while domains like cybersecurity, privacy technologies, advanced manufacturing, and space exploration herald a future replete with transformative possibilities poised to reshape industries, economies, and societies. In Pakistan, our state institutions and intelligentsia appear engrossed in a counterproductive trajectory. Rather than advancing the nation's interests, they seem fixated on pre-election manipulation and the relentless pursuit of political vendettas. Their efforts are dedicated not

to progress but to fabricating evidence, orchestrating arrests, and subjecting perceived political threats to humiliation and torture. Concurrently, our media channels relentlessly bombard audiences, both domestic and international, with a narrative that paints our leaders, state apparatus, and citizens as inherently corrupt. They portray our business community, industrialists, traders, and even the general populace as complicit in plundering national resources, transferring wealth abroad, and perpetuating poverty at home. This self-perpetuating cycle has led Pakistan to concerning global rankings: 169th out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index, 105th out of 139 countries on the Rule of Law Index, and 5th out of 163 countries on the Global Terrorism Index. On indices of global peace, human development, quality of life, democracy, and press freedom, Pakistan's rankings are equally disheartening. In education, Pakistan stands at 62nd out of 115 countries on the Education Index. The Pakistani passport, positioned at 109th on the Guide Passport Index, stands as the 4th lowest-ranking passport globally. These indices collectively reflect the pressing need for transformative change in Pakistan's socio-political landscape. Our media appears dedicated to amplifying narratives that undermine our global standing by highlighting a plethora of negative aspects. News coverage often centers on violence, terrorism, high-profile cases like the Faizabad Dharna case, instances of citizens disappearing, cybercrimes, pre-election rigging, allegations of horse trading, controversies like the Toshakhana case, and a myriad of social issues. The focus extends to electricity and gas theft, hoarding, smuggling, traffic law violations, illegal financial activities like hawala and hundi, and the presence of illegal aliens. This relentless focus on negative incidents paints a picture where our country seems immersed in a culture of illegality and instability, potentially impacting our reputation on the global stage. The world's media was buzzing with two major events in November 2023: the ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israel, and the highly anticipated meeting between US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in San Francisco. The Joe-Xi meeting yielded significant outcomes on several pressing global issues, including climate change, nuclear security, and trade. Both leaders pledged to maintain open dialogue, acknowledging shared global challenges and emphasizing peaceful competition. They signaled a desire to manage their rivalry responsibly and promote a rules-based order. A key decision was the restoration of military communication channels between the US and China, which had been severed following US Senator Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August 2022. This move aimed to reduce the risk of conflict and promote stability in the region. The global significance of these events, often underplayed in Pakistani media, underscores the need for our leadership to delve deeper. It's crucial for Pakistan to scrutinize the meeting between

two top leaders, decipher their implications, and identify areas impacting our interests. This requires strategic and tactical adjustments, along with a thorough analysis of the statements made, discerning not just the apparent but also the nuanced intentions. There's an urgent call for Pakistani leadership across sectors to prioritize the nation's welfare over personal agendas. It's essential to transcend divisive approaches and concentrate efforts on uplifting the 95 million people currently trapped in poverty. Learning from China's remarkable feat in lifting 900 million citizens out of poverty, there's a pressing need for innovative strategies and a collective commitment toward socio-economic advancement. Pakistan's leadership has an invaluable opportunity to leverage its strong ties with China, a global economic powerhouse, and its influential President, to chart a course towards development. Emulating China's successful economic reforms of 1978 could be a blueprint for Pakistan's growth, emphasizing market-oriented reforms, nurturing private enterprises, and attracting foreign investments through the creation of special economic zones. Learning from China's proactive investment in education and infrastructure, Pakistan can catalyze improvements in literacy rates and enhance its workforce's skills and economic productivity. Shifting focus from trivial issues, Pakistan can draw inspiration from China's export-led growth strategy, understanding and implementing the methodologies that propelled China to become a leading global exporter of manufactured goods. Moreover, learning from China's restructuring of its governance model, Pakistan could transition from a static and unresponsive system to a proactive government. By strategically supporting key industries and implementing policies to attract foreign investments while safeguarding domestic businesses, Pakistan can foster a more dynamic and competitive economic environment. It's vital for us to move beyond the self-defeating narrative that paints our nation as corrupt and directionless. Instead, we should aspire to emulate the Chinese model of rapid progress, focusing on economic transformation, enhanced living standards, poverty alleviation, and bolstered sectors like education and healthcare. Recognizing the destructive trajectory we're on, it's imperative to comprehend that this path undermines the very fabric of our society. It also serves as a recipe for a continued decline in Pakistan's international standing, impacting various global ratings and indices used by nations, institutions, traders, and businessmen to gauge meaningful relationships with countries. Let us make a collective commitment to address internal challenges and pursue a trajectory that uplifts the nation and its citizens and prove the statement of Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan wrong. China did it, so can we.

—The writer is Former Press Secretary to the President Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France Former MD, SRBC

Pakistan and Russia are shaping new era of relationship

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Asia is a gold mine of opportunities and choices for the major powers. Significant location of Pakistan in the region attracts major powers as well. Change in geopolitics with opportunities and choices leads regional states towards decisive shift in their foreign policy. Russia is opening eyes and looking to be a regional hegemon. Although Pakistan and Russia have no history of good relationship but the strategic realities gave birth to the current shift which is much positive for both Islamabad and Moscow. Pakistan-Russia has past of adversary but today, both are welcoming the idea of building and stimulating strategic relationship. Pakistan wants to build better relationship with Russia to reduce dependency on United States. Islamabad wants to prove to Washington that it has as another strategic option if there is any tension happens between Pakistan and United States. Washington never likes Moscow's influence in Islamabad. There are differences between Pakistan and the United States over drone attacks. According to some analysts American hegemony is near to end in the region and Pakistan does not like to become overly ally of United States and dependent on it. In fact, the increasing relationship between India and America motivates Pakistan to look for new friends and alliances. Pakistan also likes to drive wedge between India and Russia by improving relations with Moscow. Pakistan also has an eye of Russian military equipment supply and technology assistance that is better than China. Pakistan wants to gain much commercial incentive from Russia for example Karachi to Lahore Pipeline and Russia is also interested in renovation of Pakistan Steel Mill. According to some reports Russia may join CASA-1000 energy project providing electricity to Afghanistan and Pakistan. On the other hand, today Russia is interested

in Pakistan by its strategic location being very next to Afghanistan and Central Asian states. Although both the countries do not share borders but have same geopolitical space. Moscow has long considered Islamabad as a troublemaker for Russia and supporter of terrorism in the region. Russian motivation is to convince Pakistan to be moderate and subdue Islamic radicalization and militancy in the region. Pakistan is a Muslim state which has great influence in the Muslim world and Russia also has a large number of Muslim populations. Russia thinks that Pakistan can play vital role for the stable Afghanistan. Moscow hopes, after the withdrawal of American forces, Russia will find the strategic place in the region and then it will be able to play better role in the Indo-Pacific region. Russia also hopes that its understanding with Pakistan will decrease terrorism in Afghanistan and the region. It is also building relations with Pakistan to counter alignment between India and United States. Pak-Russia relationship can impede India from getting close United States. Indian tendency toward Israel and United States for advance weapons and technology encourages Russia to look for new markets for her arms sale. Moscow's proposition to Islamabad, Pakistan can be a part of Russian strategy to play significant role in the region. On the issue of Ukraine, Russia is being isolated and has few friends in the international sphere. The aftermath Ukraine issue Russia is looking for new friends who may help her and challenge the West. Islamabad and Moscow first time noticed each other in 2009 when Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia and Tajikistan floated to promote regional security and economics. This quadrilateral idea held three meetings and did not take off due to cancellation of Putin's expected visit of Pakistan for the fourth meeting in 2012. President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari had visited Russia in 2011 and Army Chief visited Moscow during 2012. There were reciprocal visits continued by ministers and high level officials of both the countries. Russian defense minister Sergei Shoigu visited Pakistan in 2014 since the last 45 years. During this visit the both countries agreed on information exchange on politic-military issues; cooperation for promoting international security, counterterrorism and arms control activities; collaboration in various military fields and other areas of education, medicine, topography, hydrography, cultural and experience sharing in peacemaking efforts were signed. In August 2015, Moscow agreed to provide Mi-35M helicopter to Pakistan. Pakistan wished to buy 20 Mi-35Ms over the next year and got four helicopters in 2017. In addition, both the countries enhanced military relations and joint military exercises were made between the two armies under the slogan of Druzhb

