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Africa is a double victim of injustice: UN Chief Guterres

Detailed News On Page-08

Shehbaz stresses for timely elections

Detailed News On Page-08



Shan aims to make history in Australia

Detailed News On Page-06



COAS meets crown prince

Pak-Kuwait agree to deepen ties, sign many MoUs

Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad had received PM Kakar upon his arrival at the Bayan Palace

NEWS DESK / DNA

KUWAIT CITY: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar met Kuwait Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al Jaber Al Sabah on Wednesday and the two sides agreed to deepen the bilateral relationship between the countries. Kakar had arrived at Kuwait's Bayan Palace earlier today to hold talks with the country's top leadership. The premier — who recently wrapped up his trip to the United Arab Emirates — had landed in Kuwait last night to cement ties with the Gulf state. In a statement, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said that during the meeting Kakar reaffirmed the importance Pakistan had attached to its relationship with Kuwait and reiterated the desire to further expand bilateral cooperation in diverse fields. "He underscored the resolve to forge deeper economic engagement between Pakistan and Kuwait, including in trade, energy, information technology, labour, mineral and investments," the statement said. PM Kakar also expressed satisfaction at the close cooperation between the two countries at multilateral fora, the statement said. "He appreciated the measures undertaken by Kuwait for the recruitment of Pakistani manpower in the fields of health, security and infrastructure," it added. Meanwhile, the Kuwait crown prince reciprocated the sentiments of the prime minister and "reiterated the desire of Kuwaiti leadership to further deepen and broaden bilateral relations with Pakistan". PM Kakar is also due to meet his counterpart Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad but the latter was admitted to a hospital due to an emergency health problem and his condition is stable, the state news agency reported.

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KSA extends \$3bn deposit term for 1 year

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: In a major development for the struggling economy, Saudi Arabia has extended the term of its \$3 billion deposit with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) for another year. "The Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) on behalf of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has extended the term for the deposit of USD 3 billion maturing on 05 December 2023 for another one year," the SBP announced in a statement on Wednesday. The extension of the term of the deposit is a continuation of the support provided by the kingdom to Pakistan, which will help to maintain the foreign currency reserves of Pakistan and contribute to the economic growth of the country, the statement added. The \$3 billion deposit agreement was initially signed through the SFD with the SBP in 2021 and rolled over subsequently in 2022, after the issuance of

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KUWAIT CITY: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul-Haq Kakar meets Crown Prince of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — DNA

Global coop needed against migrant smuggling

FM Jalil Abbas Jilani emphasized the need for legal pathways for migration

DNA

BRUSSELS: Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani has underscored the need for impactful international collaboration to create effective regulatory structures to tackle migrants smuggling while incentivizing legal means for human mobility. He expressed these views while addressing the International Conference on Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling in Brussels. The Foreign Minister was on a two-day visit to Brussels, Belgium, at the invitation of the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson. Jalil Abbas Jilani emphasized the need for legal pathways for migration to curb irregular migration and migrant smuggling. He also highlighted the steps taken by the Government of Pakistan to curb irregular migration. On the sidelines of the Conference, the Foreign Minister held meetings with senior European Union's officials and members of the European Parliament. In his meeting with EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, the Foreign Minister welcomed the progress under the recently launched Migration and Mobility Dialogue, including opening of legal pathways for migration and operationalization of

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In major relief IHC acquits Nawaz in Avenfield case

NAB also withdraws appeal against PML-N supremo's acquittal in Flagship reference

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: In a major relief for the former prime minister, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) Wednesday acquitted Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif in the Avenfield Apartments reference case. The court also dismissed the plea filed by the National Accountability Bureau in the Flagship reference against the PML-N supremo after the accountability watchdog withdrew it. An IHC division bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb announced the verdict on Nawaz's plea to overturn his conviction in the graft case. Recently, the high court also acquitted PML-N Vice-President Maryam Nawaz and her husband Captain (ret'd) Muhammad Safdar in the Avenfield reference,



Leaders from Balochistan to join PPP

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: The political leaders from Balochistan expected to join the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Sources divulged on Wednesday that former health minister Mir Naseebullah Mari will join the PPP. Former senator Nusrat Shaheen and former provincial minister Sarfraz Domki will also join the PPP. Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader Faisal Karim Kundi said on Wednesday that the talks are vital to resolving the country's issues. Addressing a press conference in Quetta, Kundi took a swipe at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief,

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Briefs

Solangi points to HRs violations in IIOJK

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi has reiterated Pakistan's moral, political and diplomatic support to the oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir in their legitimate struggle for right to self-determination. Addressing a seminar on Kashmir in Islamabad today, he said no force can suppress the voices of Kashmiris for their inalienable right to self-determination. The Minister said a politically and economically stable Pakistan can raise the issue of massive human rights violations in Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir effectively at international fora.

