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Greece, Turkiye work to build better ties amid differences

Detailed News On Page-07

Russian envoy issues special message

Detailed News On Page-07



Sinner twice beats Djokovic in Davis Cup

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Punjab CM assures Sikh pilgrims of full support

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: A 39-member delegation of Sikh pilgrims visiting Baba Guru Nanak's birthday celebrations met with Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday. During the meeting, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi noted down the suggestions and recommendations of the Sikh pilgrims and assured them of their redressal. On the instructions of Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Provincial Minister Auqaf Azfar Nasir and Additional Chief Secretary will go to Nankana Sahib for the birthday celebrations. Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi and IG Punjab talk to Sikh pilgrims in pure Punjabi language and welcomed them in Punjabi. He will solve the visa issue and other problems facing the Sikh pilgrims as soon as possible, Mohsin Naqvi assured them. Mohsin Naqvi said that we welcome the elders Sikh pilgrims come to Lahore, but the youth should come to Lahore as well.

Gazans looking to militaries of Pak, Turkey

DNA

TAUNSA Sharif: Jamaat-e-Islami chief Sirajul Haq stated on Sunday that the oppressed Muslims of Gaza were looking to the militaries of Pakistan, Turkey and other Islamic countries for their help. Addressing a rally in Taunsa Sharif, the JI chief said that Pakistani rulers were afraid of the United States. Siraj said that he wanted to thank the non-Muslim countries that were standing in solidarity with the innocent Muslims of Gaza. He recalled that his party had staged a protest demonstration in front of the US mission. The JI chief said that in Pakistan, there was a need for revolution and true freedom. He said he had been appointed a minister twice, but he did not build any house or accumulate wealth. "When I left the ministry, I presented myself for accountability. If Allah gives us the opportunity, we will first put an end to exploitative system," he added.

NAB team investigates Imran' Khan

COURT REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: A member of the NAB (National Accountability Bureau) investigating team left Adiala Jail on Sunday after a two and a half hour session with the PTI chief on 190 million pound and Al-Qadir Trust scandals. Assistant Director Mohsin Ali Khan questioned the PTI chief who is incarcerated in Adiala Jail. Deputy Director Mian Umar Nadeem, and Assistant Director Waqas are other members of the team. The jail sources said that a three-member NAB team headed by Mr Khan investigating the case. It merits mention here that the NAB team has been investigating the case since November 15.

More killings in West Bank Hamas releases more prisoners as truce holds

Yemen's Houthis have seized a tanker linked to Israel off the coast of Yemen

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: Hamas on Sunday, handed over another 13 Israeli hostages to the Red Cross along with three Thai nationals, Reuters reported. Meanwhile, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) have also confirmed that 14 Israeli captives — one accounting to a Russian citizen who holds dual nationality — have been received by the Red Cross. "Based on information that was received from the Red Cross, 14 Israeli hostages and three foreign hostages have been transferred to the Red Cross," read the statement issued by the Israeli military on social media platform X.Al-Shifa Hospital has been a major focus of Israel's ground offensive in northern Gaza, with the World Health Organization, the United Nations health agency, calling it "a death zone". More than 200 medical personnel have been killed and most hospitals shut down in the weeks of indiscriminate bombing by Israel. The Israeli army ordered an evacuation of Gaza's largest medical facility on November 18, but it was not possible to evacuate all the patients, as for some, an evacuation would have presented high health risks. Israeli forces, which raided the hospital last week, alleged that Hamas fighters used a tunnel complex beneath the facility in Gaza City to stage attacks. Hamas and hospital officials have repeatedly denied the claims.

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MFA warns of escalating aggression

DNA

RAMALLAH: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates condemns in the strongest terms the escalation in violations and crimes of the occupation forces and armed colonialist militias against Palestinian citizens, their lands, homes, properties, crops and sanctities, including the ongoing bloody incursions that continually leave more martyrs and detainees in mass and the demolition of infrastructure, as happened in the city of Jenin and its camp and the city of Al-Bireh and the village of Yatma, south of Nablus, and the settlers continued their attacks on Palestinian farmers, as happened in Khirbet Yanun, south of Nablus. The Ministry also strongly condemns the occupation's razing of more than 100 dunams and uprooting dozens of

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Zardari forms committee for talks with electables

Committee, as per a PPPP notification, comprises of members from all four provinces

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Under the leadership of former president Asif Ali Zardari, the Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), will contact political parties and politicians for dialogue both before and after the general elections, scheduled to take place on February 8 next year. The development was announced after Zardari formed a committee, comprising his party's members, to get in touch with parties and politicians with the aim of fostering dialogue as the country approaches general polls in 2024. The committee, as per a PPPP notification, will comprise members from all four provinces. From Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretary General PPP Syed Nayyer Hussain Bukhari, Qamar Zaman Kaira, Secretary Information PPP Faisal Karim Kundi, Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha and Sajid Toori will be a part of the committee. Members from Sindh are Saeed Ghani and Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, while Chengez Khan

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Country drowns in loans: Khattak

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Parliamentarians Chairman Pervez Khattak said on Sunday that the country had drowned in loans. Speaking to media in Peshawar, Khattak said: "The political parties come to rule and make promises, but do not fulfil them. For 75 years, governments have remained in power. But what made us not progress?" The former KP chief minister said, "The world has moved forward, but we are continuously dragging ourselves into the quagmire." Khattak asserted on Saturday that the PTI chief wanted to implement the presidential system in the country for personal gains.

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ISLAMABAD: The Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Neil Hawkins meeting with Pakistan's star cricketer, Babar Azam during his visit to Pindi cricket stadium. — DNA

PM Kakar to meet MBZ during UAE trip
Visit will include signing of MoUs between Pak and UAE

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has arrived in UAE for a three-day bilateral visit to the United Arab Emirates. According to the statement, the prime minister will meet UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed during the visit starting from 26 till November 28. The engagement between the two dignitaries will provide an opportunity to advance bilateral

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Durrani calls for national unity govt

Nawaz Sharif, Asif Ali Zardari and Imran Khan should not aspire to become prime minister

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Ali Durrani, former federal minister, has urged the leadership of all political parties to step aside from the race to reach the prime minister's house and

Continued on Page 06

Looking forward to exciting Pak-Australia series: HC Hawkins
Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins meets Pakistan test squad

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Neil Hawkins on Sunday met the players and officials of Pakistan cricket test squad and expressed good wishes for Pakistan team's visit to Australia. Australian High Commissioner visited Pindi cricket stadium and meet the Pakistan test team captain Shan Masood, Babar Azam, Shaheen Afridi, Muhammad Rizwan and other members along with team director Mohammad Hafeez and quired about the preparations of upcoming three matches test series against Australia. Team Director Mohammad Hafeez informed Neil Hawkins about the team preparations of test squad for upcoming series. The Australian High Commissioner also played cricket with players and expressed his good wishes for Pakistan team's

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Ronaldo gifts Vinicius Junior special jersey

SPORTS DESK

MADRID: Real Madrid's Brazilian winger Vinicius Junior recently suffered an injury during the World Cup qualifiers against Colombia, putting his 2023 season into question. However, in a heart-warming gesture, former Real Madrid forward and current Al-Nassr star Cristiano Ronaldo decided to cheer up the young player by gifting him an iconic Portugal jersey that he wore during his game against Liechtenstein, according to Goal.

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Dar's nomination as Leader of House

PPP leaders raise serious objections

This is not the first time the PPP has levelled allegations against the PML-N for having a hidden alliance with current caretaker government

MONITORING REPORT

ISLAMABAD: PPP Secretary General Nayyar Bukhari has again voiced reservations about PML-N's Ishaq Dar being the leader of the house in the Senate, questioning why caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar did not pick an independent

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General elections still doubtful? Some musings

ANALYSIS

ANSAR M BHATTI

IT is intriguing to observe that, as the elections draw near, a substantial number of political parties have not yet initiated a comprehensive election campaign. An exception to this trend is evident in the PPP, which has actively shifted into election mode. Up until now, the momentum seemed to favor the PPP; however, a pivotal moment occurred with Asif Zardari's interview on a private TV channel a couple of weeks ago, sending waves of unrest within the party ranks. In response, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari found himself compelled to hastily depart for Dubai, abruptly interrupting the ongoing election campaign. This unexpected development has added a layer of complexity to the political landscape and warrants close observation. Asif Zardari seized immediate media and public attention by unequivocally asserting his authority in awarding party tickets for the upcoming elections, thereby overshadowing Bilawal and rendering him seemingly irrelevant. This announcement came in response to Bilawal's stance advocating for a transition of power to the younger generation, implying that the old guard, including his own father, should step aside. Initially, analysts speculated that Bilawal was alluding to figures like

Nawaz Sharif, but it became evident that his own father was the intended target as well. In light of this revelation, Asif Zardari entered the fray, intensifying the rift between father and son. This controversy has precipitated a consequential face-off within the party, and its resolution at this juncture is imperative to avert potential detriment to the party's prospects in the upcoming elections. There is a prevailing sentiment within the PPP that having Asif Zardari at the helm could pose a significant challenge due to his less-than-impeccable reputation. Concerns linger that the party might face substantial setbacks if it ventures into the elections with Zardari in a prominent role. In contrast, Bilawal Bhutto is seen as a more forward-looking and popular politician, having improved his credentials over time. Bilawal himself believes that his tenure as the foreign minister in the PDM government garnered him international acceptance as a prospective leader for Pakistan. While Bilawal's optimism about his global standing holds some merit, the reality at home presents a myriad of challenges. Leading a party historically marred by allegations of corruption, Bilawal confronts the daunting task of addressing public skepticism and countering the party's past tarnished image. Despite his aspirations for international recognition, the intricate web of domestic challenges demands careful navigation for Bilawal to solidify his leadership and enhance the party's credibility in the eyes of the electorate. But that is possible only when he has full support of his father.

Internal divisions within the People's Party could significantly advantage the PML-N, considering that the PPP is currently the primary contender challenging the PML-N in the political arena. The PTI, having already experienced internal challenges, is perceived to be significantly weakened, and there are expectations that any remaining strength within the party might further splinter. This fragmentation would strategically prevent the PTI from emerging as a potent threat to the PML-N, which seems to enjoy a favored status with the Establishment. In essence, the rifts within the PPP create a political landscape where the PML-N stands as the dominant force, particularly in the absence of a consolidated and formidable opposition. The potential disarray among rival parties positions the PML-N favorably, strengthening its political standing and reinforcing the perception of it being the preferred choice for the Establishment. The unfolding dynamics within these political entities will undoubtedly shape the broader narrative of the upcoming elections and the power balance within the political landscape. According to certain sources, there have been attempts by the Establishment to court the PTI, utilizing figures such as President Arif Alvi and former minister Muhammad Ali Durrani as intermediaries. These reports suggest that the PTI was presented with an offer, proposing control over two provinces—Punjab and KPK. However, a condition was attached, stipulating that either Ch. Pervez Elahi or Shah Mahmood Qureshi should be en-

dorsed by the PTI Chairman to lead in Punjab. Imran Khan reportedly declined this proposition outright. In response to the rejection, the Establishment opted to bolster the newly-formed IPP, spearheaded by Jehangir Tareen and Aleem Khan. This development sheds light on the intricate political dynamics at play, with negotiations and alignments taking shape behind the scenes, showcasing the delicate balance of power and influence within the political landscape. Despite the intricate political maneuvers and strategies employed by both the IPP and the PML-N, they have thus far been unsuccessful in garnering the support of the people. The public sentiment continues to favor the PTI and its chairman, who is perceived by many as a messiah figure. This suggests that, despite the efforts and tactics implemented by other political entities, the PTI maintains a distinctive and enduring appeal among the populace. The challenge for the IPP and the PML-N lies in understanding and addressing the factors that contribute to the continued resonance of the PTI and its chairman as a preferred choice in the eyes of the electorate. Despite the unequivocal directives from the Supreme Court mandating elections on February 8, 2024, widespread skepticism persists regarding the timely conduct of the elections. Various factors contribute to the prevailing doubts, casting uncertainty over the scheduled date. Primarily, key political parties, notably the PML-N, have yet to initiate full-fledged election campaigns. The party is currently engaged in organizing cor-

ner meetings and dialogues with business entities, indicating a potential lack of preparedness. Analysts posit that the party is grappling with significant internal challenges, particularly in the pivotal province of Punjab. Furthermore, concerns within the party about its ability to draw substantial crowds loom large. The perceived failure to convincingly dispel suspicions of collusion with the Establishment has created apprehensions, possibly deterring a significant voter turnout. These multifaceted challenges collectively raise apprehensions about the feasibility of conducting the elections as scheduled on February 8, 2024, because if the so-called 'King's Party' cannot secure a win then the powers-that-be don't see any rationale in facilitating the election drill on February 8. The proposition of establishing a unity government for a limited duration, without the necessity of immediate elections, is also being explored. This prospective unity government aims to include all major political parties, with the exception of the PTI. Notably, the PPP, particularly the Asif Zardari group, appears amenable to this proposed arrangement. There is also a possibility of persuading the PML N to join this initiative. However, it is imperative to approach this proposal with caution, considering the challenges encountered during the PDM experience. Lessons learned from that endeavor suggest that the implementation of a unity government without a clear roadmap may potentially yield counterproductive results.