ha (Russian word meaning friendship). Russian naval forces also participated in Aman-17 international exercise in Arabian Sea, hosted by Pakistan in 2017. Further both countries agreed about coordination against terrorism and drug trafficking. Russia had already cooperated in outer-space exploration and helped in launching Pakistani telecommunication satellite Al-Badar in 2001. It also had refurbished the only Pakistani steel mill. An agreement of \$2 billion for the North-South gas pipeline was signed in October 2015 which would connect Lahore to Karachi terminal. This agreement was signed on the first visit of Pakistan by Russian energy minister. 1100 kilometer pipeline is anticipated to be completed in 2018. The Russian company will complete this project and will use for 25 years. In the energy sector, both states are collaborating as well and have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Moscow between Russia's Gazprom International and Pakistan's Oil and Gas Development Company Limited on July 3, 2017. The project will fulfill the energy requirement of Pakistan. This understanding was for mutual cooperation and joint ventures and use of state of art technology that would aid exploration and development in Pakistan. This is the beginning of commercial ties between these two countries. The increasing cooperation between Pakistan and Russia should be viewed in the context of Afghan scenario which had created challenges for Moscow. Pakistan is considered an important country for the stabilization in Afghanistan. Without constructive involvement of Pakistan, the problems of Afghanistan and stability are a dream. During the last six decades, very few Pakistani leaders and officials visited Russia. Whenever whoever visited yielded positive result; Tashkent declaration in 1966 and Pakistan Steel mills in 1970s. Pakistan has revisited her foreign policy during the 21st century and gave importance to neglected states. When president of Pakistan visited Russia in 2002, a joint work group on strategic stability, counterterrorism and inter-governmental Commission were established. Regular meetings of these groups have been held since then. Russia also seems accommodating Pakistan. Russia condemned the Salala Post attack by NATO on November 26, 2011 and issued the friendly public statement. And it also supported Pakistan on closure supply to NATO in Afghanistan through Pakistan. Russia has supported Pakistan to be a member of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and to be part of Russian security mechanism. Shanghai Cooperation Organization is an important initiative to counter American influence and to bring peace and stability in the region. The membership of SCO will enhance the strategic and regional importance of Pakistan.

There is a strong potential of Pak-Russia relations in steel production, communication, and space technology and energy sector. Pakistan should embrace these choices because it has much learnt from past errors and mistakes. There is common perception in Pakistan that its policy of ignoring nearer countries and aligning the distant ones cost her politically, economically and strategically. These alliances could not become successful to achieve all ideals of Pakistan such as Kashmir issue and security against India. Washington has enhanced relationship with India and is projecting it as a regional power. It did not fulfill the promise which it had made in the beginning of the relations. It also did not make Pakistan a progressive and modern society but turned in to radical and fragmented society. In fact, the ideal of choosing the democratic west against the authoritative east resulted in long and consistent spell of dictatorship in Pakistan. Comparatively India chose the other way round always had a stable and functional democracy in the country. Although Pakistan and Russia are being close but Pakistan will never jeopardize its relations with Washington. Washington is providing military aid and financial assistance to Pakistan but getting tension by Pak-Russia romance. Russia understands Indian concerns and believes that Moscow and Islamabad rapprochement will normalize the hostile situation between India and Pakistan. The historical back ground of India-Russia relationship is very strong and Russia will never like to lose India. However, it is expected that there will be a period of much more intensive and extensive interaction between these two countries. Pak-Russia rapprochement should not surprise the regional powers due to current geopolitical churn in global politics. Pak-Russia relationship may become true strategic partnership in future. If Russia improves strategic relations with Pakistan it might be able to influence Pakistan to play constructive role in Afghanistan and not to act against India. This would be a regional interest as regional powers like to see stability in Afghanistan. If Russia goes ahead to defense cooperation with Pakistan it would be detrimental to Indo Russia relationship and Pakistan is a smaller market than India for Russia. Russia may lose some major contract which it has made with India recently. Both India and Russia have the history of relationship and India has never openly criticized Russian policies over Ukraine. And both the countries are members of several multilateral organizations like BRICS, RIC and SCO. Although India has expressed its concerns about Pak-Russia growing cooperation on several times but Russia believes that Pak-Russia rapprochement will normalize Indo-Pak hostile attitude. It seems that Pakistan and Russia are going to forge true strategic partnership.

Briefs

Challenges remain to hostage deal

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safely back to their home." The hostage release could begin within the next several days, barring last-minute hitches, according to people familiar with the detailed, six-page agreement, the paper said on Saturday. The report comes as Israel appears to be preparing to expand its offensive against Hamas militants to southern Gaza after air strikes killed dozens of Palestinians, including civilians reported to be sheltering at two schools. Under the agreement, all parties would freeze combat operations for at least five days while 50 or more hostages are released in groups every 24 hours, the Post reported. Hamas took about 240 hostages during its Oct. 7 rampage inside Israel that killed 1,200 people. The pause also is intended to allow a significant amount of humanitarian aid in, the newspaper said, adding the outline for the deal was put together during weeks of talks in Qatar.

Al-Shifa a 'death zone', says WHO

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respite even as Hamas fighters continue to resist. At least 31 Palestinians were killed in separate strikes at the Nuseirat refugee camp and another refugee camp, reported Arab media. Besides, dozens of people, including children, were killed in Israeli air attacks on UN-run schools in northern Gaza, including the Al-Fakhoora school in the Jabalia refugee camp and a school in Tall Az-Zatar. Over 12,300 Palestinians, including at least 5,000 children, have been killed in the Gaza Strip since October 7 by Israel's relentless air and ground military campaign while thousands have been injured and displaced. The fresh wave of Israeli atrocities against the Palestinian people commenced after Hamas launched a surprise attack on October 7, which Israel claims led to deaths of 1,200 Israelis and captivity of around 240 people.

US lawmakers for...

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Freedom noted that "religious minorities were especially vulnerable to prosecution or violence based on blasphemy allegations" and "blasphemy cases remained a substantial threat to religious freedom." The report also noted that the previous government in Pakistan had "weaponised the country's blasphemy laws against former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his cabinet members". While acknowledging Pakistan's significance as a long-standing ally, the lawmakers also stressed the need to address issues like restrictions on freedom of expression, speech, and religion, enforced disappearances, military courts and the harassment and arrest of political opponents and human rights defenders.

Rivals can see Nawaz becoming...

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"We have to rise above our personal interests. Our political rivals can also see that Nawaz Sharif will become the next prime minister," said Marriyum. Talking about the recent statement of the PPP Co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari on elections, the PML-N leader said that his statement on transparent elections was "encouraging". Zardari in a statement today said that he believes the country was moving towards transparent elections as he termed the present environment "favourable" for polls. "The country is moving towards transparent elections," he said. The senior politician also expressed confidence in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to ensure fair and transparent conduct of the elections, slated to be held on February 8 next year.