Sharif's leadership key to prosperity

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz said on Wednesday that the country will lead to prosperity under the leadership of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif. Maryam had presided over the meeting of the PML-N's youth and women wing. On this occasion, the discussions were made in line with the preparations for the upcoming general elections. The PML-N stalwart had instructed the party workers to ensure the completion of the organisation at the ward level.

Intra-party election on Dec 2 Gohar nominated for PTI chairmanship

PTI is Imran Khan and Imran Khan is PTI. PTI is nothing without Imran Khan, Zafar said

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: PTI's Barrister Ali Zafar announced on Wednesday that Chairman Imran Khan will not be contesting the intra-party polls scheduled for December 2 (Saturday) due to his legal problems, and also confirmed that Barrister Gohar Khan had been nominated for the slot of party chairmanship in a "temporary arrangement". The announcement comes a day after the party found itself embroiled in fresh controversy after denying a statement by one of its own senior leaders, who had claimed that Imran would not contest the upcoming intra-party polls for the slot of party chairman and that he had picked someone to contest in his stead. Speaking to the media outside the Election Commission of Pakistan in Islamabad today, Zafar recalled that Imran had been convicted in the Toshakhana case as he highlighted the incumbent party chairman's legal challenges. On August 5, a trial court in

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MQM-P, PML-N delegations discuss electoral alliance

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) and Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) held another round of talks on electoral alliance and seat adjustment ahead of the general elections 2024. The fresh round of talks was held at PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal's residence in Islamabad. The session was attended by MQM-P's central leaders Dr Farooq Sattar, Mustafa Kamal, Syed Aminul Haque, PML-N's Ahsan Iqbal, Zahid Hamid, Bashir Memon and Khawaja Saad Rafique. Both sides mulled over

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Ceasefire expiry: Palestinians in Gaza fear resumption of war

Saudi FM has called on the UNSC to "live up to its responsibilities" and enforce a lasting ceasefire in Gaza

CENTRELINE REPORT

GAZA CITY: The armed wing of Hamas announced on its Telegram channel that the release came in response to a request from Russia. Hamas said that the two Russians were handed over to the "Red Cross a short while ago as a prelude to handing them over to representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry". Hamas's armed wing said three captives were killed in previous Israeli bombardment of Gaza. The Qassam Brigades identified them as the youngest captive, 10-month-old Kfir Bibas, his four-year-old brother and their mother. Meanwhile, two Palestinian children have been shot dead by Israeli troops attacking Jenin city in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian Health Ministry says. The ministry identified the two, who were killed by Israeli occupation forces early on Wednesday, during Israel's ongoing aggression against the city of Jenin and its camp, as the eight-year-old Adam Samer al-Ghoul and the fifteen-year-old Basil Suleiman Abu al-Wafa. The Ministry said the occupation forces continued their aggression against the Jenin camp, where they launched a massive arrest campaign and forced citizens in Damj neighborhood to get out of

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World marks Palestine solidarity day

FOREIGN DESK

RAMALLAH: The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is being observed today across the world. The United Nations General Assembly has designated 29 November to be celebrated as International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian People. In 1977, the General Assembly called for the annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. President Mahmoud Abbas has Wednesday issued a statement on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, stressing that the dangerous escalation in the region is mainly caused by the absence and disregard for rights. The President added that the Gaza Strip is under an existential

Continued on Page 06

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PDMA prepares winter contingency plan to cope natural hazards

PESHAWAR : The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) under the guidance of Relief, Rehabilitation and Settlement Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Wednesday formulated the Winter Contingency Plan for 2023-24 in order to cope with various natural hazards which the province may face during the winter season. The plan encompasses strategies to manage hazards such as extreme low temperatures, smog, snowfall, rainfall, landslides, flash floods, and seismic activities in the mountainous north and west. Muhammad Qaisar Khan, the Director General PDMA, stated that the Winter Contingency Plan 2023-24 was initiated in October 2023, involving key stakeholders such as the Federal Government, Provincial Line Departments, District Administration, UNDP GLOF-II, and other development partners.—APP