Pak religious leaders urge global intervention for Gaza

The leadership of religious sects and different religions also said that Palestine should be made an independent state with Al-Quds its capital

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Leadership of different religions and religious sects from all over Pakistan have demanded of the world leadership to play their respective role to make an end to ongoing Israeli aggression and barbarism in Gaza. Ulemas-Mashaykh and leadership of different religious schools of thought and religions while addressing press conference along with Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council and Dr. Paul Bhatti, Chairman All Pakistan Minorities Alliance appealed to United Nations Organisation and the leadership of OIC, US, UK and Europe to play their respective role to make an end to ongoing atrocities at the Palestinian people and Gaza from the Israeli aggression and asked for ceasefire from Israel at Gaza.

The leadership of religious sects and different religions also said that Palestine should be made an independent state with Al-Quds its capital. Speak-

ing with the press conference, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said that whatever going on in Gaza, is not being happened with the faithful of any religion but against the humanity. He urged the world leadership to play their role against the oppressed people of Gaza who have been facing worst atrocities and bombardment from Israeli forces. Worldwide voice have been raised against the aggression of Israeli forces in Gaza and people from all over the world are raising voice for rescue operations in Gaza to rescue the thousands of injured people in Gaza. He said that the world leadership have to pressurise Israel for ceasefire in Gaza. Hospitals in Gaza are being bombarded by Israeli forces, which is a great loss of Humanity adding that Church Hospital in Gaza have also been bombarded by Israeli forces. Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said that at least 13000 people among 5000 children in Gaza have been martyred and people from all over the world have been calling

for ceasefire in Gaza to start rescue operations. United Nations have also stated that more than 300,000 people in Gaza have no access to food, water and medicines and in this entire scenario, the world leadership have to build pressure at Israel for ceasefire in Gaza, said Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi. He said that until and unless, Israel does not adopt peace process, we will keep raising voice. He said that innocent children, women, mosques and Hospitals are being targeted in Gaza. The religious leaders also appealed to Muslim countries to play their fully role to build pressure on Israel to make ceasefire. The religious leadership also stated that interfaith dialogue endeavours in Pakistan have intensified and also lauded the role of Chief of the Army Staff General Hafiz Asim Munir and Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar for respective instructions on Jaranwala incident as following the visits of Chief Justice of Pakistan and Prime Minister to Jaranwala, people got the hope of justice.



ISLAMABAD: Ladies posing for a picture on the occasion of the Germany Unity Day. —DNA

Govt to enhance standard of medical education

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The quality of medical and dental education will be enhanced at par with international standards, considering local needs and ground realities. Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Medical Education and Patient Care and Minister of State Prof. Dr. Aamir Bilal said that while chairing a high-level meeting at Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) head office for the promotion of medical education and quality health care in the country. He said there will be no compromise on the minimum standards and quality. The minister said that PMDC has a pivotal role in ensuring the quality and standardization of medical and dental education, professional practice, and ethical standards in the country. He said that all necessary steps will be taken to revise existing rules and regulations of PMDC including the syllabus for MDCAT, curriculum for undergraduate medical dental education, and accreditation standards for the accreditation of medical and dental institutes. He emphasized that it will be ensured to standardize the MDCAT, NRE and NEB exams to stringent quality assessments, updated curriculum, and modern teaching methodologies to produce competent and globally competitive healthcare professionals which are safe for society.

APHC urges global attention to IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leaders and organizations have urged the international community to take stock of the worst human rights situation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), as the Indian forces and its agencies, shielded by the draconian laws, kill, harass and arrest the subjugated people with impunity. According to Kashmir Media Service report on Sunday, the APHC leaders, including Ghulam Muhammad Khan Sopori, Abdul Ahad, Muhammad Saleem Zargar, Advocate Arshad Iqbal and Maulana Musab Nadvi in their separate statements issued in Srinagar said a prosperous and strong Pakistan is in the best interest

of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and they always pray for prosperity and stability of the country. The leaders maintained that at a time when India was hell bent to eliminate every Kashmiri and snatch their land and government services, it is incumbent upon Pakistan to galvanize the support of the international community to force India for settlement of the Kashmir dispute as per the United Nations resolutions. They said India has forgotten the reality that the freedom movements and sentiments could not be suppressed through military and brutal tactics, adding that the Bharatiya Janata Party regime was systematically committing genocide and killing Kash-

miris in fake encounters during cordon and search operations. Meanwhile, the APHC AJK chapter's leaders Syed Faiz Naqshbandi, Altaf Hussain Wani and Shamim Shawl in their separate statement in Islamabad, have urged the international community to take notice of the worst human rights violations in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. They urged the United Nations Council for Human Rights, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other peace-loving people of the world to take cognizance of the prevailing gruesome situation of Kashmir wherein people were being killed mercilessly without any reason. — DNA



Lahore remains among world's most polluted cities

LAHORE: Despite caretaker government's extreme drive to curb smog, Lahore is still one of the most polluted cities in the world on Sunday. Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi while presiding over a meeting on Thursday ordered measures, including smart lockdown, to curb smog. But smart lockdown could not improve the situation as average air quality index (AQI) of Lahore was recorded at 356 (extremely hazardous) on Sunday. Closing of The Mall to vehicular traffic proved futile as AQI was 458 in the morning, while AQI in the DHA's phase 8 was 437, in Gulberg it was 412 and Johar Town 402. Meanwhile, the number of people with respiratory complaints increased in hospitals due to breathing in the toxic atmosphere. Children and elderly are the most affected by the pollution. On the other hand, smart lockdown is still enforced in 10 smog-affected districts of Punjab. There will be lockdown in Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Multan, Sahiwal and Sargodha divisions. Lahore's The Mall is closed to all kinds of vehicular traffic — only cyclists and pedestrians can commute. Punjab Relief Commissioner Nabil Javed issued a notification on Saturday for smart lockdown in all districts of Gujranwala, Multan, Sargodha, Faisalabad and Sahiwal divisions. —DNA

Naqvi orders to speed up driving licence

DNA

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited police service centers (Khidmat Markaz) of Liberty and Garden Town late at night and inspected the procedure of driving licence issuance system. During the visit of Chief Minister, Inspector General of Police Dr. Usman Anwar was also present. The CM found that the Internet of the Token Machine of the Police Service Center of Garden Town is broken and citizens are facing difficulties in getting tokens.

CM Naqvi met the citizens present at the two service centers and asked questions regarding getting a driving licence while the citizens complained about the delay in the process for getting the driving licences. Chief Minister Naqvi directed to speed up the process of making driving licences. He gave instructions to the IG police in this regard and directed to fix token machine's internet at Garden Town Service Center sooner. The Chief Minister instructed that there should be no delay in making the driving licence. CM Naqvi also in-

spected the driving licence manufacturing vans and met the citizens. 12% reduction in crimes recorded during 6 months of Punjab caretaker govt. Over 12 percent reduction in crimes has been recorded in 6 months due to effective policing by the caretaker Punjab government. As per the crime calls statistics of Lahore, a decrease in the incidents of robbery, theft and larceny in Lahore was recorded during 6 months. Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that the trend of reduction in crime is admirable, but it has to be further reduced.

CPEC seminar highlights Pakistan's prosperity path

PESHAWAR: Speakers at a seminar on Sunday underscored significance of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) for Pakistan's prosperity and global collaboration and stressed the importance of converting these challenges into opportunities. Secretary Agriculture Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Javed Marwat has heralded the CPEC as a transformative game-changer for both Pakistan and the broader region. He said that this significant project not only presented challenges but also offered unprecedented opportunities for the nation. The seminar was organized by the China Window, a Peshawar-based Chinese Cultural Center, in collaboration with the Institute of Management Sciences (IMSciences). A large number of male and female students participated in the seminar. Javed Marwat emphasized that CPEC presented both challenges and opportunities for the region. He said Pakistan needs to improve its industries and generate youth employment through CPEC. Javed Marwat expressed optimism that the establishment of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) would attract investment not only from China but also from other countries from around the world, including the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. The Secretary of Agriculture underscored the potential for agricultural development. He pointed out that 1.1 million acres of land in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was currently barren, emphasizing the need to leverage CPEC to cultivate this land. Javed Marwat suggested that adopting China's successful agricultural model could lead to significant progress in the sector. Javed Marwat urged the audience to view global conditions as an opportunity to turn challenges into positive outcomes. He anticipated that the SIFC would attract investors from various countries worldwide, contributing to Pakistan's economic growth. Professor Dr. Usman Ghani, Director of IMSciences, highlighted that CPEC encompasses not only industrial investment but also educational collaboration between Pakistan and China. He acknowledged the thousands of Pakistani students benefiting from scholarships to study in top Chinese universities. He emphasized the positive impact of memorandums of understanding (MoU) signed between educational institutions in Pakistan, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and their Chinese counterparts. Dr. Usman Ghani said that the present era required producing such a batch of students who were skilled in technology and serve in the industry sector. —DNA

Ignite launches 3rd digital Pakistan cyber security Hackathon 2023

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecom Dr. Umar Saif emphasized the paramount importance of safeguarding the cyber boundaries of the country. He highlighted the ongoing efforts within his Ministry to identify and nurture talent capable of thwarting malicious cyber attempts. In his message at the inaugural event of the third edition of Digital Pakistan Cybersecurity Hackathon 2023, organized by Ignite in Karachi, the minister conveyed the progress in establishing the operational readiness of Pakistan's National Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the forthcoming institutionalization of a Cyber Security Authority. The event was attended by CEO Ignite, Asim Shahryar Husain, along with board members of Ignite, Engr. Prof. Dr. Bilal Ahmed

Alvi, Vice Chancellor Nazeer Husain University Karachi and Prof. Dr. Rabia Enam, Director ORIC SSUET Karachi besides cybersecurity professionals and guests from the industry and academia, said a news release issued on Sunday. In his welcome address, Asim Shahryar Husain, CEO Ignite, informed that this year, Ignite had organized a series of five-day hands-on training workshops in ten cities of Pakistan to build the capacity of cybersecurity students and professionals before conducting the hackathons. He said that originally designed for approximately 100 participants at each location, these workshops accommodated an impressive 1576 trainees which was 57 percent more than the planned trainees. The comprehensive training covered various topics of cybersecurity including Security fundamentals, Penetration testing methodologies, Web application security, Network security, Social engineering, Wireless network security,

Cloud Security, Mobile device security, and Incident response. He also informed the audience that three teams from Ignite's cybersecurity hackathons over the past two years, Griffins, Su-doers and Airoverflow, had competed in "Black Hat MEA" in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from 14th to 16th November. The three teams, sponsored by Ignite, were ranked in the top 35 teams out of 250 global teams with Airoverflow, Su-doers, and Griffins being ranked 27th, 32nd, and 33rd in Blackhat MEA's competition respectively. Team Airoverflow achieved a remarkable feat by cracking a Linux Docker in just 4 minutes and 50 seconds during a challenge presented by the Academy of Learning. This was the first time that six Pakistani teams had participated in Blackhat and goal will be to improve rankings in next year's competition through training and practice. This was followed by talks on different topics related to cybersecurity by Dr. Haider Abbas, DG NCERT, Fahad Azam, CISO

Meezan Bank, GM K-Electric, and Salman Mufti, Head of Enterprise Security and Compliance, HBL. In his closing remarks, Engr. Prof. Dr. Bilal Alvi commended the efforts of Ignite for transforming the Digital Pakistan Cyber Security Hackathon into a national brand. He described it as a singular platform fostering an environment for identifying and addressing security vulnerabilities, promoting secure coding practices, and generating innovative solutions to combat emerging cyber threats faced by Pakistan. The morning session involved a very interesting quiz competition which included live questions and answers using Menti's platform. Teams from ten universities competed and the top 3 teams were from FAST and NUST universities. The hackathon started with 4 hours of blue teaming followed by 6 hours of capture the flag style competition. After 10 hours of hackathon, the top 3 teams were Revolt, M4Lware.