France smash records in 14-0 win

Mbappe scores hat-trick as Les Bleus thrash Gibraltar in Euro 2024 qualifying

SPORTS DESK

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe scored a hat-trick in France's record-breaking 14-0 thrashing of 10-man Gibraltar as the Netherlands, Switzerland and Romania booked their places at Euro 2024. Les Bleus set a new record margin of victory in European qualifying and a national record in Nice. Ethan Santos' own goal and Marcus Thuram had already opened the floodgates before 17-year-old Warren Zaire-Emery scored. That was Zaire-Emery's last contribution as the PSG midfielder was forced off with an ankle injury but a red card for Santos after just 18 minutes allowed the World Cup finalists to run amok. Mbappe's penalty made it 4-0 and Jonathan Clauss, Kingsley Coman and Youssef Fofana all scored before half-time. Adrien Rabiot, Coman again and Ousmane Dembele kept the score ticking over before Mbappe struck twice to seal his hat-trick in style. The France captain lobbed Dayle Coleing from just inside the Gibraltar half to register his 300th career goal aged just 24. Olivier Giroud then came off the bench to grab the final two goals and ensure the history books were re-written. But the scoreline will raise fresh questions



over the need for such clashes between giants and minnows in a congested fixture calendar. "We did everything to make this score happen. That is the ambition that there is in this team," said France boss Didier Deschamps. Just one goal was enough to ensure the Dutch joined France in qualifying from Group B with a 1-0 victory over the Republic of Ireland. Wout Weghorst's powerful drive separated the sides in Amsterdam in what is likely to be Irish boss Stephen Kenny's final competitive game in charge. "In the end, it's about winning the game. We knew we needed the three points

to qualify directly today, at home with our own fans," said Netherlands forward Cody Gakpo. "We created a lot of chances, opportunities, but we have to score more goals and have more finesse in the final third." Romania reached just a second major tournament since 2008 by ending Israel's chances of automatic qualification with a 2-1 win. Despite being forced to play what should have been a home fixture in Hungary due to the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, Israel went in front after just two minutes through Eran Zahavi. But Romania hit back quickly to level through George Puscas and secured their place in Germany thanks to Ianis Hagi, son of Gheorghe Hagi who inspired the Romanians famous run to the 1994 World Cup quarter-finals. Switzerland also qualified despite being held 1-1 at home by Kosovo. Romania are now in pole position to win Group I with a draw at home to the Swiss on Tuesday enough to secure top spot. Wales' hopes of reaching a third consecutive European Championship were dealt a huge blow by a 1-1 draw away to Armenia. Rob Page's men began the day with automatic qualification in their own hands. But Wales fell behind early on to Lucas Zelaryan's strike from outside the box in Yerevan.

F1 Las Vegas: Max Verstappen wins gripping race



LAS VEGAS: Max Verstappen secured his 18th victory of the season on Saturday night by overtaking Charles Leclerc at the Las Vegas Grand Prix, making it one of the most fiercely contested events despite a tumultuous beginning to Formula One's lavish spectacle. "Viva Las Vegas! Viva Las Vegas!" sang the three-time reigning world champion as he crossed under the checkered flag waved by Justin Bieber. Verstappen had slammed the race at every chance, yet raced in an Elvis-inspired fire-suit and took the victory on the famed Las Vegas Strip. "I hope everyone enjoyed it; we definitely did. Excited to come back here next year and try to do something similar," said Verstappen, who had markedly reversed his position on the Las Vegas spectacle. Verstappen, Leclerc, and Sergio Perez were driven in a limousine to the victory podium located near the Bellagio - "We go straight to the nightclub," Verstappen told his fellow podium finishers - but they

were instead treated to the casino's famed fountain show. The Bellagio fountains had been turned off all week and restarted as part of the victory celebration. None of the participants seemed remotely interested as they stood chatting on the podium, awaiting their trophies just before a New Year's Eve-style fireworks show over the Strip. The race was the third stop this season in the United States, more than any other country, and was promoted by F1 and owner Liberty Media. But the event has been lambasted - especially by Verstappen - for its opulence and excess. Tickets were expensive, hotels along the famed Strip hiked their prices, and the sporting element of the 21st race of the season was overshadowed by everything from celebrities, musical acts, a myriad of Elvis impersonators roaming the paddock and a wedding chapel where former F1 champion Jacques Villeneuve was married earlier in the week. Liberty expected to spend \$500 mil-

lion on the first Grand Prix it self-promoted, but paddock speculation before Saturday night's main event was that Liberty had gone well over budget. The entire event nearly imploded nine minutes into the first practice session when Carlos Sainz Jr. ran over a water drain valve on the track that badly damaged his Ferrari and F1 had to close the 3.85-mile (6.2-kilometer) circuit that utilizes a long portion of the Strip for inspection. Fans were forced to leave at 1:30 a.m. Thursday night, after witnessing just nine minutes of track activity. The second practice started at 2:30 a.m. and ran until 4 a.m., and F1 offered \$200 credits to its merchandise store to any ticket holders who had only purchased Thursday access. A class-action lawsuit was filed Friday against the Las Vegas Grand Prix. It made it critical for F1 to deliver a good race Saturday night, and even though it was Verstappen's sixth consecutive victory, it was one of the most spirited events of the season. Leclerc and teammate Sainz had qualified 1-2 on Friday, but Sainz was handed a 10-place penalty on the starting grid because Ferrari was forced to change his car because of the damage from hitting the drain cover. That pushed Verstappen up to second for the start, and Verstappen immediately pounced at the start. The Dutchman forced Leclerc off-track to take the lead, and although Leclerc demanded that Verstappen be forced to give the position back, Verstappen was only handed a five-second penalty. He served it during a later pit stop, but his Red Bull was so strong he remained in contention the entire race. Leclerc passed Sergio Perez for the lead with 17 laps remaining, and then three laps later, Verstappen passed his teammate to take second. He and Perez then worked to create a tow that allowed Verstappen to catch Leclerc for the win with 13 laps remaining. - Agencies

Nadal plans to reveal return strategy

WASHINGTON: Despite missing nearly all of 2023 due to a hip injury requiring surgery, Rafael Nadal is confident about returning to competition and has announced that he will soon unveil his comeback plans. Nadal wrote Thursday on social media, "I confirmed yesterday I'll be back," and punctuated that message with a smiling emoji. "Stay tuned," he continued in the Instagram post, which included a photograph of him about to hit a backhand. He said that in the coming days he will "decide and announce with my team when and where" everyone can expect to see him in action. Next season begins in late December, with the year's first major tournament, the Australian Open, scheduled to begin main-draw matches on Jan. 14. "For the world of tennis, there's no doubt that it's amazing news that he'll be back," Novak Djokovic said at the ATP Finals in Turin, Italy. Nadal, whose 22 Grand Slam singles titles rank second to Djokovic's 24 for the most among men, has not played on tour since last January, when he hurt his hip flexor during a loss to Mackenzie McDonald in the second round of the Australian Open. In May, a little more than a week before the start of his beloved French Open, Nadal announced that he would miss the tournament; he has won a record 14 times and was not exactly sure when he might return to play. He said then that he hoped to compete in 2024, which he expected to be his final season. "You never know how things will turn out," Nadal said at a news conference at the time, "but my intention is that next year will be my last year." He wound up having arthroscopic surgery in June in Barcelona. Dating to the end of 2022, the 37-year-old Spanish left-hander has lost seven of his past nine matches, including going 1-3 this season. With Roger Federer, who won 20 majors, having announced his retirement in 2022 and Nadal missing much of this year, Djokovic was the only member of the so-called Big Three of men's tennis who was active throughout 2023, and the 36-year-old from Serbia was dominant, particularly at the Grand Slam tournaments. He won the Australian Open, French Open and U.S. Open and reached the final at Wimbledon. "I think it would be nice for the sport to have at least one more match between Nadal and me. That's the biggest rivalry in terms of the amount of matches played that this sport ever had. Hopefully that can happen," Djokovic said. "He's a big warrior. He's somebody that really never gives up. With all the injuries that he had, keeps going. That's definitely something that you have to respect and admire about him and his spirit." - Agencies