Khyber Medical University announces MDCAT test result

PESHAWAR : Khyber Medical University (KMU) has announced the MDCAT test results on Wednesday with six candidates got first position by getting 192 marks in the exams. According to Khyber Medical University, 11 candidates have got more than 190 marks. It may be mentioned here that the MDCAT test was reconducted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on November 19, 2023. As many as 75 percent of the candidates passed the test out of 34,852 who actively participated in the examination while 11,366 students were unable to take the test. Those who topped the exams included Taimur Iqbal s/o Khurshaid Iqbal from Swat, Anam Khan d/o Abdul Qayyum Khan from Swat, Amanullah s/o Nazir Ahmad from Mardan, Muhammad Mutaal Azeem s/o Samiullah and Muhammad Asim Ayaz from Dera Ismael Khan.—DNA

DC inspects performance of anti-polio teams

MUZAFFARGARH : Deputy Commissioner Mian Usman Ali visited village Maharan to check anti-polio teams as over eight lakh kids were being administered drops across the district. Chief Executive Officer Health Dr Zafar Abbas was also accompanying him on this occasion. The deputy commissioner urged parents to vaccinate their children against the crippling disease. He maintained that anti-polio teams were also being monitored. CEO Health Dr Zafar also spoke and stated that the campaign would continue by the first of December. The anti-polio teams are paying door-to-door visits, he remarked. He further observed that a 100 per cent target would be achieved across the district.—APP

Soekarno's legacy exhibition strengthens Indonesia-Pak ties

Indonesia-Pakistan exhibition unveils shared history and cultural ties, celebrating Soekarno's enduring impact on bilateral relations

ADIL SAHHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in collaboration with the National Archives of Indonesia, the National Library of Pakistan, and National Archives of Pakistan inaugurated today a week-long exhibition of "Soekarno's Legacy in Building Stringer Bonds of Indonesia-Pakistan Brotherhood, National Library of Pakistan, 29 November-2 December 2023. The main objective of the exhibition generate more awareness among the people of Pakistan about the historic multi-dimensional Indonesia-Pakistan relationship. The exhibition showcases a compelling collection of photographs, videos, and letters, between the founding fathers of Indonesia (Soekarno) and Pakistan (Muhammad Ali Jinnah). It offers a unique glimpse into the visits of President Soekarno to Pakistan in 1960s, underlining the shared history that binds the two nations. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest and Head of National Archives of Indonesia Mr. Imam Gunarto expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the people of Pakistan for their love and respect to the leaders of Indonesia especially President Soekarno. Mr Imam emphasized "such events will strengthen the cultural relations between the two countries especially in the fields of archives and history". In his short remarks, the Charge d' Affaires of the Indonesian Embassy Mr. Yusran Hadromi extended his gratitude to National Library of Pakistan and National Archives of Pakistan for their valuable contribution and support in organizing this exhibition. Mr. Yusran highlighted, "as two of the world's largest Muslim countries, our two countries share lot of historic and cultural commonalities that provide many opportunities to grow together...President Soekarno is highly respected by the people and Government of Pakistan in recognition of his sincere efforts to bring two countries closer to each other". The Guest of Honor, Senator Mushahid Hussain, valued the



exhibition and expressed deep appreciation to Soekarno's role as a statesman. Senator Mushahid further addressed, "Soekarno's revolutionary spirit echoes in the shared values of democracy, independence, and cultural diversity that continue to unite Indonesia and Pakistan. This

exhibition is a timely reminder of the strong foundation laid by our visionary leaders, paving the way for a future of collaboration and mutual prosperity". The Director General of National Library of Pakistan, Mr. Asif Iqbal Khan elaborated, "this exhibition serves as a bridge between

our two nations, connecting us through the rich tapestry of history that binds Indonesia and Pakistan together". In addition, the Director of National Archives of Pakistan, Dr Mazhar Saeed remarked, "the showcased archives underscore the importance of preserving our shared heritage,

ensuring that the legacy of leaders like Dr. Soekarno and Muhammad Ali Jinnah continues to inspire generations." The event also featured captivating performances by Indonesian students on the stage, showcasing brilliant angklung music and dance

performances, including Pasambahan, Randai, and Indang dances—a vibrant representation of West Sumatra province. The Indang dance, in particular, reflects the cultural progression in the Minangkabau community, symbolizing the arrival of Islam in West Sumatra in the 13th century.