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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

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Massive depreciation fuels multi-decade high inflation

The short-term, or weekly, inflation is measured by a basket of goods and services called the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), which currently stands at 308.90 compared to 309.09 in the preceding week

Faisal Sheikh

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP), while fearing of a sluggish growth and high inflationary trends in the country, said the massive depreciation, high exchange rates and resultant heavy bank borrowing to finance record fiscal deficits and debt servicing fuelled the spiraling multi-decade high inflation rates. FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar observed that the inflation reading was 41.13pc for the week ending Nov 23, as gas prices stood over 1,100pc higher than a year ago. He asked the government for a sharp fiscal adjustment and decisive implementation of broad-based reforms to get out of the macroeconomic quagmire, as annual short-term inflation remained above 40 per cent for the second week in a row, mainly driven by a massive increase in gas prices. Calling for the robust implementation of the real reforms amidst continued fiscal restraint, he said the real GDP growth is projected to recover to 1.7 percent in FY24, estimating the rate of inflation at 26.5pc for the current fiscal year and 17 percent for

FY25. Referring to the latest data, he stated that after gas, other items whose prices increased the most included wheat flour (88.2pc), chilli powder (81.7pc), broken basmati rice (76.6pc), garlic (71pc), Irrigated rice (62.3pc), gents' sponge chappal (58pc), gents' sandal (53.37pc), branded tea (53pc), gur (50.8pc), and potatoes (47.9pc). On a week-on-week basis, however, consumer prices were unchanged in the outgoing week in sharp contrast to the previous week's reading when the prices skyrocketed 10pc as the hike in gas prices came into effect. The short-term, or weekly, inflation is measured by a basket of goods and services called the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), which currently stands at 308.90 compared to 309.09 in the preceding week. The index, comprising 51 items collected from 50 markets in 17 cities, is computed weekly to assess the prices of essential commodities and services at shorter intervals. The PBS data showed that the prices of 18 items increased, those of 12 items decreased and those of 21 items remained stable compared to the previous week. The items whose prices saw the highest increase week-on-week included garlic (4.6pc), onion (2.4pc), chicken (1.8pc), potatoes (1.7pc), pulse masoor (1.01pc),

LPG (0.8pc), firewood (0.6pc), wheat flour (0.54pc), matchbox (0.52pc), pulse moong (0.52pc) and plain bread (0.47pc). On an annual basis, the SPI inflation hit a record 48.35pc in early May but then cooled to as low as 24.4pc in late August before crossing 40pc during the week ending Nov 16. As a consequence, more than 12.5 million people are estimated to have fallen below the international poverty line (\$3.65 per day) from the vulnerable stage or 39.4pc of the population under the poverty line FY23 – down from 34.2pc in FY22. The growth forecast is slightly lower than 2pc it was forecast in June and less than half the 3.5pc target set by the government. Last month, the Asian Development Bank projected GDP growth rate at 1.9pc and rate of inflation at 25pc for the current fiscal year. The WB forecast Pakistan's fiscal deficit at 7.7pc of GDP in FY24 and primary deficit at 0.4pc of GDP – unlike IMF's 0.4pc of primary surplus for the current year, showing a wide gap of 0.8pc of GDP or about Rs-850bn. He said that without a sharp fiscal adjustment and decisive implementation of broad-based reforms, Pakistan's economy will remain vulnerable to domestic and external shocks, warning that economic growth was therefore expected to remain

below potential over the medium term with some improvements in investment and exports. Careful economic management and deep structural reforms will be required to ensure macroeconomic stability and growth," he said and noted that with inflation at record highs, rising electricity prices, severe climate shocks, and insufficient public resources to finance human development investments and climate adaptation, critical reforms must be undertaken to build the fiscal space and public means to invest into inclusive, sustainable, and climate-resilient development.

Anjum Nisar said that the inflation continued to increase in the wake of higher prices of food and energy despite a recent cut in the prices of petroleum products, as essential commodities have still not seen a decline in prices, leaving trade and industry frustrated. He stressing the need for putting the economy on a sustainable growth trajectory by providing incentives to the industry, lamented that the economy is facing multiple challenges of falling exports, high inflation, low growth and declining foreign reserves, with fiscal accounts under immense pressure on account of heavy interest payments.

Residents want immediate extension of Blue bus route

ISLAMABAD: The residents residing in different housing societies located near the Islamabad Expressway have demanded an immediate extension of the route covered by Blue Bus service up to PWD interchange after substantial road widening and construction work had been completed, easing vehicular traffic on one of the busiest arteries of the twin cities. Residents of Korang, Pakistan, Jinnah Garden, PWD, Sohan, and other adjacent societies were of the opinion that the authorities have unveiled the plying of the Blue Bus service route from Rawat but deferred it due to the condition of the road and the subsequent construction and expansion work from Korang Bridge to Rawat. The demand coincides with the Capital Development Authority's (CDA) decision to roll out 160 electric buses on 13 different routes in the capital city. As the extensive work on the laying of new road lanes has been completed up to PWD interchange with smooth and rapid vehicular traffic, the route of Blue Bus service should be extended to PWD interchange to facilitate a large number of commuters, students, and office-going people, Raziq Ali Shah, a senior journalist and resident of Jinnah Garden, said on Sunday. Haji Abdul Qadoos, a trader in PWD, said that the introduction of blue bus service on the Expressway was a significant initiative to provide much-needed transport facilities to the masses, but after the completion of hassle-free traffic movement on the newly constructed multi-lane road from Korang Bridge to Naval Anchorage Housing Society, its route should be immediately expanded to PWD interchange. Shaheena Jabeen and Humaira, two working women and residents of Korang town, opined that they conveniently moved to their workplaces located in the Blue Area regularly by boarding the Blue buses, but for reaching the Koral bus stand to catch the service, they still faced the issue of moving from the entrance of the society on the highway to the designated Blue bus stop via private.—APP

PODA launches awareness sessions on women rights



DNA

ISLAMABAD: PODA is set to launch a series of awareness sessions, focusing on the challenges faced by women in accessing their rights. Our aim is to empower women for active participation in political processes and also these awareness sessions will not come to an end on December 10, this campaign

will continue till the end of December and cover more than 50 districts." PODA Pakistan, a leading advocate for gender equality and women's rights Organization is gearing up to participate actively in the Global 16 Days of Activism campaign Against Gender-Based Violence commencing from November 25th to December 10th, 2023. This year's theme, "UNITE! Invest to prevent

violence against women and girls," resonates deeply with PODA's commitment to advocate for gender equality across social and political spheres. At PODA, we believe in addressing the root causes and underlying factors that contribute to gender-based violence. Under 16 Days of Activism, activities will focus on the Advocacy of Girl Childbirth Registration, Voter Education, and Early Marriages.

Sessions and webinars on Ending Violence Against Women, Women to Access Citizenship Rights in Rural Areas, Issues and Challenges in Elections of Pakistan, and Human Rights laws in Pakistan will be held in project areas. PODA will organize community theatre performances, and community dialogue on child abuse, and will celebrate World Children's Day.

Pak proactive approach in seeking BRICS membership

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis on Sunday said by seeking membership in BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), Pakistan demonstrates a proactive approach to economic collaboration, geopolitical stability, and shared development objectives. Chairing a round table meeting of Gold Ring Economic Forum, a strategic think tank, he said the decision aligns with the country's pursuit of enhanced trade, investment opportunities, and diplomatic ties on a global scale, said a news release here. Moreover, it sends a positive message about Pakistan's commitment to fostering mutual understanding and collective efforts to address common challenges. Pakistan's wise decision to formally request to join BRICS will pay dividends in future. He said this strategic move not only reflects Pakistan's commitment to regional and global cooperation but also highlights its foresight in recognizing the potential benefits of participating in this influential alliance. As BRICS continues to play a crucial role in shaping the global economic landscape, Pakistan's inclusion will undoubtedly contribute to the diversification and strengthening of the alliance, he added. Meher Kashif Younis applauded the leadership for this bold and forward-thinking step, and he is optimistic about the positive impact it will have on the region and beyond. He hoped that BRICS would move forward on Pakistan's request in line with its commitment to inclusive multilateralism. Pakistan enjoyed friendly ties with most members of the BRICS as well as the newly-invited group of countries. Pakistan was an ardent supporter of multilateralism and was a member of several such organisations, he remarked.—APP

Malik urges govt to prioritize uninterrupted power

ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan Business Forum Lahore Momin Ali Malik Sunday urged the government to prioritize uninterrupted power and gas supply for the industrial sector and agriculture sector during the winter season. Talking to a delegation of industrialists, he said, "The industrial sector plays a pivotal role in the economic growth and uninterrupted gas and power supply is essential for its smooth functioning," said a news release issued here. "This will not only sustain production but also safeguard jobs and contribute to overall economic stability besides help meeting export targets." He said, "Timely availability of power is crucial for agricultural activities, especially during winter, to support processes such as crop drying and irrigation." "Ensuring a reliable power supply to this sector will directly impact food production and the livelihoods of our farmers," he added. He hoped that government will take the necessary measures to coordinate with relevant authorities and stakeholders to implement this prioritization effectively. Government attention to this matter will undoubtedly contribute to the economic prosperity and well-being of our nation.—DNA

Pakistan-Korea trade ties be enhanced further: Envoy

Mehtab Pirzada

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan to Korea Nabeel Munir has said that trade and economic relation between Pakistan and Korea should be enhanced as both countries are potential markets and have the great ability and resources to fulfill each other's needs. He was talking to APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood, who met with the Ambassador at Pakistan Embassy in Seoul, to discuss important matters related to B2B collaborations, joint ventures, and enhancing bilateral trade between Korea and Pakistan. In the meeting, the Pakistan Embassy in Korea and the All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) agreed to give intra-trade a new boost through joint ventures between the private sectors of the two countries. Several ideas were discussed to bring awareness about opportunities on both sides of the business communities through regular contact and exchange of information for the businesses of Korea and Pakistan. On this occasion, Nabeel Munir acknowledged and appreciated APBF efforts and initiatives taken by it for the business community of Pakistan. He observed Pakistan is a very potential market, adding that doing business in country like Pakistan is always very profitable. He said that Korea and Pakistan remain actively engaged in various fields such as climate change, cultural exchange, and information technology. Many Korean investors are also interested in the Pakistani market, investing over \$39 million last year alone. The 13,000 Pakistanis in Korea also contribute invaluably to the Korean economy to further solidify relations. Korean companies already operate in Pakistan in diverse sectors. Daewoo, Samsung, Lotte, LG, Hyundai, and Kia are household names in Pakistan. While Korean companies are welcome to invest in any sector, food processing, the automotive industry, I.T., hospitality/tourism, textiles, housing and construction, and logistics are areas in which Korean companies enjoy a competitive advantage. Speaking on the occasion, the APBF President applauded Nabeel Munir for the efforts being made by him to increase collaboration on both sides between Korea and Pakistan through his diligent working. APBF President assured his full commitment to work closely with his office and Excellency welcomed this with great enthusiasm. Syed Maaz Mahmood briefed the Pakistan ambassador about the APBF efforts and initiatives to increase bilateral trade, facilitating business community for ease of doing business and promoting the real and positive perception of Pakistan at every platform. Syed Maaz Mahmood observed that Pakistan with a \$347 billion economy, a youthful population of 220 million, a location at the crossroads of South and Central Asia and the Middle East, and investor-friendly policies, is open for business. He said that Korea is an important trading partner of Pakistan. South Korea is the second biggest export destination of Pakistan in East Asia after China. It comes at 14th place among the top importing countries and at 16th place among the top exporting countries for Pakistan. He said that the 16 designated Special Economic Zones in Pakistan offer lucrative incentives for investors. Korean companies are welcome to start businesses in established SEZs or develop a Korean SEZ anywhere in Pakistan. Benefits include a one-time exemption from customs duties and taxes for all capital goods imported into Pakistan for the development, operations, and maintenance of the SEZ. Similarly, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a game-changing development of the Belt and Road Initiative, is open for third-party collaboration.

Ministry allocates Rs 5.80m for electricity bill of Qasr-e-Naz lodge

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Housing and Works has allocated an amount of Rs 5.80 million in the current financial year 2023-2024 for electricity bills of Qasr-e-Naz Lodge, South Zone Karachi due to financial constraints. "Out of the total Rs 5.80 million, only an amount of Rs 0.87 million has been released at the rate of 15 percent in this regard so far," an official source told APP. He said that the Karachi Electric Supply Company bill was Rs 7.26 million for the month of September 2023 along with arrears and the electricity connection had been disconnected in June 2023. As per the statement of K-Electric, the official said that the electricity connection would be restored after payment of the complete amount along with arrears. To a question, the official source said that the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) had opened registration to allot plots to the general public in sectors G-12 and F-12, Islamabad in August 2023. He said the award of land of Sectors F-12 and G-12 was announced by the Deputy Commissioner of Capital Development Authority (CDA) in April and June 1985 under section 25 of CDA Ordinance 1960.—APP

بل کو پروٹیکٹڈ بنانے کا راز جانیں!

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مزیدیں کے 4 مہینے گیس کا ماہانہ استعمال 0.9hm³ سے کم رکھیں

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گیس کا استعمال 0.9hm³ تک کیسے رکھا جاسکتا ہے

- مہینہ وار استعمال پر نوڈ کریں
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Briefs

SAPM underlines need for strengthening Pak-Saudi cooperation

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani delegation led by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD), Jawad Sohrab Malik, visited the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh on Sunday. The delegation included Ambassador of Pakistan Ahmad Farooq, Director General of Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment (BEOE) Akram Khawaja, Joint Secretary Emigration Aurangzeb, and Community Welfare Attachés, said a press release. The Saudi side was represented by Deputy Governor Eng. Abdulrahman Almarwani, Director General of International Cooperation Eng. Sultan Alsunay, Supervisor at the Deputy Governor Office for Training and Quality Policies, Dr. Khaled Al-Othman, and International Cooperation Specialist at the Directorate of International Cooperation, Khaled Alshehri. The Deputy Governor of the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) welcomed the Pakistani delegation.

The meeting was held in a very cordial manner. The Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) team gave a detailed presentation on the working of TVTC.

SAPM, Jawad Sohrab Malik appreciated the great role of the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) in the skills development of Saudi nationals. Both sides discussed ways to strengthen cooperation in skills improvement for workers.

It is pertinent to note here that Navtec and Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) will soon sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in this regard.

The visit of the Pakistani delegation to the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) was a positive step forward in strengthening cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in the field of skills development. Both sides are committed to working together to create new opportunities for Pakistani workers in Saudi Arabia.