Zampa equals Muthiah Muralidaran's WC record

AHMEDABAD: Australian leg-spinner Adam Zampa on Sunday equalled Muthiah Muralidaran's record of most wickets by a spinner in a single edition of the Men's ODI World Cup. Zampa, who returned figures of 1/44 in his 10 overs, helped Australia book the strong Indian batting lineup for a modest total in the grand final. His sole wicket in the match came in the 45th over when he trapped Jasprit Bumrah plumb in front. Bumrah's dismissal took his wickets tally in the ongoing World Cup to 23 and equalled the Sri Lankan legend's long-standing record, who picked up as many in the 2007 edition. Watch ICC World Cup 2023 Live on ARY ZAP In an elite list of spinners, Adam Zampa is followed by his compatriot Brad Hogg and former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi, who picked 21 wickets each in the 2007 and 2011 editions respectively. Australian spin legend Shane Warne is fifth on the list with 20 wickets, which he took in the 1999 World Cup. The ongoing World Cup marked a change of fortune for Adam Zampa. In September, he returned with the joint-worst bowling figures in the history of Men's ODIs when he conceded 113 in his 10 overs and went wicketless in the fourth ODI of the five-match away series against South Africa. However, his dubious record was short-lived, courtesy of Glenn Maxwell's berserk double century against the Netherlands. - Agencies

Army to compete Faisalabad in national basketball opener

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Defending champion Pakistan Army will compete against Faisalabad in the first match of the opening day of National Basketball Championship for Men's 2023 starting from today (Monday) at the Government College University Lahore. According to the Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) Secretary General Khalid Bashir, top eight teams from around the country will be in action in the national men's basketball championship organised by Punjab Basketball Association and all arrangements have been completed for the successful

five-day championship. He said top eight teams are divided into two groups as Pool "A" comprises defending champion Pakistan Army, Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF), Pakistan Air Force (PAF), Faisalabad while Wapda, Lahore, Navy and Islamabad are included in Pool "B". The first match of the championship will be played between the defending champion Pakistan Army and Faisalabad, while Wapda and Islamabad, POF and PAF, Lahore and Navy will compete on the first day of the event. Khalid Bashir said that four matches will be played every day during pool round matches in the championship as well as the top two teams of each

group will qualify for the knockout round. The semi-finals will be held on November 23rd while the final of the championship will be played on November 24th.

Schedule:

Nov 20 (Day-1): Army vs Faisalabad; Wapda vs Islamabad; POF vs PAF; Lahore vs Navy.
Nov 21 (Day-2): Army vs PAF; Navy Vs Wapda; Faisalabad Vs POF, Islamabad vs Lahore.
Nov 22 (Day-3): POF vs Army; Faisalabad Vs PAF; Wapda Vs Lahore, Navy vs Islamabad.
Nov 23 (Day-4): Semi Finals
Nov 24 (Day-5): Final

Peshawar defeat Karachi to win Pak Cup 2023-24

Peshawar clinched their third one-day cup title after defeating Karachi Whites at Pindi Cricket Stadium by five wickets

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Peshawar clinched their third one-day cup title after defeating Karachi Whites at Pindi Cricket Stadium by five wickets in the Pakistan Cup 2023-24 final. Nabi Gul hit the winning runs for Peshawar as the Sahibzada Farhan-led side pocketed a cash prize of PKR 5 million. Peshawar's last national one-day title win came in the 2016-17 season when they beat the same opponent at National Bank Stadium, Karachi in the final by 124 runs. Karachi Whites began their innings patiently after being put in to bat first by Peshawar on a surface that seemed to assist the fast bowlers. The first blow arrived in the eighth over with Habibullah dismissed by left-arm pacer Mohammad Imran. Saim Ayub, who starred with 95 in the semi-final of the Pakistan Cup for Karachi Whites, was the second batter to exit the stage when Imran struck again to have him caught by Azam Khan. Wickets



continued to tumble as none of the top five batters could register a score above 13. Karachi Whites skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed was dismissed courtesy of a sharp catch by Iftikhar Ahmed for just 22 off 25 balls. Azam Khan was the last man out for 30 off 46 deliveries as Karachi merely scrambled to 103 all out in 31.2 overs. Imran was the chief destroyer with four wickets for 28 runs while Mohammad Abbas Afridi got three wickets. Peshawar did not face serious hiccups in

their chase of the paltry target getting home with five wickets and 27.4 overs to spare. Mohammad Haris top-scored with a quick-fire 46 from 33 balls featuring seven fours and a six.

Sahibzada was out in bizarre fashion as he inadvertently whipped the bails off with his bat resulting in a hit wicket off Ghulam Mudassar. The other four wickets to fall were taken by Noman Ali (two wickets), Danish Aziz and Saim (one each). Multan's Haseebullah took home the Player of the Tournament and best wicket-keeper awards for his tally of 326 runs including two centuries and 10 dismissals during the Pakistan Cup 2023-24. Saim topped the batting chatting charts with 397 runs in eight innings and was duly named the best batter of the tournament. Multan leg-spinner Zahid Mehmood and Peshawar fast bowler Abbas Afridi were the joint winners for the best bowler award with 15 wickets each. For his impactful figures of 4-28, Mohammad Imran was declared player of the final.

COURT NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF
DANIYAL AMJAD SB
CIVIL/FAMILY JUDGE
RAWALPINDI

Suit For Recovery of Maintenance Allowance etc. Mst. Falak Sajid D/o of Sajid Mehmood Versus Owais Ahmed Notice To, Owais Ahmed Resident R/o near city School House no 279 Gulraiz 3 Rawalpindi. Where as in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendant cannot be served in the ordinary way it is therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shell not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8am on 20-11-2023 the proceedings will be taken ex-parte. No arguments of any nature shall be entertained thereafter. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Head brings India to their knees

FROM PAGE 01

Mitchell Starc (3-55) for three boundaries in a row but India slumped to 81-3 in the 11th over when Cummins dismissed Shreyas Iyer caught behind. Kohli and Rahul (66) then combined in a dour rebuilding job even if it meant going 16.1 overs without a boundary. Kohli brought up his ninth 50-plus knock in 11 innings but soon departed after chopping a Cummins delivery onto his stumps. Rahul hit just one four in his half-century illustrating how difficult the pitch was for shot-makers like him. Australia wicketkeeper Josh Inglis took five catches, which is a record in a World Cup final. Australia, when they came out to bat, slumped to 47-3 seven overs into what had looked like a straight-forward chase for them. Head combined with Marnus Labuschagne, who made 58 not out, in a 192-run stand to kill off the contest. Six Indian players failed to score in double digits, which probably became the reason of their first and the most-costly defeat in the World Cup.

Zardari says country moving...

FROM PAGE 01

expressed their reservations citing a lack of a level playing field, raising doubts over the fairness and transparency of the upcoming polls. The former head of state said his party is set to compete in the general polls as it is "fully prepared", underlining the PPP's calibre to sweep majority votes. "PPP is the only party which has the ability to fight elections in every environment," Zardari maintained, adding he is certain the party would emerge as the majority winner on February 8. Two mainstream parties - Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and PPP - have repeatedly been complaining that they were being denied a level playing field in the run-up to elections and attempts are being made to pave the way for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) return to power ahead of general elections scheduled to be held on February 8, 2024.