UN intervention urged for Kashmir resolution

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Human Rights Mashal Hussain Malik has said that the Kashmir issue should be resolved in the light of United Nations resolutions. She was addressing a seminar organized by Friends of Kashmir International and KMS at Kashmir House on Wednesday. From the seminar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Senator Dinesh Kumar, Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George, Former President of Azad Kashmir Sardar Yakub Khan, Chairperson Friends of Kashmir Ghazala Habib, Hurriyat leader Farooq Rahmani, Altaf Wani, Abdul Hameed Lone, Jay Salik, Faiz Naqshbandi, Waqar Hasan, Hasan Ibrahim, Fawar and others spoke. Mashaal Hussain Malik

said that according to the United Nations Charter, everyone has freedom of religion and expression of their thoughts, these laws provide protection to the followers of every religion, even the Indian Constitution mentions it. And it has also signed the Charter for the Protection of Minorities. "Unfortunately, after 2014, when the government was formed under the leadership of Modi, Hindu-Tava politics has flourished in India. After that, the time is very difficult for us as well. All the Hurriyat leaders, including my husband, were locked up in jails," he said. They are being poisoned in jails, Ashraf Sahrai and Syed Ali Geelani lost their lives in custody. She said that apart from this, atrocities against minorities are common in India, their target killing and acts of terrorism against them are normal, a Sikh leader was targeted for killing in Canada, similarly Sikh leaders were killed in Pakistan. Jeet, Attar Singh

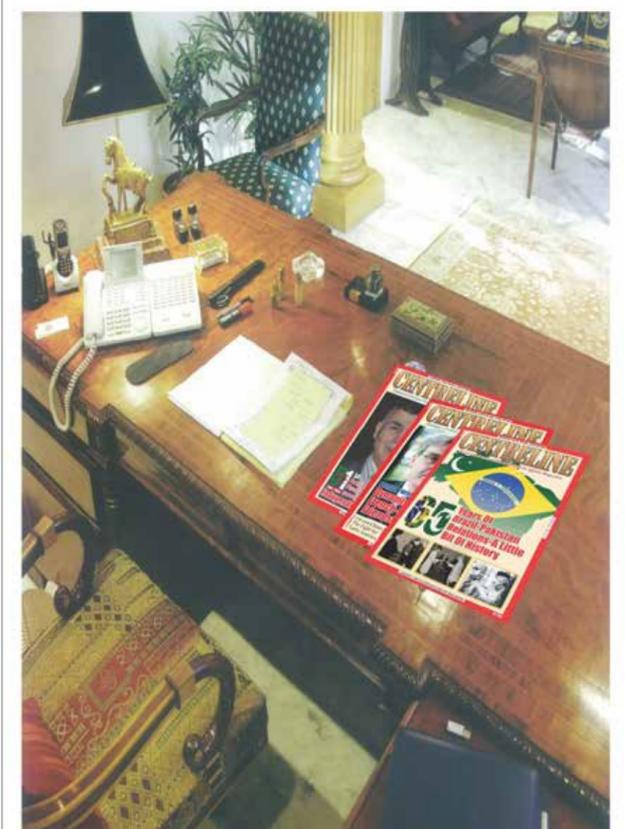
were targeted in Canada while plans to target key Sikh leadership in the US also emerged. Apart from this, Kashmiris in Pakistan were targeted. He said that India has committed 294 hate crimes against Muslims, Sikhs and other minorities in 2021, thousands of churches have been targeted, Christians are being forced to convert, RSS is involved in various acts of terrorism, RSS is taking hateful steps to establish Hindu supremacy in India, RSS has created a parallel army which is a threat not only to India but to the region and the whole world. Because the world is not taking any action against fascist leaders like Netanyahu and Modi, due to non-implementation of international laws, Geneva Conventions and laws regarding humanity, India has become a land where no religion or caste a person belonging to a relationship is not safe, all this is being sponsored by the state.