PR accelerates efforts to retrieve 13,972 acres land from land grabbers

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has accelerated the efforts to retrieve the major portion of around 13,972 acres of land worth billions of rupees found under the illegal occupation of private individuals and different government departments across the country. "Around 5,809 acres were occupied in Punjab, 1,181 acres are under encroachment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5,948 acres in Sindh and 1,034 acres land occupied in Balochistan," an official in the Ministry told APP. He said the category of land under illegal occupations included commercial, residential, agricultural and various persons or departments. Giving details of the land, the official said that around 769 acres were commercial in all the provinces, 3,309 residential, 5,512 acres agricultural and 4382 were under encroachment of various persons or departments. The official said the department had also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country to recoup its land from different individuals, groups, and even business organizations which were using it for residential, commercial and agriculture purposes for decades. "The joint procedure orders have been issued to all Divisional Superintendents of Pakistan Railways to retrieve the railway land from encroachers," the official added. Accordingly, he said the anti-encroachment operations for retrieval of encroached Railway land all over the Railway network are being initiated by the concerned divisions.—DNA

ICCI for harnessing untapped trade potential with Thailand

The delegation was representing various sectors including pharmaceuticals, textiles, construction, edible oil, marble, light engineering, hospitality, retail sector, importers and exporters

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President visited Thailand and held meetings with the office bearers of Thai Chamber of Commerce and Thai-Pakistan Business Council to explore the business opportunities between the two countries. The delegation was representing various sectors including pharmaceuticals, textiles, construction, edible oil, marble, light engineering, hospitality, retail sector, importers and exporters.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Pakistan and Thailand have immense potential for bilateral trade, which should be exploited to achieve beneficial results for both economies. He said that the current trade volume between the two countries is relatively low, however, there are numerous opportunities for growth and expansion that remain untapped. He said that both countries can complement each other in many areas as Thailand is a significant exporter of electronics, automobiles, and machinery while Pakistan is a huge market of over 240 million consumers with abundant natural resources like cotton, rice, and textiles. He said that



agriculture, textiles, and energy sectors hold great potential for trade between Pakistan and Thailand, which should be taken benefit of. He said that Thailand has expertise in the renewable energy sector and it should cooperate with Pakistan in this sector to meet our growing energy needs. He said that the purpose of the visit of ICCI delegation to Thailand is to interact with Thai counterparts and explore new areas of mutual cooperation to unlock new business opportunities for a more prosperous future for their citizens. He also briefed the Thai counterparts about the investment potential in various sectors of Pakistan's econ-

omy and invited them to visit Pakistan to explore possibilities of joint ventures and investment. The Office Bearers of Thai Chamber of Commerce and Thai-Pakistan Business Council welcomed the ICCI delegation and assured their full cooperation to promote business linkages between the private sectors of Thailand and Pakistan to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation between the two countries. They said that Thailand and Pakistan can benefit from increased trade and investment, therefore, it is important for both countries to work together to encourage frequent exchange

of trade delegations in order to identify new areas of improving business and investment relations. They said that with supportive policies and incentives from both sides, the business relationship between Pakistan and Thailand could flourish in the years ahead. They hoped that the visit of ICCI delegation to Thailand would lead to good business partnerships between the two countries. Ameer Hamza, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Shahbaz Majeed Sheikh, Raja Muhammad Imtiaz, Faizan Shehzad, Akhtar Hussain, Saif ur Rehman Khan, Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry and Malik Mohsin Khalid are in the ICCI delegation.

ANF recovers 1550 kg drugs in 15 operations; arrests 14 accused

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 15 operations across the country managed to recover 1550 kg drugs and arrested 14 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman. He informed that, in an operation at Bacha Khan International Airport, ANF recovered 1593 grams Ice drug from trolley bag of a passenger. The accused was leaving for Qatar by flight number QR-601. In another operation, 792 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for Britain at the courier office in Lahore. 36 kg opium and 28.8 kg hashish were recovered

from a vehicle intercepted near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad. During the operation, two suspects were also arrested.

18 kg opium and 12 kg hashish were recovered from a truck stopped near Sangiani toll plaza Islamabad while two drug smugglers were netted. 4.8 kg hashish and 1 kg Ice were recovered from a vehicle checked near Shershah Toll Plaza Multan while an accused was arrested.

2.4 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near Vehari Chowk, Multan. 970 grams Ice was recovered from an accused arrested from a passenger bus in Dera Ghazi Khan. 7 kg hashish was recovered

at Jinnah International Airport Karachi from a parcel sent from Quetta. 520 kg opium, 80 kg heroin and 650 kg hashish were recovered from the 'Gali Pani Gai Pishin' area. The spokesman said that 2834 grams opium was recovered from a parcel booked for Canada at a courier office located in Rawalpindi.

101 Ice-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a passenger arrested at Bacha Khan International Airport. The accused, a resident of Khyber, was leaving for Doha by flight number QR-601. 19.2 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle near Kak Pul area Islamabad. During the operation, three accused, residents

of Abbottabad, including a woman, were netted.

150 kg hashish was recovered from two vehicles checked near Saranan Bazar Pishin while a suspect was also arrested during the operation. 8 kg hashish and 2 kg Ice were recovered from the possession of an Afghan national rounded up near Lakpas Toll Plaza Quetta. 3 kg opium and 1 kg Ice concealed in secret cavities of a vehicle were recovered on GT Road Peshawar. A resident of Peshawar was arrested during the operation. Separate cases have been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act while further investigations are under process.

Millions of people are fleeing abroad in search of work

ISLAMABAD: FPCCI's presidential candidate, Atif Ikram Sheikh, said on Sunday that millions of people are leaving the country for employment abroad as there are almost no opportunities in Pakistan due to the economic downturn. He said that workers, scientists, engineers and IT experts are among those leaving the country due to desperation, which has threatened the country's economy. Atif Ikram Sheikh, who has also served as VP FPCCI, Chairman PVMA and President ICCI, said in a statement today that no one will leave the country if they can get decent jobs in Pakistan. He informed that jobs can be created by promoting industrialization, which has received little attention from authorities due to which industrialists are also turning to non-productive sectors. He said that import restrictions are hurting the economy, commodities are becoming expensive, and the dollar volatility is also preventing the market from stabilizing, which needs to be controlled. The business leader said that due to the strict measures of the caretaker government, the country had been saved from bankruptcy. However, we are still facing severe problems, and investors are shying away from Pakistan. Atif Ikram Sheikh said that many local and foreign companies need to get raw materials, while there are also difficulties in sending profits abroad, due to which investment has stopped.—DNA

32% computerization of Gwadar's land record completed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Thirty-two percent computerization of Gwadar's land record has been completed, Gwadar Pro reported quoting Deputy Commissioner Gwadar, Aurangzeb Badini. He stated that the computerization of land records is currently underway in Gwadar. In a progress review meeting, it was noted that 32% of the record computerization has been completed. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) solutions are replacing manual records, a move expected to resolve land issues and litigations in the district, according to Badini. A revolution in computerizing all data, providing online accessibility, and instituting robust backup plans is deemed essential for Gwadar's development.

Badini added that it is time to envision paperless government offices. The digitization of land records is expected to reduce land disputes, subsequently fostering economic development by boosting trade and agriculture. As such, it is crucial for the development and management of smart cities, holding great importance in the Gwadar smart city plan. The land record digitization initiative in Baluchistan, especially in Gwadar, is set to revolutionize the province's administrative processes, increase transparency, and prevent corruption and land grabbing in the future. According to officials, the digitization of land records is part of a broader drive under which all government departments are being digitized. As per the vision, digital facilities will be provided in Gwa-

dar, Pishin, Jaffarabad, and Quetta, including individual registries, maps, land tax, collection SMS services, etc. Officials stated that related departments have been working on this project since 2017, converting manual land records into computerized records. A computerized person will be issued in the center facilities. Registry entries and instant computerized transfers, immediate access to digitized land map equivalents, and a portal for filing complaints to the public will also be available, according to officials. In the next phase, every facility is expected to be available to the public under the roof of Central Facilities in a one-window operation, including land transfer. People could directly go to the facility center instead of the Patwari or Tehsildar.

IRSA releases 91,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 91,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 45,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1501.88 feet and was 101.88 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 22,400 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1180.00 feet, which was 130.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,200 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 58,400, 43,500, 39,900 and 14,400 cusecs respectively.—APP

Economic conditions difficult only for people, small traders

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Saturday that the prevailing economic conditions solely affect individuals and small business owners. Still, the circumstances are highly favourable to powerful companies. Under the guise of the IMF program, the entire burden has been placed on the people, while no responsibility has been placed on the rich, which is unjustified, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the IMF is content with increased tax collection. However, it is not the outcome of efforts of any department but the result of unsustainable inflation. He said that the economy is currently shrinking; the people are not getting their due share while many sectors are getting their rights, including those who are getting more than they deserve, which needs to be balanced. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that in July, August and September, the corporate sector earned 417 billion rupees, breaking the previous record of earnings, in which the profit of banks was 149 billion rupees. Apart from this, almost all the listed companies earned huge profits. In contrast, the gains made by the cement fertilizer and automobile industry in these three months were unprecedented in the last two years. The business leader informed that these companies distributed profits of 97 billion rupees to their shareholders.—DNA

ICT admin posted seven new ACs

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory administration has posted/transferred seven Assistant commissioners against vacant posts after issuance of notification from establishment division. In this regard Islamabad administration has issued orders for postings and transfer of new assistant commissioners according to notification Abdullah Khan Swati has been posted Assistant Commissioner Secretariat Circle, Nihal Hafeez Assistant Commissioner Shalimar, Aneeq Anwar Assistant Commissioner Potohar, Kamran Asghar Assistant Commissioner Rural, Farwa Batul Assistant Commissioner Industrial Area, Aziz Khan Assistant Commissioner Nellore and Farhan Ahmed Assistant Commissioner City.—APP

World sustainable Transport Day

ISLAMABAD: First ever World Sustainable Transport Day is being observed on Sunday. In his message on the occasion, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres said there is an urgent need for a transformative shift towards more sustainable transport, emphasizing importance of cleaner energy to combat climate change. The UN adopted a resolution earlier this year to designate November 26 as the World Sustainable Transport Day.—APP

Senate to resume its business on Monday

ISLAMABAD: The Senate is set to resume its business on Monday after a two-day break, with proceedings beginning at 3 p.m. During the session, the House will transact private members' business, during which several bills will be introduced. Moreover, the House will discuss matters of national and international importance.—APP

ECP to hear Imran Khan's PTI chairman case on Nov 28

ISLAMABAD: Yet another test for the cornered Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), which is already grappling with so many issues, as the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will take up the case of stripping PTI Chairman Imran Khan off his party chairmanship on Tuesday (November 28). A five-member bench, headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja, will hear the case. PTI chairman's lawyers, on the occasion, will submit their replies to the bench. Khalid Mehmood Khan, a citizen, who had filed a petition in the election commission, had argued that since Imran was now a convict in the Toshakhana reference; therefore, he be removed from the post of the party chairman. Also on Sunday, Akbar S. Babar, one of the founders of PTI, in his message, urged what he called 'ideological workers of the party' to come forward in order to ensure free, fair, and transparent intra-party elections as ordered by the ECP. He tried to bring home the fact that in case free and fair elections were not held, the party would not be able to retain its electoral symbol of 'bat', and hence the prospects for it contesting the general elections might be in serious jeopardy. "Therefore, the PTI workers will have to save the party from complete destruction," he said, and announced starting a countrywide mass contact campaign on behalf of the party. Babar was of the view that the workers would have to rise to the occasion so that what he called the party could be saved from getting 'hijacked' again. He also called for the constitution of PTI's election commission, comprising honest and dedicated party leaders and workers, after consultations with each other. "Voters' lists should be issued at the national, provincial and district levels," he said, adding, "The verification of these voters should be done in a transparent manner.—DNA

Political Instability In Pakistan

Political stability plays an important role in keeping society integrated and in maintaining legitimacy within the state

MUHAMMAD ALI

Political instability has become a serious and threatening problem especially in developing and underdeveloped countries. It is creating massive problems and resisting the development of these countries. The theme of this article revolves around the problem of political stability in the context of identity and justification crisis in Pakistan. Political stability plays an important role in keeping society integrated and in maintaining legitimacy within the state. It is essential for the economic development, social integration, and supremacy of law in a state. The stability of the political system has direct effects on the processes of nation and state building. These both require stable political systems for their growth and flourishing. The development of nation and state without a firm and organized system of politics is not possible and the government becomes only a tug of war amongst various interest groups. Political instability in any state is the best opportunity for the external interference,

anti-state elements, and pressure groups for the exploitation of their own selfish interests. Political history of Pakistan is the narrative and analysis of political events, ideas, movements, and leaders of Pakistan. Pakistan gained independence from the United Kingdom on 14 August 1947, when the Presidencies and provinces of British India were divided by the United Kingdom, in a region which is commonly referred to as the Indian subcontinent. Since its independence, Pakistan has had a colorful yet turbulent political history at times, often characterized by martial law and inefficient. The Pakistani political structure is moving away from the politics of clientelism towards the politics of fundamentalism, and fundamentalism means instability. In stable conditions people are empowered and exert their energies for the development of the nation. In case of instability the case is vice versa, people feel unsatisfied and powerless, lose their trust in institutions and they prefer their own interest in front of state and ultimately society leads to split. The Pakistani Political system has always protected the interests of elites. Although political leadership has been

the representative authority, they failed to raise hope for a democratic state that would provide socio-economic justice to all Pakistani citizens. The political leadership failed to create harmony on the national language, the role of Islam, provincial representation and the division of powers between the center and the provinces, delayed the constitution and postponed general elections. Pakistan is a multiparty democracy where several political parties compete for seats in the National and Provincial assemblies. From the 1950s to 2000s, several coups were staged that overthrew democratic regimes. In May 2023, Pakistan witnessed a staggering record inflation rate of 38 per cent compared to the same period the previous year. Over the past 12 months, the average inflation rate stood at 30 per cent, significantly impacting the affordability of daily essentials such as food and transportation for the poor and middle-class. The country's economy is teetering on the brink of collapse, attributed to years of financial mismanagement, natural disasters, and political turmoil. The political tumult in Pakistan comes as the country grapples with a dire

economic outlook. Growth has slowed to a crawl, while a severe shortfall of dollars is hampering imports. Shortages of food items are contributing to skyrocketing prices. Inflation reached an annual rate of 36.4% in April, with the cost of food rising nearly 47% in urban areas and more than 52% in rural regions. The present political instability in Pakistan has raised the external and internal challenges for its society and state. Pakistan is facing serious challenges specially in the realms of politics and economics. The global world is providing aid and assistance to Pakistan but in presence of insincere leadership and political unstable conditions the huge foreign aid is not generating any positive results. Pakistan can emerge as a strong state and nation only when the socio-cultural trends of intolerance, exclusivity, nepotism, extremist ideologies and violence that have warped the national fabric, are transformed as a nation. And the political nursery of inclusiveness, tolerance, enlightenment, and coexistence in state building should foster critical thinking skills, inclusiveness, and respect for opposing ideologies in future generations of Pakistan.