Blast claims 3 in Balochistan

FROM PAGE 01

Unidentified gunmen had also fatally shot six labourers in Turbat on Oct 14. Earlier the same month, the project manager of the Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC) was killed in an IED blast targeting his vehicle in Quetta.

CM Naqvi opens...

FROM PAGE 01

shared updates on various healthcare projects with the media. He also shed light on the current developments and future plans in the healthcare sector. "As we continue our work, a new government is on the horizon, and they will address the remaining issues," assured Mohsin Naqvi. Naqvi said that the Nishtar-2 project is in its final stages. The construction and rehabilitation of one ward of the Nishtar-1 project is in progress, then there will be 12 wards, added by Naqvi.

Briefs

Japanese Troops Conduct Drills on China-Vulnerable Island

Japanese marines in amphibious assault vehicles stormed an island beach at the edge of the East China Sea on Sunday in a simulated attack to dislodge invaders from territory that Tokyo worries is vulnerable to attack from China. As tensions run high with neighbours China, Russia and North Korea, the drill on the southwest island of Tokunoshima capped an 11-day series of exercises nationwide dubbed 05JX, meant to show the readiness of ground, sea and air forces to defend Japan's territory and infrastructure, including nuclear power plants. "The goal of JX is to show that if there is an emergency situation resulting from an attack, that we are able to respond in a joint way," General Yoshihide Yoshida, chief of staff of the Self-Defence Forces' Joint Staff, said after observing the drill on Tokunoshima. China's defence ministry could not be reached on Sunday for comment on the Japanese drills. Ground Self-Defence Force amphibious assault vehicles launched from two Maritime Self-Defence Force landing ships anchored offshore. Other troops arrived in semi-inflatable rubber boats, with heavy equipment carried to shore on military hovercraft. — Agencies

Argentines vote in high-stakes election drama

BUENOS AIRES : Desperate for a way out of a crippling economic crisis, Argentines began voting Sunday in a nail-biter election between embattled Economy Minister Sergio Massa and the libertarian outsider Javier Milei.

The two men represent starkly different futures for Latin America's third-largest economy, creaking under triple-digit inflation and poverty levels over 40 percent. Polls show the candidates in a dead heat, with Milei holding such a slight advantage that no one wants to predict an outcome. Some 36 million Argentines will be able to vote until 6:00 pm (2100 GMT), with results expected a few hours later. The new president will take office on December 10. Massa, 51, is a charismatic and seasoned politician seeking to convince Argentines to trust him despite his performance as economy minister which has seen annual inflation hit 143 percent. His rival Milei is an anti-establishment outsider, who has vowed to halt Argentina's unbridled spending, ditch the peso for the US dollar, and "dynamite" the central bank. — DNA

Milei puts down chainsaw

MILEI: A 53-year-old economist, is a political newcomer who stunned observers by surging to the front of the electoral race just months ago. He is often compared to former US president Donald Trump and Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro, with Massa accusing him of aping the two politicians by raising the specter of electoral fraud — for which he has provided no evidence. Milei's rants against traditional parties who have failed to halt decades of economic decline have fired up voters tired of the status quo. "I hope Milei wins," said taxi driver Daniel Ayala, 50, adding he was "tired of the corruption" of the ruling Peronist coalition. In a first-round election in October, Massa confounded the polls by coming first with almost 37 percent, while Milei scored about 30 percent of the vote. Both have scrambled to shore up millions of votes from the three losing candidates. Third-placed candidate Patricia Bullrich, from the powerful centrist-right opposition, has thrown her weight behind Milei. Milei has toned down his rhetoric to appeal to her more moderate voters, imploring the public not to give in to fear stoked by Massa's campaign. — APP

G20 summit signals renewed interest in Africa's growth

Underscoring renewed interest in Africa, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, French President Emmanuel Macron and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte will be among those attending the summit in Berlin, hosted by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz

NEWS DESK

BERLIN : Leaders from more than a dozen African countries are heading to Germany for the G20 Compact with Africa conference, which aims to help bolster private investment in the world's poorest, but fast-growing, continent. Underscoring renewed interest in Africa, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, French President Emmanuel Macron and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte will be among those attending the summit in Berlin, hosted by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, according to German government officials. Scholz, who has visited Africa several times since taking office in late 2021, will hold bilateral talks with several African countries on Sunday, before hosting a German-African investment summit at Berlin's Marriott Hotel on Monday morning. Europe and the United States are jostling with Russia and China for geopolitical influ-



ence, critical minerals and new economic opportunities in the world's second most populous continent.

Those include Africa's potential for renewable energy production, in particular green hydrogen, that could help its northern neighbor's transition to a carbon neutral economy. The stability and prosperity of the

continent is also seen as key to reducing illegal migration. The Compact with Africa, which was created in 2017 under the German G20 presidency, aims to bring together reform-minded African countries, international organizations and bilateral partners to coordinate development agendas and discuss investment opportunities. The event offi-

cially takes place on Monday afternoon in the German chancellery, preceded by a news conference with leaders of the African Union, which in September was made a permanent member of the group of the G20 group of the world's most powerful countries. "We will not make a common declaration, we do not want to force our African partners

into a tight corset," a German government official said on Friday. "Instead, we want concrete results." German government officials say Africa can play a key role in helping Germany better diversify its supply chains, secure skilled labour, reduce illegal migration and achieve its green transition.

African countries have long complained that while Europe talks about investment, China actually provides financing without any moral lecturing. Still, Chinese lending in Africa is in decline, while European interest is rising as it seeks to diversify supply chains. German trade with Africa was 60 billion euros (\$65.4 billion) last year, which is a fraction of its trade with Asia but up 21.7% on 2021. Nearly two thirds of German companies want to expand their business in Africa, according to a study by KPMG and the German-African Business Association. The member countries of the G20 Compact are Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Senegal, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia.

Maldives president asks India to withdraw its military Muizzu made the request to Kiren Rijiju, India's minister for earth sciences, who was representing India at the president's inauguration, it said

WEB DESK

MALE : Maldives new President Mohamed Muizzu, who campaigned on altering the tiny Indian Ocean archipelago's "India first" policy, has requested India withdraw its military from the country. Muizzu won the presidential election in September, ousting Ibrahim Solih in



a runoff after promising to remove a small Indian

military presence of some 75 personnel. India and China have been vying for influence in the region, with the coalition backing Muizzu considered to be leaning more towards China. "The Maldivian people had given him (Muizzu) a strong mandate to make the request to India and expressed the hope that India will honour the democratic will of the people of the Maldives," the president's office said in a statement on Saturday. India's defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. At his inauguration on Friday, Muizzu said, "I will ensure that this country has no foreign military presence on its soil." Muizzu made the request to Kiren Rijiju, India's minister for earth sciences, who was representing India at the president's inauguration.