Trilateral meeting offers ray of hope

The China-Japan-ROK Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Busan, the Republic of Korea, on Sunday is the first since 2019. Relations between China and its two East Asian neighbors had become increasingly fraught in the intervening years, as the US administration has worked hard to draw its two allies into its "Indo-Pacific" strategy at the expense of their ties with China. If the three sides can take advantage of the meeting to pave the way for an anticipated trilateral meeting of their heads of state, to be arranged at the "earliest convenient time", the Busan meeting might become an overture to a much-needed thawing of relations between China and its two neighbors. It is against the backdrop of easing tensions between Beijing and Washington that the trilateral foreign ministers' meeting is being staged. The pace with which Tokyo and Seoul are trying to repair relations with Beijing has apparently accelerated after the meeting between the leaders of China and the United States in San Francisco earlier this month, in which the two sides reached some consensus to strengthen exchanges and responsibly manage the Sino-US relations and avoid decoupling and confrontation. Subsequently, the leaders of Japan and China held their first meeting in a year on the sidelines of the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, which was held alongside the summit. ROK President Yoon Suk-yeol also exchanged warm greetings with his Chinese counterpart face-to-face during the multilateral gathering. And the generally friendly and constructive tones of the readouts of the ROK-China and Japan-China bilateral foreign minister's meetings arranged on Saturday and Sunday before their trilateral meeting show their readiness to focus on economic and trade cooperation, as well as their common recognition of the difficulties that they face in resolving their divergences on some issues, not least pro-US diplomacy of Tokyo and Seoul, which touches on China's core interests. As long as Japan and the ROK surrender their strategic autonomy to the US, the extent to which they can mend ties with Beijing will depend on how much space Washington grants them to do so. Their security cooperation with the US is set by their trilateral and respective bilateral agreements, through which the US holds the reins on how they address regional hotspot issues such as the maritime tensions in the East and South China seas and even the Taiwan question, a grave interference in China's internal affairs. Even the economic and trade cooperation between China and the two countries, where they have broad common interests, is now restricted by the economic, trade and technology pacts introduced by the US. For instance, both the ROK and Japan have been pressured to be part of the "chip alliance" Washington has founded to try and prevent China having access to advanced chips and related equipment. It is likely that the relations between China and the two US allies will take on a dual-track model with Washington pulling the strings it has affixed to Seoul and Tokyo. But despite this, if the leaders of the three East Asian countries can have their first trilateral meeting since 2019, it would undoubtedly provide a boost for the regional stability as well as bolster confidence in the economic prospects of the global economy.

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Potential of relations needs to be sustained

He has supposedly vowed to shut down Argentina's central bank and drop the peso, the country's currency, in favor of the US dollar. He has apparently pledged to drastically downsize the government by cutting entire ministries. He also made sensational claims on the campaign trail that many anticipate will dramatically disrupt Argentina's foreign policies. Dubbed by some as "Argentina's Donald Trump", self-claimed anarchy-capitalist Javier Milei won the country's recent presidential election riding a tide of voter anger over the status quo. Labeling his foreign policy as part of the global "fight against socialists and statists", he has raised eyebrows with comments regarding China, Brazil and Russia, and with his expressed antagonism toward BRICS, despite Argentina being one of the six countries invited to join an enlarged BRICS. While the next Argentine leader's promise to not deal with "socialists" and "communists" has triggered serious concern about his approach to trade partners such as China, which is the second-largest market for Argentine exports. If such reported statements from the campaign trail do translate into policy after his Dec 10 inauguration, the China-Argentina relationship will no doubt suffer. Especially with the unverified remark by Diana Mondino, who is tipped to be the next foreign minister and who suggested that the new government would "stop interacting" with the governments of China and Brazil. If that were to be the case, it would be a significant break from the current cooperative relations that have been established. During his October visit to China, President Alberto Fernandez called China a "true friend" of his country and pledged bilateral coordination under such frameworks as the G20 and BRICS. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said that "Bilateral relations between China and Argentina have shown sound momentum of growth". Preserving that momentum would be beneficial for both economies. In his congratulatory message to president-elect Milei, President Xi Jinping underscored that, "pragmatic cooperation in various fields has brought tangible benefits to the people of both countries", and vowed to work with Milei to "facilitate our respective country's development and revitalization with win-win cooperation". It is to be hoped that through their personal exchange of goodwill, the Chinese leader and the next leader of Argentina have in part mitigated any possibility of a substantial disruption of bilateral ties. "It would be a huge foreign policy mistake for Argentina to cut ties with major countries such as China or Brazil," said the Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, affirming that "China stands ready to work with Argentina to keep our relations on a steady course forward." Many of the challenges facing president-elect Milei are rooted in the economic troubles at home, including one of the highest inflation rates in the world. Healthy economic and trade relations with the world's major economies will be instrumental to his attempt to revitalize his country's economy.

Complex interplay of trade, politics, and power in East Asia

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The United States consumes a significant amount of goods manufactured in Asia, which benefits the United States as a whole by providing consumers with cheaper products. However, this trade pattern simultaneously damages some American sectors and regions by harming local industries. What benefits consumers can lead to increased unemployment and lower wages, creating complex political dynamics within the United States?

East Asia is a region of immense economic significance and geopolitical importance characterized by a complex interplay of trade, politics, and power. This interdependence between these three factors has shaped the dynamics of the region which are influencing not only the prosperity and stability of individual nations but also the broader international environment. Trade has long served as a catalyst for economic growth and development in East Asia. The region has witnessed remarkable economic transformation over the past few decades, driven by its robust trade networks. Countries like China, Japan, South Korea, and others have become global economic powerhouses, with exports and imports playing a central role in their success. East Asia's economic prosperity is inextricably linked to international trade. The growth of supply chains, manufacturing hubs and technological innovation has fueled economic advancement. Trade liberalization policies, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and regional trade agreements like the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) have facilitated trade integration and helped the region achieve economic interdependence. East Asia has seen the emergence of regional trading blocs like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the East Asia Summit (EAS). These institutions have promoted economic cooperation, reduced trade barriers and enhanced cross-border investments and further deepening the region's economic interconnectivity. The political situation of East Asia is marked by its rich diversity, historical tensions and shifting alliances. Politics not only influences trade policies but also shapes the regional balance of power. East Asia has been a focal point for global power competition, particularly between the United States and China. The political maneuvering between these two giants affects trade dynamics, as it influences alliances, security agreements and economic dependencies. The U.S.-China trade war serves as a prime example of how politics can disrupt trade relations in the region. The distribution of power in East Asia is fluid, with a range of actors seeking to exert influence in different ways. National power and strategic interests play a crucial role in shaping the region's dynamics. The United States consumes a significant amount of goods manufactured in Asia, which benefits the United States as a whole by providing consumers with cheaper products. However, this trade pattern simultaneously damages some American sectors and regions by harming local industries. What benefits consumers can lead to increased unemployment and lower wages, creating complex political dynamics within the United States? One of the characteristics of the United States is its tendency to not feel internal political concerns because it has a large scope to manipulate foreign policy. Therefore, the overall benefits of trading with Asia, the United States may find itself in a position where domestic political considerations force it to change its import policies from Asia. While this possibility is remote, it represents a serious threat to the interests of East Asia. China sends about a quarter of its total exports to the United States. If the United States were to ban Chinese products or impose tariffs that render Chinese goods non-competitive, China would face a massive economic crisis. The same would happen in Japan and other Asian countries. Countries facing economic collapse can become unpredictable and may attempt to open up other markets, sometimes through political or military pressure. The United States is also sensitive to domestic political pressures exerted by groups disproportionately affected by cheap Asian imports. In response to internal pressures, the United

States may seek to reshape economic relationships in the Pacific region. The United States cannot resort to protectionist legislation, supported by its military strength. Therefore, there is no real effective counter to the military or economic activities carried out by the United States in East Asia. From a self-preservation standpoint, the last thing any country in the region wants is conflict. However, objectively, there is a massive power imbalance. Any change in U.S. policies can cause chaos in East Asia and it is not even conceivable that there will be a change in U.S. policy. The threat of U.S. sanctions against China, for example, which could allow the United States to try to limit oil imports from China, strikes at the core of Chinese national interest. Therefore, the Chinese must use their growing economic strength to develop a military option against the United States. They will simply act according to the basic principle of strategic planning: hope for the best and plan for the worst. In this context, China and Japan have no choice but to attempt to increase their military power for the next century. The United Nations will see this as a potential threat to U.S. control over the Western Pacific. This will define defensive moves as offensive, which is objectively the case, no matter their personal intentions. Add to that the two continuously growing countries like South Korea and Taiwan and it's certain that the region will become a powder keg in the 21st century. The complex interplay of trade, politics, and power in East Asia shapes the region's present and future. Trade is both a driver of prosperity and a potential casualty of political tensions while the distribution of power among nations can profoundly affect regional stability. The region's evolving dynamics have broader implications for global affairs, making it imperative for nations in and beyond East Asia to navigate this intricate web of interactions with care and strategic foresight.

Rousing the sleeping giant of climate philanthropy

Badr Jafar

The presence of global philanthropists at the forum is not an afterthought. Although a lot has been said in recent decades about the crucial role that government and business must play in the fight against climate change and nature degradation, much less attention has been paid to the increasingly important role that philanthropy plays in this effort. This is despite the fact that well over \$1 trillion in philanthropic capital is deployed around the world every single year. To put this in perspective, this equates to 10 times the value of all the climate

philanthropic capital that makes it a transformative resource in the global response to climate change. Philanthropic capital also has several distinctive characteristics that make it a qualitatively uniquely powerful tool for pushing the boundaries of what is possible and achieving urgently required scale. Among other things, philanthropic funding is often more flexible, risk tolerant and patient than other forms of capital. When strategically deployed at an early stage, de-risking follow-on investments, it can generate a multiplier effect by unlocking even larger pools of government and business capital. Achieving an equitable climate and nature transition by 2050 is going to require an "all hands on deck" response from every part of the global community. Philanthropy can be a particularly powerful tool in the deployment of nature-based climate interventions – including with reforestation, restoring mangroves, and protecting biodiversity – that may not offer an immediate financial return and have historically struggled to compete for business and government funding. The increasingly recognized reality is that our nature and climate goals are inseparable, with research finding that natural climate solutions could yield one-third of the emissions reductions required to achieve a 1.5 C limit pathway. These reductions will not come cheaply, however. To address biodiversity loss and land degradation alone, it is estimated that nature-positive investments of \$8 trillion is needed between now and 2050. Philanthropists could play a pivotal role in filling that gap. Which is why a number of sessions at the COP28 Business & Philanthropy Climate Forum will focus specifically on unleashing the catalytic effect of climate and nature philanthropy. Of course, there are many things that we should already be doing to ensure more philanthropic capital

is channeled towards climate and nature-based outcomes. First and foremost, we need to treat philanthropy with the respect that it deserves, and seek to harness it in ways that takes advantage of its unique strengths. Second, we need to listen to and engage with the growing cadre of strategic philanthropists across the Global South, home to three-quarters of the global population, many of whom are already dealing with the all-too-real effects of climate change. Third, we must not overlook the scale and consistency of faith-based giving, and the significant potential that exists for interfaith collaboration to address the universal threat that climate change poses to humanity. Finally, we need to make a sustained effort to facilitate greater coordination between the sectors of philanthropy, government and business – not just during high-profile moments such as COP28, but also in the precious months and years in between. Achieving an equitable climate and nature transition by 2050 is going to require an "all hands on deck" response from every part of the global community. For many government stakeholders, that will mean properly raising ambitions and making good on commitments that they and their predecessors have already made. For many business leaders, that will mean making the essential leap from simple pledges and declarations to tangible action and implementation. For many of the world's philanthropists, that will mean coming off the sidelines and throwing more of their considerable weight and unique attributes behind global efforts to address climate change. More than mere financial donors, I am optimistic that philanthropy can be the glue that binds business, government and civil society together in concerted action to achieve our net zero and nature positive goals.

—Sourced by Arab news

Briefs

Hamas releases more prisoners as...

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Israel has also taken into custody Muhammad Abu Salmiya, the director of al-Shifa Hospital. The Ramallah Friends School says three of its graduates who had left the occupied West Bank to study in the United States have been shot at in Burlington, Vermont. They have been identified as Hisham Awartani, who studies at Brown University, Kinnan Abdel Hamid, who goes to Haverford University, and Tahseen Ahmed, who is a student at Trinity College. Awartani was reportedly shot in the back, Ahmed in the chest and Abdel Hamid sustained minor injuries. Family members are calling it a hate crime, but police have yet to assess the motive for the shootings. Of the 24 hospitals operating in northern Gaza prior to the war, only four small ones are operational and admitting new patients, the UN agency OCHA says. Of the 11 medical facilities in the south, eight are currently functional, it said.

MFA warns of escalating aggression

FROM PAGE 01
olive trees east of Qalqilya to expand the colony perched on citizens' lands in that area, in addition to this. To the continued imposition of restrictions on the movement of citizens in the occupied West Bank, the dismemberment of it, and the control of the occupation army and settler militias on the main roads linking the governorates, which forces citizens to search for alternative, difficult, rugged roads that require a longer time to fulfill their needs and reach their homes and places of work. This is at a time when the truce continues in the Gaza Strip, which revealed the unprecedented scale of destruction that befell the Strip and the scale of the humanitarian catastrophe that citizens in the Gaza Strip are experiencing, which requires the continuation of the regional and international movement to stabilize the truce, transform it into a sustainable ceasefire, and secure the basic needs of Palestinian citizens in Gaza strip.

PM Kakar to meet MBZ during...

FROM PAGE 01
ties in all spheres including political, economic, trade, investment, cultural, defence and people-to-people relations. The visit will include the signing of MoUs between Pakistan and the UAE in a range of areas including investment cooperation in the sectors of energy, port operations, waste water treatment, food security, logistics, mining, aviation, and banking & financial services. Pakistan and the UAE enjoy warm and long-standing fraternal ties that have stood multiple tests of time, it added. Moreover, PM Kakar will also lead a delegation to attend the celebrations of 52nd National Day of the UAE and the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 28) in Dubai. 90 heads of the states including Pakistan and 7,000 representatives across the world will be a part of the celebrations.

Durrani calls for national...

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pave the way towards forming a national unity government. The politician told political leaders to stop aspiring for the coveted chief executive post and instead focus their abilities on forming a coalition government in the country's interest. "Nawaz Sharif, Asif Ali Zardari and Imran Khan should not aspire to become prime minister and instead play their role in the formation of a national unity government in the country," Durrani said, speaking with a Pakistani newspaper. The politician said the PML-N, PPP and PTI leaders should put forth their candidates for the position of prime minister.



ISLAMABAD: Participants hold placards during a walk on the eve of World Olive Tree Day at F-9 park in Federal Capital. – Online

Davis Cup 2023

Sinner twice beats Djokovic to send Italy into final

Italy, who won the trophy for the first and only time in 1976, will face 28-time winners Australia

SPORTS DESK

MÁLAGA: A "proud" Jannik Sinner beat world number one Novak Djokovic twice in one day to send Italy into the Davis Cup final with a 2-1 win over Serbia in Malaga. Italy, who won the trophy for the first and only time in 1976, will face 28-time winners Australia. Sinner, who has now triumphed three times in four clashes across 11 days against the usually unstoppable Djokovic, crucially kept Italy in the tie by beating the 24-time Grand Slam winner 6-2, 2-6, 7-5 in the second singles rubber. Sinner and Lorenzo Sonego then defeated Djokovic and Miomir Kecmanovic 6-3, 6-4 in the decisive doubles to clinch victory, after Kecmanovic had dispatched Lorenzo Musetti 6-7 (7/9), 6-2, 6-1 in the opener. World number four Sinner saved three match points as he faced Djokovic in the singles, with the 36-year-old arriving in stellar form. "I have to be really proud about how I handled the situation," said Sinner. "Tomorrow we have a great opportunity, we know this but we try to stay as relaxed as possible, keeping the smile in our head." Djokovic, who has won seven titles this year including three Grand Slams, was aiming to send 2010 champions Serbia into the final for the first time in a decade. However Sinner claimed arguably the biggest win of his career, becoming the first man to beat Djokovic in a singles match at the Davis Cup since Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro in 2011, ending a 21-match streak. "Congratulations to Italy for qualifying for (the) finals," said Djokovic. "They deserved it, they played really well, particu-



larly Jannik, in singles against me and then doubles, as well. "He barely missed the ball the entire match - so you can only say congrats and hats down for the performance like that." Sinner won the first of their four recent battles in the ATP Finals group stage, but although Djokovic took the second to bag the title, Sinner delivered twice more in front of a full house at the Martin Carpena arena. Djokovic created headlines

in the week by rowing with noisy British fans and then showing his fury at being asked to take a doping control test before Thursday's last eight tie. The Serb was this time unimpressed by rowdy Italian fans in the doubles defeat as he ended a glittering year without the team title he craved. Sinner, 14 years the younger at 22, broke Djokovic in the third and fifth games, racing into a 5-1 lead. The Italian finished his superb first set with an ace, hitting 12 winners to the subdued Djokovic's one, in only 38 minutes. For a moment he let it slip, double-faulting on the first break point he conceded to fall 3-1 behind in the second. Djokovic ruthlessly capitalised, sealing the set with another break when Sinner whipped a forehand wide. The Serbian had the momentum. Djokovic was on top in the third set with Sinner saving two break points and unable to pressure the Serb's serve. Sinner appeared to crack in the wild 10th game, giving up three match points, but then won five consecutive points to hold for 5-5. He then broke Djokovic and held comfortably to triumph. "For me personally it's a huge disappointment, because I take the responsibility, obviously having three match points, being so close to win it," added Djokovic.

Min Woo Lee wins Australian PGA title

BRISBANE: Min Woo Lee held his nerve after a shaky start to fire a three-under-par 68 and win the Australian PGA Championship by three strokes from Japan's Rikuya Hoshino, earning a third DP World Tour title. The 25-year-old Australian went into the final day at Royal Queensland Golf Club in Brisbane three clear of Hoshino and mixed five birdies and a spectacular chip-in eagle with four bogeys to seal the win. He carded 20-under for the tournament, building on a successful year in which he won the Macau Open on the Asian Tour last month and earned 2024 playing rights for the US PGA Tour. But another victory on the DP World Tour had eluded him until now, having broken through for his first European win at the 2020 Vic Open then claiming the 2021 Scottish Open. "It's unbelievable, I've always thought I could win, it took a while to get over the hump," said Lee, whose sister Minjee Lee is the women's world number five. "But two wins in the last month or so and I'm really proud of my team and myself. I made it interesting for myself early on and through the middle, but I ended up hanging on. "I know Rikuya is a really good player and he kept knocking on the door, but it was exactly same as my

last win, just the playing point. I just kept coming," added Lee after his triumph in DP World Tour's 2024 season opener. Six-time Japan Tour winner Hoshino put up a gutsy fight at his first tournament in Australia, hauling in Lee's overnight three-shot advantage by the second hole. But he couldn't maintain the momentum and ended with a 68 for outright second on a day that saw Chile's Joaquin Niemann, who plays on the Saudi-backed LIV Golf tour, sink a hole-in-one at the par-three fourth. It was the second ace of the tournament after Australian Curtis Luck did the same at the 17th on Friday. Niemann carded 67 to finish fifth, two shots behind Luck in fourth. Fellow LIV Golf player Marc Leishman was third after a best-of-the-day 64 left him four strokes behind Lee. Defending champion and one of LIV Golf's superstars, Cameron Smith, missed the cut. Lee suffered early nerves, over-hitting his approach at the first to open with a bogey then par, while confident playing partner Hoshino drilled consecutive birdies as the Australian's overnight three-shot lead evaporated. – DNA



Barcelona fall behind Madrid after Valleciano draw

PARIS: Spanish champions Barcelona slipped up in a 1-1 draw at Rayo Vallecano in La Liga, continuing a worrying run of underwhelming performances. Surprise La Liga leaders Girona and Real Madrid in second now have the chance to extend their lead on the Catalans, fourth, over the next two days. Antoine Griezmann's header earned Atletico Madrid a 1-0 win later on Saturday in their La Liga clash against Real Mallorca to take the Rojiblancos third, above Barcelona on goal difference, having played a game fewer. Unai Lopez drove Rayo ahead from long range in the first half but Barca levelled through Florian Lejeune's own goal in the 82nd minute. The draw adds to the doubts around Barcelona, who have not been at their best for several weeks and face Porto on Tuesday seeking Champions League knock-out round qualification. "I think it was a game of two halves, in the first we dominated but we weren't aggressive enough to cause damage," said Xavi. "In the second we were, we scored a goal and could have had others... we need to win these games if we want to win the league. "We have to be self-critical, it's costing us too much this season giving things away... in modern football a lot of changes when they score against you." Inaki Pena started in goal for Barca with Marc-Andre ter Stegen out with a back problem, while Xavi turned to the fit-again Frenkie de Jong to replace the injured Gavi in midfield. – Agencies

Pak on track to host CT 2025 despite challenges

Sources indicate that, given the current circumstances, the Indian government is unlikely to allow BCCI to send its team to Pakistan

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

ISLAMABAD: The hosting rights of Champions Trophy 2025, scheduled for February-March, have been awarded to Pakistan by the International Cricket Council (ICC), although formal hosting agreement is yet to be finalized. Discussions on this matter transpired during recent ICC meetings in India. PCB authorities express optimism about the imminent signing of the agreement. Pakistan's stance is clear: if any country cites security concerns to refrain from sending a team, the ICC should refrain from unilateral decisions. Instead, a comprehensive assessment, in consultation with an independent security agency, should be conducted. All teams, except India, have recently played in Pakistan without security issues. Consequently, the proposal is for all matches

to take place in Pakistan, unless a genuine security concern, validated by an independent security agency, arises. Sources indicate that, given the current circumstances,

the Indian government is unlikely to allow BCCI to send Indian team to Pakistan. The PCB acknowledges the political nature of this issue, anticipating resolution at the

government level. In case India opts not to send its team, alternative solutions such as relocating India's matches to neutral venues and ensuring complete compensation for financial losses through ICC consultation are being explored. The previous PCB management committee had also raised objections based on ICC documents, seeking legal advice. Although ICC Chairman Greg Barclay and CEO Geoff Allardice visited Pakistan in May, a resolution to this matter was not reached. The current administration seeks assurance, with contracts potentially being signed next month pending the resolution of financial and other matters. Notably, PCB successfully organized the 2023 Asia Cup in Sri Lanka under the hybrid model, with only four matches held in the country. If the Indian team opts out, a similar approach might be adopted for the Champions Trophy, albeit with a significant increase in expenses.



Looking forward to exciting Pak-Aus...

FROM PAGE 01
visit to Australia. During the meet and greet with the Pakistani team, the Australian High Commissioner they won't just be cricketers in Australia; they will be ambassadors and role models, fostering meaningful connections with their extensive Pakistani and Australian fanbase. "I encourage all Pakistanis to show their support for the Shaheens", High Commissioner said adding that we are looking forward to an exciting contest and a glorious Australian summer of cricket. The tour will open at the Perth Stadium on 14 December and it will mark the first instance of Pakistan playing a Test at the venue. The two teams will face off in the Boxing Day Test at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground from 26 till 30 December and the third and final match will be played at the Sydney Cricket Ground from 3 January, 2024.

Country drowns in loans...

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Addressing the gathering in Buner, Khattak said, "The thieves and looters had dragged the country to the quagmire. The PTI had bagged success due to the Pakhtuns." As the prime minister, the PTI chief was a dictator, not a representative of the masses. The PTI chief staged the drama under the guise of Naya Pakistan. He took a dig at the former rulers, saying, "The rulers had left the country in debt." On Friday, Khattak fired a fresh broadside at the PTI chief. Expressing his thoughts in Lower Dir, Khattak asserted, "The PTI used to treat the elected representatives like Pharaohs. The former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) chief minister claimed that his party's manifesto was to uplift the country. He schooled the opponents, saying, "The looters had harmed the country. The former rulers had dragged the country to the quagmire".

Ronaldo gifts Vinicius...

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The shirt was signed and featured a small message from Ronaldo himself, which Vinicius posted on his Instagram account along with pictures of the thoughtful gift and other pictures of the 23-year-old winger sporting luxury brand outfits.

PPP leaders raise serious objections

FROM PAGE 01
senator for the role. This is not the first time the PPP has levelled allegations against the PML-N for having a hidden alliance with current caretaker government. Earlier this month, Bukhari had raised fingers at Dar for holding his position in the Senate. "With which status, Ishaq Dar is holding the office of leader of the house in Senate. In Senate, leader of the house represents the prime minister," Bukhari had said in a statement. Moreover, state-run APP reported on Monday that caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi had informed the Senate that the premier had endorsed Dar as leader of the house and Senator Saleem Mandviwalla as chief whip.

Zardari forms committee...

FROM PAGE 01
Jamali, Rozi Khan Kakar and Sabir Ali Baloch will participate from Balochistan. When contacted, Secretary Information PPP Kundi confirmed forming the committee for dialogue with political parties and personalities under a well-planned strategy. The PPP co-chairman is known for his reconciliatory ways of politics and has been a proponent of a coalition government for the betterment of the country. He has consistently ruled out the formation of a single-party government and this time around, too, the senior politician is looking towards the many political groups in Pakistan.