Taiwan opposition talks deadlocked, with No Compromise

TAIPEI : The leader of a small Taiwanese party who has been in talks with the main opposition party for a joint presidential ticket showed no signs of backing down on Sunday in a dispute deadlocked over who runs as president and who for vice president. The issue of China, which views Taiwan as its territory, looms over the Jan. 13 parliamentary and presidential elections. China has stepped up military and political pressure, including high-profile war games, to press the island to accept the sovereignty claims that Taiwan rejects. After weeks of sometimes acrimonious talks on joining up for the presidential election, the Kuomintang (KMT) and the much smaller Taiwan People's Party (TPP) agreed on Wednesday to look at an aggregate of opinion polls to decide which party's candidate would run as president and which as vice president. The parties on Saturday failed to reach agreement on how to interpret opinion polls and thus decide on who will stand for which position. Candidates have to register with the election commission by Friday, Nov. 24. Speaking at an election rally on Sunday, TPP chairman Ko Wenje said he would not go against public opinion or "abandon" his supporters and would work to bring together. —

Heavy rain in Kenya affects tens of thousands

NAIROBI : Kenya on Sunday said tens of thousands of people across the country had been impacted by heavy rainfall, flooding and landslides that had also interrupted cargo services at Mombasa port. The Horn of Africa has experienced intense rainfall linked to the El Nino weather phenomenon in recent weeks that has claimed dozens of lives, including at least 46 in various parts of Kenya. Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua said at least 80,000 households in Kenya had been affected "with numbers rising every day". He said the government was responding to "save our people" including with helicopters and other emergency services to deliver aid and rescue marooned families. "This situation has continued to threaten lives," he said in a statement issued Sunday, urging the public to avoid floodwaters and evacuate homes in low-lying areas. The prolonged rainfall was expected to extend into the first quarter of next year, he added. Officials said nine people have died in the coastal region since last week including two passengers in a car belonging to the Kenya Revenue Authority that was swept off a flooded bridge in Kwale County on Friday morning. "A multi-agency team led by the Kenya Coast Guard Service is on scene trying to retrieve the bodies," the interior ministry said Sunday. Kenya Railways said floods and landslides had caused an "unexpected delay" in deliveries to Mombasa port and along the cargo rail line to Nairobi. "Consequently, this has affected normal train operations, including cargo transfers, loading as well as offloading activities at the Port of Mombasa," the state-owned railway said in a statement on Saturday posted on X, formerly Twitter. A landslide in one section of the line between Mombasa and Nairobi had resulted in "the closure of that section for all freight trains" but limited passenger services were still moving, it added. Mombasa, the country's second-largest city, and its port and railway cargo line serve not just Kenya but also landlocked neighbours including Uganda, South Sudan and Rwanda. — DNA

Madrid protests erupt over Catalan amnesty agreement

Protesters, including neo-Nazi groups, have held demonstrations outside the Socialist party's headquarters in Madrid for 15 consecutive nights since the deal was announced, leading to violent clashes with police and arrests

MADRID : About 170,000 took to the streets, a day after Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez was sworn in for a second term. Tens of thousands of protesters have marched through Madrid in opposition to a controversial Catalan amnesty law that enabled Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez to form a government for a second term. Sanchez's Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) secured the backing of the Catalan separatist Junts party by offering amnesty to those linked to a botched bid for regional independence six years ago. According to the authorities, more than 170,000 took part in Saturday's protest, the largest yet against the deal, which has prompted the opposition to take to the streets in cities across the country. Sanchez was sworn in on Friday, nearly four months after an inconclusive election left the country with a hung parliament. The conservative main opposition People's Party (PP) won the largest share of the vote, however, the right-wing coalition with the far-right Vox party failed to secure the absolute majority needed to form a government. Protesters waved Spanish flags and held signs that read "Sanchez traitor" and "Don't sell Spain". Four judicial associations, opposition political parties and business leaders say the law threatens the rule of law and the separation of powers. PP leader Alberto Nunez Feijoo and Santiago Abascal, head of Vox, were among the demonstrators. After the rally, hundreds of people protested on the motorway near the Moncloa Palace, the prime minister's residence in Madrid. The A6 road was closed for about an hour during the protest but later reopened after the police cleared the area. Police officers stand guard as people block the road leading to Moncloa Palace [Reuters/Susana Vera] Police officers stand guard as protesters block the road leading to Moncloa Palace, the prime minister's residence, Madrid, Spain, November 18, 2023 [Reuters/Susana Vera] Approximately 400 people involved in the independence bid that came to a head in 2017 will benefit from the law, including both separatists and police involved in clashes with activists. Among them is former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont, the leader of Junts and the brains behind the illegal referendum, who today lives in exile in Belgium. The independence referendum was declared illegal by the courts and resulted in Spain's worst political crisis for decades. The amnesty will be the largest in Spain since the 1977 blanket amnesty for crimes committed during the Francisco Franco dictatorship, and the first amnesty law approved in the European Union since 1991, according to Spain's CSIC research council. Sanchez, who won a parliamentary vote to form a new government on Thursday by 179 votes in favour and 171 against, has defended the law saying an amnesty would help to defuse tensions in Catalonia. Some of his ministers, including PSOE senior official Felix Bolanos, have hailed the legislation as a way to "heal wounds and resolve the existing political conflict" in the region. Protesters, including neo-Nazi groups, have held demonstrations outside the Socialist party's headquarters in Madrid for 15 consecutive nights since the deal was announced, leading to violent clashes with police and arrests. In a survey by pollster Metroscopia in mid-September, approximately 70 percent of respondents — 59 percent of them Socialist supporters — said they were against the idea of an amnesty. — DNA

Zelenskiy slaps sanctions on 108 People, 37 Russian groups

"We are increasing the pressure of our state onto them and each of them must be held responsible for what they have done," President Volodymyr Zelenskiy

FOREIGN DESK

KYIV : President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has sanctioned 37 Russian groups and 108 people including a former prime minister and a former education minister and said he aimed to fight wartime abductions of children from Ukraine and other "Russian terror". "We are increasing the pressure of our state onto them and each of them must be held responsible for what they have done," he said in video address, after his office issued corresponding decrees with his signature. Zelenskiy did not associate specific individuals or groups with particular wrongdoings. The decrees showed a range of 10-year penalties against individuals and five-year penalties against non-profit groups including one named in English as the "Russian Children's Foundation." Zelenskiy said in his address that the

list included "those involved in the abduction and deportation of Ukrainian children from the occupied territory" and individuals who "in various ways help Russian terror against Ukraine." A National Guard patrol car full of soldiers stands guard outside the local headquarters of the federal attorney general's office, in Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz state, Mexico, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019. Mexico's drug war appears to be back, and it may be worse this time around than in the bloody years of the government's 2006-2012 offensive against drug cartels. That was evident this week in Coatzacoalcos, an oil industry city in the Gulf coast state of Veracruz where residents say gangs have been fighting over turf and extorting business owners with threats of violence. (AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell) View All 14 Slides Some of the newly-sanctioned people, which included many with Russian citizenship, had previously been punished



with separate or similar penalties. Those included Dmytro Tabachnyk, a former minister of education and science who had his Ukrainian citizenship stripped from him in February, and ex-Prime Minister Mykola Azarov. With former President Viktor Yanukovich, Azarov previously had assets and property frozen among other penalties. The two men fled Ukraine for Russia in 2014 after a crackdown on street protests that killed more than 100 demonstrators in Kyiv. Other individuals penalized on Saturday

included Sergei Aksyonov, the Russian-installed head of Crimea, and Leonid Pasechnik, whom Putin appointed head of Luhansk, the eastern Ukrainian region Russia annexed in 2022. The sanctioned Russian groups included several whose names or websites indicate they work with children. One sanctioned group was named Kwartal Lui, which matches an organization with a website which says its founder is Children's Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova, herself sanctioned by Kyiv in October 2022. The International Criminal Court in The Hague this month issued an arrest warrant against Lvova-Belova, along with President Vladimir Putin, accusing them of the war crime of deporting children from Ukraine. Zelenskiy's new list also sanctioned the executive director of Kwartal Lui, Sofia Lvova-Belova. Her older sister, Maria Lvova-Belova, has said children were taken to shelter them from vi-

olence and denied committing any war crime. Kyiv says about 20,000 children have been removed to Russia or Russian-held territory without the consent of family or guardians, which it says amounts to a war crime that meets the UN treaty definition of genocide. Yale University published research on Thursday saying more than 2,400 children aged between six and 17 had also been taken to 13 facilities across Russian-occupied Belarus. The report, from a group that receives U.S. State Department funding, said that the transports across Russian territory to its western neighbor were "ultimately coordinated" between Putin and Belarus leader Alexander Lukashenko. Zelenskiy's decrees upheld a decision by the National Security and Defence Council to issue sanctions with an array of penalties including blocking assets, trade, transit, leasing, removal of capital, land purchases and other financial and economic activities.