Briefs

N.Koreans
vote for
provincial
governors,
mayors

PYONGYANG : North Korea conducted local elections on Sunday, marking a distinct departure from previous practices with the inclusion of more than one candidate in certain districts. Citizens cast their votes to elect provincial governors, mayors, and local assembly deputies. The government urged voters to reflect on the love and consideration they received from the Party and the state, emphasizing the need to fulfill civic duties. Shift in Election Practices
These local elections, held every four years since 1999, experienced a significant change this year. A primary election was introduced, where a final candidate was selected from two contenders based on their qualifications. This candidate then engaged with the electorate during the campaign period. Despite the shift in practices, South Korea's Ministry of Unification, responsible for North-South relations, maintains that this change does not indicate the introduction of free elections. Instead, it is perceived as an attempt to manage public opinion amidst North Korea's prolonged economic difficulties. Voter Turnout
By noon, 47.8% of eligible voters had participated in the election, as reported by the Korean Central News Agency.—Agencies

China
seeks more
clinics amid
respiratory
surge

BEIJING: China's health ministry on Sunday urged local authorities to increase the number of fever clinics as the country grapples with a surge in respiratory illnesses in its first full winter since easing Covid-19 restrictions. The spike became a global issue last week when the World Health Organisation asked China for more information, citing a report on clusters of undiagnosed pneumonia in children by the Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases. China and the WHO have faced questions about the transparency of reporting early in the pandemic, which emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019. The WHO said on Friday no new or unusual pathogens had been found in the recent illnesses. National Health Commission spokesperson Mi Feng said on Sunday the surge in acute respiratory illnesses was linked to the simultaneous circulation of several kinds of pathogens, most prominently influenza. "Efforts should be made to increase the number of relevant clinics and treatment areas, appropriately extend service hours and strengthen guarantees of drug supplies," Mi told a news conference.—APP

Somalia
floods: Death
toll nears 100

The number of people killed by floods from heavy rains in Somalia has risen, state news agency SONNA said. The flooding has been described as the worst in decades and has displaced about 700,000 people, according to the United Nations. "Somalia's flood death toll climbs to 96," SONNA said on Saturday in a post on X, formerly Twitter, adding the figure had been confirmed by Mahamuud Moallim, the head of the country's disaster management agency. Both are climate patterns that impact ocean surface temperatures and cause above-average rainfall. The intense rains have unleashed widespread flooding across the country, triggering displacement and exacerbating an already existing humanitarian crisis caused by years of insurgency. In neighbouring Kenya, the floods have so far killed 76 people, according to the Kenyan Red Cross, and also unleashed widespread displacement, destruction of roads and bridges and left many residents without shelter, drinking and food supplies, according to the charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF).—APP



BAHAWALPUR Mr. Isphanyar Bhandara ex-MNA celebrated Dewali in Yazman Mandi, Bahawalpur with deprived and marginalized Hindu community of South Punjab.—DNA

UN to end decades long
arms embargo on Somalia

MOGADISHU : Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has announced that the UN Security Council arms embargo on Somalia will be lifted next month. Mohamud told parliamentarians on Saturday that his government was committed to achieving five national targets. "We had five national targets this year including liberating the country from Al Shabaab, removal of the arms embargo, admission to the East Africa Community (EAC) and debt relief and the arms embargo will be lifted earlier next month," Mohamud told lawmakers. Experts said the removal of the arms embargo and its effect will likely be more reputational than anything. Omar Mahmood, International Crisis Group's senior analyst for Eastern Africa, said that the president's remarks regarding the arms embargo signal international confidence in Somalia. "It signals international confidence in the Somali government's progress on weapons and ammunition management at a technical level, but at the same time the war against Al Shabaab has flagged for a number of reasons unrelated to weaponry," he said. Somalia: UN arms embargo impedes efforts to rebuild army, counter Al Shabaab Fostering better and more robust diplomatic relations" The Security Council extended the embargo to Nov. 15, 2023, citing the continued threat of the Al Shabaab terror group to the region's peace and stability. The embargo has been in effect since 1992 to cut off the flow of weapons to the country after it was dragged into a civil war. "The lifted UN arms embargo on Somalia brings significant benefits, including improved stability, heightened counterterrorism capabilities, and a more stable, peaceful Somalia which will be a favorable environment for rebuilding and humanitarian efforts in the country," Mohamed Husein Gaas, director of the Raad Peace Research Institute in Mogadishu, said. He said it would be a vital step in Somalia reclaiming its sovereignty and "fostering better and more robust diplomatic relations." "Additionally, a secure Somalia will become an attractive destination for foreign investment, driving economic development and infrastructure rebuilding. The government's strengthened security measures not only enhance legitimacy but also contribute to improved governance and the rule of law," he added.—APP

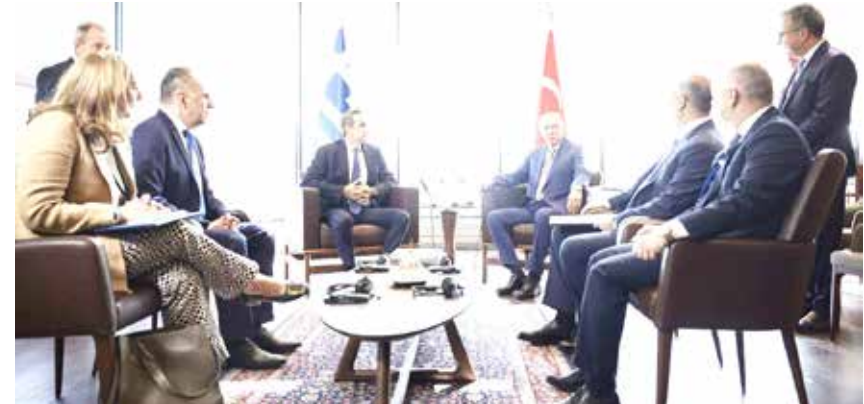
Australia, Philippines
launch joint south
china sea patrols

SYDNEY: Australia and the Philippines have begun joint sea and air patrols in the South China Sea as Pacific nations warily eye an increasingly assertive China. The three-day exercises follow discussions earlier this year on joint patrols to underscore what the countries say is their commitment to closer cooperation and a rules-based order in the region. It also comes days after Manila took similar steps with the US, concluding patrols that started in waters near Taiwan. Australia's defence minister, Richard Marles, said the inaugural patrols represent the practical implementation of the strategic partnership signed between the two nations in September. Philippine coast guard personnel look at a China Coast Guard ship during a mission to deliver provisions at Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea "Australia and the Philippines are firmly committed to a peaceful, secure and prosperous region, where sovereignty and agreed rules and norms are respected," he said on Saturday in a joint statement with the Philippine national defence secretary, Gilberto C Teodoro Jr. "The first maritime cooperative activity between the Australian Defence Force and Armed Forces of the Philippines demonstrates this important commitment." The Philippine defence department spokesperson Arsenio Andolong said the patrols would be carried out in the West Philippine Sea, Manila's term for waters in the South China Sea that fall within its exclusive economic zone. The Philippine military said two of its navy vessels and five surveillance aircraft would participate. Australia said it would send the frigate HMAS Toowoomba and P8-A maritime surveillance aircraft. The Philippine president, Ferdinand Marcos Jr, hailed the exercises as maintaining a rules-based international order. "This inaugural Maritime Cooperative Activity and those that may follow are a practical manifestation of the growing and deepening strategic and defense partnership between our countries," he said on X, formerly known as Twitter.—DNA

Greece, Turkiye work to build
better ties amid differences

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Turkiye and Greece are looking forward to a meeting of their leaders in December while officials from both sides hail the benefits of improvements in once-hostile ties. Greece emphasized that the benefits of better relations with Turkiye without ignoring fundamental differences between the two countries. In an article penned for the Parapolitika newspaper, Foreign Minister George Gerapetritis drew attention to the thaw in relations since February. "In this regard, political and administrative communication channels have been developed in recent months, fostering an improved level of mutual understanding and facilitating the development of essential interpersonal relations." "We emphasize mutually beneficial cooperation, namely a positive agenda with measures more of a commercial and economic character and confidence-building measures oriented toward the de-



fense and military dimension," he wrote. But Gerapetritis warned about the profound differences between the two neighboring NATO allies in bilateral relations and international matters. In particular, he noted the Greek-Turkish High-Level Cooperation Council to be held in Athens on Dec. 7. "The Greek government welcomes the upcoming High-Level Cooperation Council with awareness and seriousness. And with our gaze fixed on the next generations. It is to them we owe the legacy of a peaceful

international neighborhood, which will substantially contribute to the prosperity and progress of our country." President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis affirmed the "positive climate" in relations during a meeting in September in New York. The leaders confirmed the road map and timeline of bilateral contacts as agreed to in an earlier meeting of foreign ministers in Ankara. Keeping channels open through Turkiye and Greece have to deal with longstand-

ing issues, keeping all channels open helps build more trust and respect toward each other's sensitivities and vital interests, Communications Director Fahrettin Altun said in an interview with the Greek daily Ta Nea. "We should keep all channels open. We must talk to each other, not others about each other. Such a common understanding would help build more trust and respect towards each other's sensitivities and vital interests," Altun added.

Message by H.E. Andrey Fedorov, consul
general of the Russian Federation in Karachi

The main attraction of the evening was the traditional dance troop from Northern Caucasus, and their performance was an extremely unique and magnificent experience for all the honourable guests!

I would like to convey my sincerest appreciation for all your support in making Russia-Pakistan relations more productive and mutually beneficial than ever! With your help, we have managed to elevate them on a completely different level. Many great results have been achieved this year. They include mutual visits of high-level delegations, productive trade negotiations and, of course, the start of the supply of crude oil from Russia to Pakistan. We also launched some extremely successful ventures in the field of transport and logistics. To name a few, a direct shipping line from Saint-Petersburg and Vladivostok to Karachi was established by Pak Shaheen company in collaboration with Neco Line in May, and the two-way trucking line between Pakistan and Russia started operating this June. Such breakthrough was

foreshadowed by the Russian President Vladimir Putin during his address to the Federal Assembly this February. In particular, Pakistan was one of the few countries mentioned by him in the context of developing bilateral partnerships. Our leader set the tone for a particularly fruitful cooperation, and lots of great initiatives have been implemented this year so far! The aforementioned achievements concurred with the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between our countries. Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my gratitude for the Pakistani friends who have always held a very sensible position toward the Soviet Union and Russia despite all the geopolitical perturbations and bloc politics. As a reflection of such wisdom and reasonableness, such mega projects as Pakistan Steel

Mill and Guddu Thermal Power Station were concluded in 1980s, even though the relations at that time between our countries were marred by the situation in Afghanistan. This milestone was also celebrated during the Reception on the occasion of the People's Unity Day organized on the 3rd of



November. The event was marked by the presence of the most distinguished guests from Karachi: Governor of Sindh Kamran Tessori, the Chief Minister of Sindh Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar and the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly Agha Siraj Durrani. The main attraction of the evening was the traditional dance troop from Northern Caucasus, and their performance was an extremely unique and magnificent experience for all the honourable guests! Despite such significant progress, which has been achieved this year so far, we still have a lot of untapped potential in the wide range of fields. Today's Pakistan is a responsible country with a very young and diverse population. It is a key player in the international arena, an important voice in the Islamic World and an emerging economic power. Which is

why it is very important for Russia to maintain mutually beneficial partnership and contribute to the sustainable growth of Pakistan. We are committed to further strengthen the cooperation in the wide range of spheres. Among them are energy, trade and economic partnership, anti-terrorism activities, information technology, medical and pharmaceutical industry, culture and education. Russia is also eager to solidify strong relations with Pakistan in various multilateral formats, such as Shanghai Cooperation Organization, as both our countries stick to the principle of the supremacy of the international law instead of some arbitrary "rules". Thus, I hope that next year will bring even more positive results and create various opportunities to develop even stronger ties between our nations!

Russia says
it thwarted
Ukrainian
attacks

MOSCOW : Russia said Sunday it had downed Ukrainian drones over four regions, including Moscow, as well as two Ukrainian missiles over the Azov Sea headed for Russia, a day after Kyiv reported what it called the largest drone attack on Ukraine since Moscow launched its offensive in February last year. Moscow said the drone attacks hit border regions and regions close to the capital, Moscow. "Air defence destroyed four Ukrainian drones over the territory of the Bryansk, Smolensk and Tula regions," Russia's defence ministry said in a statement. Earlier Sunday, Russia also reported some drones were shot down over the Moscow region. The Russian army said it had also downed two Ukrainian missiles headed for Russia over the Azov Sea, between the two countries. "Russian air defence located and destroyed two Ukrainian missiles in the air over the water area of the Azov Sea," Russia's defence ministry said in a statement. Ukraine, meanwhile, said its air defence had downed eight out of nine drones over the country on Sunday. Massive drone attack on Holodomor anniversary
On Saturday, Ukraine said Moscow had launched 75 drones onto the country, mostly aimed at Kyiv. The attack came as Kyiv marked Holodomor, the Stalin-era starvation that killed millions in Ukraine.—APP

Militants
claim base
seizure, Army
denies

BAMAKO : Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), an armed militant group operating in Mali, claimed to have seized a military base in the north of Mali, inflicting heavy losses on the country's military. The Malian army, however, said it had repulsed attacks on bases in the Timbuktu region. JNIM took control of the Niafounke camp Friday with the help of a suicide-bomb vehicle, the group said on its Al-Zalqa Foundation media platform. That statement was "quickly" verified Saturday by SITE, a US organisation that follows radicalised groups. Tens of soldiers were killed or wounded in the battle, and two captured, JNIM claimed. It released photos showing five armoured vehicles it claimed to have captured, along with weapons and ammunition. It said that dozens of soldiers had been killed or wounded and two had been taken prisoner. It was not possible to immediately verify the information. JNIM often abandons camps they capture after a few hours. The group also claimed to have hit another army camp, a few miles away in Goundam, with mortar fire. The Mali military said on social media that the attacks had been "energetically repelled." "After artillery fire on the two camps, the assailants tried in vain to occupy them and were routed," it said. Verifying claims by either side is complicated because access to the region is difficult and dangerous. Since 2012, Mali has been ravaged by militant groups, as well as by self-declared self-defence forces and bandits. The north in particular has seen intensified military clashes following the recent withdrawal of UN forces at the demand of the ruling junta.—DNA

Briefs

Karachi: FIR registered against builders, authorities

DNA

KARACHI: A case has been registered in the aftermath of a devastating fire that broke out at RJ Shopping Mall on Rashid Minhas Road claiming 11 lives early Saturday morning. The First Information Report (FIR) filed at Shah Faisal Police Station pointed fingers at various entities involved in the construction and maintenance of the ill-fated shopping mall.

Meanwhile, the report also revealed that the fire erupted at 5 am, rapidly engulfing the entire mall. Panicked individuals trapped within the building were compelled to use stairs and an electric lift in desperate attempts to escape the inferno. Tragically, some patrons sustained burn injuries, with several succumbing to the severity of their wounds during treatment at different hospitals.

An alarming revelation from the FIR is the apparent absence of firefighting equipment within the mall premises, exacerbating the challenges faced by emergency responders. Initial investigations strongly suggest that a short circuit might have been the catalyst for the devastating fire. The defendants include the mall builders, accused of utilizing defective materials, the alleged approval of flawed maps, issuance of NOC despite safety concerns, and the current management of the shopping complex. Additionally, the electric and fire brigade services are under scrutiny for their purported failure to fulfill their responsibilities.

Russia puts Meta spox on wanted list

DNA

MOSCOW: Russia on Sunday put Meta Platforms spokesperson Andy Stone on a wanted list on unspecified charges as the US social media giant - which owns Facebook - is classed as "extremist" by Moscow. Russia has hugely cracked down on media and social media freedom since launching its Ukraine offensive last year and banning criticism of it. Stone is listed on Russia's interior ministry's list of wanted people, without further detail.

In October 2022, Russia listed Meta as a "terrorist and extremist" organisation, opening possible criminal investigations and fines for users in the country. Facebook and Instagram have been blocked in Russia since the start of the Ukraine offensive and are only accessible via VPN. Twitter is also banned, as well as Russian independent media critical of the Kremlin. Before the bans, millions of Russians used applications belonging to Meta, especially Instagram, which remains hugely popular with young Russians. In April 2022, Russia put Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg on a blacklist of people banned from entering the country.

BELGIAN CULTURAL WEEK CELEBRATIONS



ISLAMABAD: Artists taking part in a drama written by famous Belgian playwright. The embassy of Belgium organized drama at the PNCA as part of the Belgian Cultural Week. - DNA

Lahore remains among most polluted cities

DNA

LAHORE: Despite caretaker government's extreme drive to curb smog, Lahore is still one of the most polluted cities in the world on Sunday. Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi while presiding over a meeting on Thursday ordered measures, including smart lockdown, to curb smog. But smart lockdown could not improve the situation as average air quality index (AQI) of Lahore was recorded at 356 (extremely hazardous) on Sunday.

Closing of The Mall to vehicular traffic proved futile as AQI was 458 in the morning, while AQI in the DHA's phase 8 was 437, in Gulberg it was 412 and Johar Town 402.

Violence continues in West Bank

DNA

CAIRO: Seven Palestinians, including one minor, were shot dead by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank late Saturday and early Sunday, according to the Palestinian health ministry. Five of the deaths occurred in the city of Jenin and the sixth was in Yatma, a village near Nablus city.

Six others were injured during the shooting in Jenin, the ministry said. The Israeli military spokesperson's office said it was checking the reports. The official Palestinian news agency Wafa said Israeli forces stormed Jenin "from several directions, firing bullets and surrounding government hospitals and the headquarters of the Red Crescent Society".

'Breach of confidentiality' lands cargo deal with Azerbaijan in red zone

PLL uses price offered from SOCAR as tool to bring down bid price from lowest bidder OQ trading

ISLAMABAD: The GtG deal with Azerbaijan on offering one LNG cargo a month has landed in the red zone because of the confidentiality breach allegedly done by Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL), a Pakistani newspaper reported Sunday. The PLL used the price offered from SOCAR, an Azeri state-owned company, as a tool to bring down the bid price from the lowest bidder OQ trading, which was at \$18.46 per MMBtu, senior officials involved in the bidding process told newspaper. The OQ Trading on Friday offered the lowest bid of \$18.46 per MMBtu for one LNG cargo to be delivered on January 08-9, 2024, followed by Vitol Bahrain at \$18.58, QatarEnergy Trading at

\$19.43, and Trafigura at \$19.64 per MMBtu. The OQ Trading offered the lowest bid, but the price was still higher than the previous spot cargoes procured by Pakistan LNG Limited. Earlier, SOCAR was evasive from offering the price of one cargo for the month of January on account of higher LNG prices. However, the PLL Board met after the bids were opened and decided to contact SOCAR for its offer for January LNG cargo. In return, SOCAR offered the LNG price at \$17.96 per MMBtu, but PLL management cleverly contacted OQ trading and let it know about the SOCAR offer which was under GtG, not the bidding process. It asked the lowest bidder to match the SOCAR offer. The OQ trading revised down its offer to \$17.95 per MMBtu than the SOCAR-offered price below one cent. This is how the PLL managed the LNG cargo for January at \$17.95 by using SOCAR's price as a tool to bargain with the lowest bidder. This may warrant legal action by SOCAR.

The PLL after getting the price offer from SOCAR did not contact again for further decrease but preferred to ask OQ trading to match its price. The price under the GtG contract can't be matched with the bid price. The sources said the price difference between the lowest bid price of \$18.46 per MMBtu from OQ trading and SOCAR's offer was \$1.5 million per cargo but then the lowest bidder gave a price of \$0.01 cheaper to get the order. One cent reduction means a \$32,000 reduction in LNG cargo price. "This has virtually annoyed SOCAR as it is of the view that PLL has breached the sanctity of confidentiality, which is against the spirit of GtG deal. It says PLL has no right to use the price offered under the GtG contract with the bidders' price. SOCAR came up with the offer under its contract at \$17.96 per MMBtu with the impact of a lower price of \$1.5 million a cargo compared to the bid price offered by OQ trading at \$18.46 per MMBtu," officials said while quoting the SOCAR management, which got agitated after the confidentiality violation. When contacted, SOCAR didn't reply in detail but confirmed that confidentiality had been breached. However, this scribe contacted time and again PLL MD Masood Nabi who did not respond to the calls. - DNA

'Committee on missing persons in the works'

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Human Rights Minister Khalil George has said that a committee on the issue of missing persons is in the works, adding that government was "thoroughly" looking into the matter. The human rights minister made the remarks during a TV interview. The remarks come days after the Islamabad High Court (IHC) directed interim Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar to appear before the court on November 29 (Wednesday) if he did not secure the recovery of more than 50 allegedly missing Baloch students. Meanwhile, the Sindh High Court (SHC) on Thursday had also hinted at summoning the caretaker prime minister if police and provincial administration could not make any progress in recovery of missing persons. In an interview, George said, "The prime minister is planning a committee on missing persons with the interior minister and other ministers so the issue can be fully analysed. Such as where are the missing persons, how many there are and what is their status." He said the finer details regarding the finalisation of the committee were under way. However, the minister said that the government's stance was that the number of missing persons was not as high as some claimed. George said the government was "thoroughly" looking into the matter and the committee would investigate the details of those who were missing. At the same time, he said that the committee's terms of references (TORs) had not yet been drafted, adding that its mandate would be determined once this was done. - DNA

Gaza war inflicts 'humiliating defeat' on Israel

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: The chief commander of the Iranian Army says the weeks-long Israeli onslaught on the besieged Gaza Strip inflicted a "humiliating defeat" on Tel Aviv and exposed the "true face" of the US and other supporters of the occupying regime. Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi made the remarks at a ceremony in Tehran on Sunday, saying that "The US president went to meet the most hated person in the world [Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu] and supported him, but he adjusted his stance as the Zionist regime's crimes intensified."

"This war led to the Zionist regime's humiliating defeat. The Zionist regime advocates apartheid ..., and thus the leaders of the countries that support this regime are also pro-apartheid." Mousavi also noted that the bombardment of civilian targets does not constitute an achievement for Israel as it has lost many military equipment and personnel in the ground battle and failed to arrest Hamas leaders. For years, he added, the Zionists tried to "consign the Palestine issue to the oblivion," but the Gaza war has turned the spotlight on Palestine across the globe. "The US spent a fortune and employed its media empire to portray itself as an advocate of human rights and democracy. However, this war laid bare the true nature and face of US and the countries supporting the Zionist regime," Mousavi said. Israel waged the brutal war on Gaza on October 7 after the Palestinian Hamas resistance group launched a surprise attack, dubbed Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, in occupied territories.

Thousands march in Indonesia calling for permanent ceasefire in Gaza



FOREIGN DESK

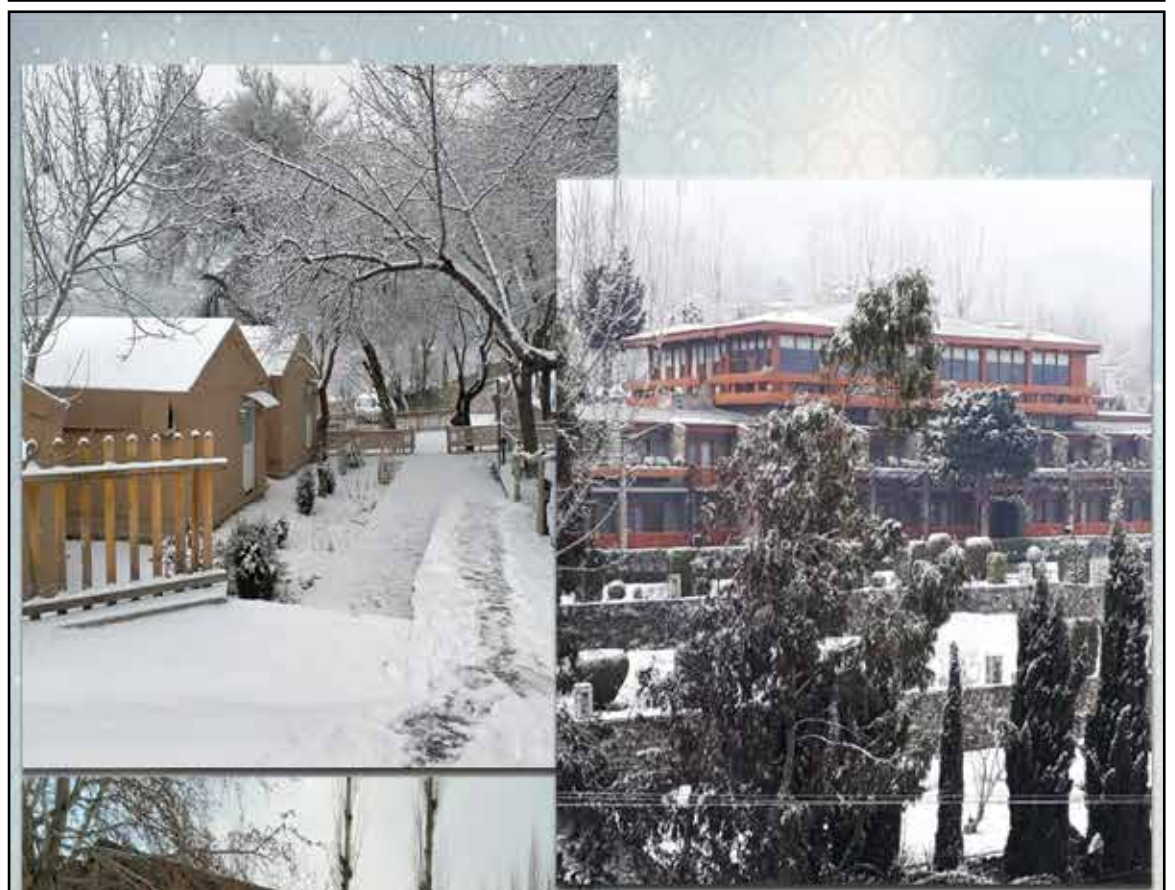
JAKARTA: Thousands of Indonesian protesters turned out for a peaceful march in solidarity with Palestine on Sunday, as they called for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza. Indonesians from various cities marched through

the streets of Karawang, West Java, mostly dressed in white and wearing traditional Palestinian scarves, as they waved Palestinian flags and chanted "Free Palestine." The demonstration in Karawang was the latest in several huge protests staged across Indonesia since Israel began its deadly onslaught on Palestinian civilians in

Gaza last month. Indonesians in Bali, North Sulawesi and Depok, West Java, also took to the streets over the weekend in similar marches.

Sunday's protest came on the third day of a four-day cease-fire that has allowed humanitarian aid into the besieged strip, after Israel agreed to stop the daily bombardment in exchange for the release of its hostages held by the Gaza-based militant group Hamas.

"We are calling for a permanent cease-fire ... We also demand the immediate delivery of critical humanitarian aid to Palestinians in need," protest coordinator Cecep Jasim told Arab News. "These protests are important, especially for the international community, so that we can show what Israel is doing to Palestine is an act of terrorism that we must fight against," he said. "The situation in Gaza right now is a product of Israeli violence that has hurt people's hearts across the globe."



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