More than 500 Rohingya refugees land in Indonesia

BIREUEN : Three boats filled with more than 500 Rohingya refugees landed in Indonesia's westernmost province on Sunday, a UN agency said, in one of the biggest arrivals since Myanmar launched a military crackdown on the minority group in 2017. The mostly Muslim Rohingya are heavily persecuted in Myanmar, and thousands risk their lives each year on long and expensive sea journeys, often in flimsy boats, to try to reach Malaysia or Indonesia. United Nations refugee agency protection associate Faisal Rahman told AFP one boat had arrived in Aceh province's Bireuen district with 256 people aboard, while at least 241 others arrived in Aceh's Pidie region and a smaller boat carrying 36 arrived in East Aceh. "They were found in several spots," Rahman said Sunday. Of the 256 aboard the Bireuen boat, 110 were women and 60 were children, he said. It was the same boat that locals had pushed back out to sea on Thursday, leaving it stranded off the coast for several days, according to Rahman. "It's confirmed... because many people were identified by security officials during the landing," he said. — Agencies

China vows to support property sector

BEIJING : China's central bank and financial regulators pledged on Friday to ensure financing support for the property sector and to work together to resolve local government debt risks. Chinese leaders are trying to revive the economy and fend off potential financial risks from a property slump and 92 trillion yuan (\$12.77 trillion) in local government debt. Financial institutions will meet reasonable financing needs of property firms and refrain from withdrawing or cutting off loans to them, the securities regulator said on Friday, after a meeting held by the central bank and financial regulators. Recent efforts to stabilise financing for the real estate sector via bank credit, bonds, and equity are gaining traction, the China Securities Regulatory Commission said. China will promote stable credit expansion to support its economic growth, and financial institutions should work with local governments to resolve debt risks, by extending, swapping or rolling over debt, the regulator added. — DNA

Saudi debt market to continue to grow

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's outstanding debt capital market will see further growth after an 18.4 percent annual increase in the third quarter of 2023, according to research by Fitch Ratings. The agency said the total sector size hit \$358.8 billion, with 62 percent as sukuk and the rest in bonds. The Kingdom's debt capital market growth is expected to be supported by the diversification of funding and the development of capital markets in Saudi Arabia. Bashar Al-Natour, global head of Islamic finance at Fitch, said "ambitious giga-projects and capital market development initiatives" were also fueling the sector's expansion. He added: "We expect continued initiatives to diversify funding — not only by the sovereign, but also by banks, corporates and projects that are likely to seek alternative channels like DCM". In a press note, Fitch said the corporate funding culture in Saudi Arabia is still geared mostly towards bank financing, but this is gradually changing. "Saudi riyal issuance was almost solely dominated by sukuk across all sectors over the past five years, and the government only issues local-currency debt in sukuk format," it added. Saudi Arabia accounted for 25.1 percent of the global US dollar sukuk market in the third quarter of the year. The Kingdom has the largest debt capital market in the Gulf Cooperation Council, with 69.4 percent of the sukuk market. — APP

Briefs

Pakistan to China human smugglers gang nabbed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) teams on Sunday Asif Mahmood and Bilal Hasan are among the arrested accused. The FIA said that the accused was involved in the smuggling of the Pakistanis from China to Hong Kong. The agency said on instructions of the Prime Minister's Office, their teams investigated 35 Pakistanis involved in trafficking. In the investigation of the affected Pakistanis, the main trafficker Asif Mahmood was identified and now he has been arrested at the airport while returning to Pakistan from China. "On the identification of Asif, the main facilitator accused Bilal Hasan was also arrested," the FIA said. The accused made fake documents and pretended to be businessmen to the immigrants and also used to give formal training to the immigrants for immigration clearance.

Senate election likely in March

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Senate elections are anticipated to take place in the first week of March, ARY News reported on Sunday, citing sources. Following the announcement of the general election, the relevant authorities initiated the preparations for the senate election as well. It is highly anticipated that the schedule for the Senate election may be released immediately after the general elections. A total of 50 senate members are expected to retire on March 11, meanwhile, the total number of senate members will remain at 96 after four seats become vacant after the merger of FATA. Following the general elections, the elections will be held for the 48 vacant seats in the Senate. Elected members from national and provincial assemblies will vote for senators. Earlier in the day, the Former president Asif Ali Zardari has said that the country has been moving towards transparent elections. Talking to media Zardari said that his People's Party has been fully prepared for the upcoming general elections.

Two more PTI leaders join IPP

LAHORE: Two more Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders including Ali Nawaz Awan and Sardar Asif Nakai on Sunday joined the Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party (IPP). As per details, the two PTI leaders parted ways with the party and joined the IPP after meeting Jahangir Tareen and Aleem Khan. Aam Chudhry and other leadership of IPP also participated in the meeting. Tareen and Khan welcomed the new entrants while Awan and Nakai informed them about his future political planning during the meeting. - DNA

Indonesian Embassy hosts Family Gala for friends

Ambassador Adam Tugio bids farewell to friends in style

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad for second year in a row organised a joyous event titled "Family Gala: Fun Games and Sports" to celebrate the strong bonds between Indonesian Embassy and its Pakistani friends from different walk of lives. The family gathering took place on the backyard of the Embassy premises and witnessed the participation of diplomatic corps, government officials, media professionals along with their families. In his remarks, Ambassador Mr. Adam Tugio expressed his gratitude for friends of Indonesia from diplomatic community and Pakistan for their support and good cooperation which helped the Embassy in strengthening bilateral ties and people to people connection of the two countries. He thanked media professionals of Pakistan for their



continued support to the Embassy's works in promoting economic and socio development in Indonesia to the wider audience in Pakistan. The envoy further added that cultural activities play important role in building bridges of understanding and friendship, and the Embassy looks forward to hosting more such celebrations in the future. Chairperson of Rawalpindi Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ms. Riffat Shaheen presented the replica hand sculpted gift of world's largest flower model, "Titan Arum" to the Embassy. This awe-inspiring creation was unveiled by the Ambassador of Indonesia with his spouse and Ms. Riffat Shaheen, symbolizing the flourishing friendship between the two brotherly nations. "Titan Arum is a symbol of long life, beauty, resilience and cultural richness, this flower is a token of love for the Indonesian people", mentioned Ms Riffat Shaheen, who also a renowned Fine Artist, sculptor and painter.

Man arrested in hate-motivated attacks on Muslims

TORONTO: Chandler Marshall, a Canadian man, has been arrested by police in Toronto after being charged with several counts in connection with hate-motivated crimes that occurred outside a Toronto mosque and two other areas. In a statement released on Saturday night, Toronto Police said that at approximately 6:40am, officers were called to the Toronto Islamic Centre (TIC), located close to the intersection of Yonge Street and Davenport Road. TIC issued a statement which was shared by the National Council for Canadian Muslims (NCCM) on X, formerly known as Twitter, with details of the Marshall's attack where he vandalised the centre and yelled Islamophobic slurs and threats at congregants. - Agencies

Jordan's King urges world to push for immediate ceasefire

FOREIGN DESK

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah urged the international community on Sunday to push for an immediate ceasefire to avert a humanitarian catastrophe caused by Israel's "ugly war" on Gaza. His remarks came during a meeting with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to discuss urgent measures addressing the escalating violence in Gaza.

King Abdullah stressed that global powers should force Israel to comply with international law to protect civilians and ensure an uninterrupted flow of aid into the Gaza Strip. Expressing deep concerns, the king criticized Israel's ongoing military actions in Gaza, warning of the potential for a broader regional crisis. He underscored the necessity of halting hostilities for regional stability and reiterated the call for a political resolution to the Palestinian issue, emphasizing the role of the EU in

achieving a two-state solution. Von der Leyen reaffirmed her rejection of any attempts to displace Palestinians and stressed the need to preserve the historical and legal status in Jerusalem. She also condemned settler violence in the West Bank. She praised Jordan's humanitarian efforts in Gaza, recognizing the military field hospital's crucial role in aiding civilians. Commending King Abdullah's political initiatives, she underscored the importance of achieving peace through a two-state solution.



Punjab makes face mask mandatory for a week in smog-hit districts

"Prioritising health is our collective responsibility. Please adhere to the guidelines for a safer community," says Mohsin Naqvi

LAHORE: In a bid to counter deteriorating quality in Punjab, the caretaker government on Sunday made it mandatory for all citizens to wear a face mask for a week in the smog-hit districts of the province. "Prioritising health is our collective responsibility. Please adhere to the guidelines for a safer community," said Punjab's Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi in a post on X, formerly Twitter. The notification shared by Punjab's healthcare department said that the high level of the Air Quality Index (AQI) due to SMOG poses a serious and imminent threat to public health in all age groups. The government urged all citizens to take all possible safety measures for the prevention and control of airborne diseases in the province of Punjab. Primary & Secondary Healthcare Department's Secretary Ali Jan Khan said that, with the approval from the chief minister, all citizens are ordered to wear face masks during all kinds of outdoor activities. "The above order shall be implemented in the areas of Lahore Division (District Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhupura, Kasur) and Gujranwala Division (District Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot, Narowal, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahuddin), having highest Air Quality Index (AQI), for next one week i.e., November 20, 2023 to November 26, 2023," the notification added. A day

earlier, the government said it was planning to carry out artificial rain in the provincial capital later this month. Provincial Environment Minister Bilal Afzal said that a team and working group should be formed to provide artificial rain which will consult on providing aircraft to carry out artificial rain. Punjab districts including Lahore Jhang, Hafizabad, Khanewal, Nankana, Bahawalnagar and Sheikhupura are experiencing the worst air pollution. Meanwhile, the Lahore High Court has ordered the authorities to close all schools and colleges on Saturdays in smog-hit districts. The court also directed the government to implement a work-from-home policy for two days a week. Countries in South Asia have seen a marked increase in industrialisation, economic development, and population growth over the past two decades, leading to increased demand for energy and fossil fuels. While sources like industries and vehicles affect most countries, certain major contributors are unique to South Asia, including solid fuel combustion for cooking and heating, human cremation, and burning of agricultural waste. About 38% of the pollution in New Delhi this year, for example, has been caused by stubble burning - a practice where stubble left after harvesting rice is burnt to clear fields - in the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana. - DNA

Average PSDP project takes 14.1 years in Pakistan: IMF
At least 909 development projects worth Rs7,961.5 billion are ongoing at present

NEWS REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has assessed average time for completion of development projects in Pakistan stands at 14.1 years if no new projects are included in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) list. The IMF has come up with a technical assistance report titled 'Public Investment Management Assessment (PIMA)' for evaluating Pakistan's development framework, which is expected to be launched soon. The IMF assessed there were 244 new development projects included in the PSDP with an estimated cost of Rs2,261.9 billion during the last financial year 2022-23. The number of ongoing development projects was 909 with a total cost of Rs7,961.5 bil-

lion, it said. The average time for completion of a project, therefore, stood at 14.1 years, provided the development budget remained the same and no projects were included in the PSDP. While the Planning Commission gives funding priority to ongoing projects, reforms are needed to provide a more credible basis for the PSDP budget. The total cost of completion of ongoing projects, the "throw forward", is very large compared to realistic funding available in the medium term. It shows if the annual PSDP budget remains the same, and no new projects are added, it will take approximately 14 years to complete the existing approved projects. However, in practice, new projects continue to be added at a significant rate.

IDF helicopter shot Israeli festivalgoers

TEL AVIV: A recent report from Haaretz newspaper revealed that amid the October 7 attack by Hamas on Israel, an Israeli military helicopter hit festival participants while engaging Palestinian fighters. The Israeli security assessment, based on an investigation by police with arrested Hamas gunmen, suggested that the attackers had no prior information about the festival held near Kibbutz Re'im, close to the Gaza border. During the attack, Israeli forces encountered difficulty identifying Hamas fighters, prompting helicopter pilots to use artillery against festival participants. The report indicates that Hamas instructed its fighters to blend in with the crowd, attempting to deceive the air

force into believing they were Israelis. "The Hamas terrorists were instructed to blend in with the crowd slowly and not to move under any circumstances," the newspaper said in its report. "In this way, they tried to fool the Air Force into believing that those below were Israelis. This deception worked until the Apache helicopters had to break free of all restraints. The pilots found it difficult to distinguish who was a terrorist and who was an Israeli," the report added. Contrary to the official Israeli narrative, which claimed that Hamas gunmen deliberately targeted and killed festivalgoers, the investigation refutes this account. The Haaretz report challenges the established Israeli narrative and underscores the complexities faced by Israeli forces in distinguishing combatants from civilians during conflict situations. The incident resulted in casualties among festival participants, highlighting the tragic consequences of such misidentifications amid ongoing hostilities between Israel and Palestinian groups. - Agencies

Thousands attend JI's Gaza Solidary March

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Thousands of citizens have attended Jamaat-e-Islami's (JI) Gaza March in Lahore to show solidarity with Palestinians in besieged densely populated strip and occupied West Bank suffering from the aggression of the Israeli occupation forces. Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) organised the Gaza Solidarity March at Lahore's Punjab University (PU) Campus Bridge today which

was attended by thousands of citizens including women and children. The massive public event was addressed by JI Pakistan Ameer Sirajul Haq, politicians and clerics. Protestors chanted pro-Palestinian slogans and demanded an end to Israeli aggression in Gaza. While addressing the Gaza March, JI Pakistan Ameer Sirajul Haq said that the innocent children of Gaza were waiting for the help of Muslim countries amid Israeli bombardment. He slammed rulers of the Muslim countries for doing nothing

for the relief of Palestinians except making tall claims. He also criticised that the rulers of the Muslim countries did nothing in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) summit except for consolation. "A dead resolution was passed in the OIC summit, ineffective to provide any relief to the Palestinians and stop inhumane actions of the Israeli occupation forces." He lauded the Western nationals including the United Kingdom (UK), France, Australia, Ireland, United States (US) and Canada for showing solidarity with the Palestinians. Haq said that the French people forced their government to change its narrative through a powerful campaign. "The people of Australia and Canada have also exhibited solidarity with Palestinians. I also thank the people of Ireland, Washington and London for raising strong voices for Gaza." The JI Pakistan Ameer said that the massive rally was a 'message of death' to the enemy. "Israel is an evil state created by the imperialist forces. Palestinians have never accepted Israel and they are standing firmly against the occupation forces." He said that Israeli people are also protesting against Benjamin Netanyahu. Our public event gives a message to Gaza that they are not alone and we are standing side-by-side in this Jihad." Sirajul Haq slammed the Pakistani rulers, saying, "I wanted to see the prime minister, chief minister, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) politicians in this march but the political personalities are currently busy lobbying in Balochistan and Sindh [for the forthcoming general elections]."



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