Chinese police delegation visits PSCA

LAHORE: A delegation of police officers from China's Jiangsu Province visited the Punjab Safe Cities Authority here Tuesday. The Deputy DG Public Security of Jiangsu Police led the eight members' delegation. On this occasion, the PSCA Managing Director briefed the delegation about professional strategies and PSCA initiatives. Chinese police officers were shown the working of different Meanwhile, a delegation of American Sikh yatrees visited Punjab Safe Cities Authority here Tuesday. The delegation consisted of 14 members. On this occasion, Operation Commander PPIIC3 SP Muhammad Shafique welcomed the delegation, conducted a tour of various departments of the authority, and briefed about PSCA initiatives. The pilgrims praised the excellent security arrangements at Sikh religious sites. The participants said that Pakistan is the land of angels, and the warm hospitality of Lahoris has won their hearts.—APP

Chinese consul general awards scholarships to UCP students

LAHORE: Humanities and Social Sciences Department of the University of Central Punjab organised a scholarship-awarding function which was attended by Chinese Consul General in Lahore Zhao Shiren as a special guest. Scholarships amounting to Rs0.5 million were distributed by the Chinese consul general among 12 toppers and deserving students. The function was attended by Dean Humanities and Social Sciences Department Khalid Manzoor, faculty members and students. A documentary was also shown to the students to highlight Sino-Pak friendship and relations between both countries. Speaking on the occasion, the Chinese consul general said he was feeling happy to visit the UCP for the second time. He said next year the UCP students would get scholarships worth Rs1 million. —DNA



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ISSI organizes seminar on Pakistan-Philippines bilateral relations

The Seminar, titled "Pakistan-Philippines Bilateral Relations in the Changing World," aimed to explore opportunities for enhanced collaboration across a broad spectrum

ISLAMABAD: The China Pakistan Study Center, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with Embassy of the Philippines, organized a seminar today, focusing on relations between Pakistan and the Philippines in the changing global landscape. The Seminar, titled "Pakistan-Philippines Bilateral Relations in the Changing World," aimed to explore opportunities for enhanced collaboration across a broad spectrum. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director-General ISSI, while giving his welcoming remarks, acknowledged the enduring strength of Pakistan-Philippines relations marked by friendship, trust and mutual understanding. He stressed the importance of upscaling bilateral trade, investment and economic cooperation,

sustaining a steady momentum of high-level visits, and fostering closer people-to-people exchanges. He also underscored the importance of Pakistan-Philippines relations in the context of Pakistan's elevated partnership with ASEAN. Ambassador Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, Ambassador of the Philippines in Islamabad, reminded that Pakistan and the Philippines had signed 25 cooperation agreements - strengthening bilateral cooperation on various track of the relations. She highlighted the potential for increased economic cooperation, especially in Information Technology, and emphasized the importance of people-to-people exchanges and cultural understanding. Ambassador Mohsin Razi, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the Philippines, shared his views on the excellent relations between Pakistan and the Philip-

ippines based on common values, dating back to the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1949. He highlighted mutual support on the international forums, including the Philippines' support for Pakistan's ASEAN engagement and joint initiative to promote inter-faith dialogue. Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, bilateral trade between the two countries has substantially increased, he noted. Chrystl Sicut from the Philippines Embassy discussed economic agreements between the two countries, highlighting diverse areas for increased economic cooperation. Ms. Sicut called for a more open policy framework on trade and investment and encouraged streamlined people-to-people exchanges. Dr. Jay L. Batongbacal, Director of the Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, Philippines, shared information

about the security issues in ASEAN region and Philippines' perspective. He advocated for cooperation in maritime affairs for mutual economic development and security. Dr. Amna Mahmood from IJU focused on the untapped potential of maritime cooperation between Pakistan and the Philippines, emphasizing the significance of maritime security and trade for economic growth. Dr. Sameera Imran from NDU delved into the potential of bilateral relations in the changing global landscape, advocating for cooperation in research and development between the two countries. Chairman Board of Governors, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, emphasized the long-standing friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and the Philippines. —DNA

National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

- Nov 01/Algeria National Day
Nov 04/Italy Armed Forces Day
Nov 07/Russian Federation Socialist Revolution
Nov 09/Cambodia National Day
Nov 11/Poland Independence Day
Nov 14/Jordan Birthday of King Hussein
Nov 15/Belgium Kings Day
Nov 15/Brazil Republic Day
Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus National Day
Nov 18/Oman National Day
Nov 18/Morocco Independence Day
Nov 21/Bangladesh Armed Forces Day
Nov 22/Lebanon Independence Day
Nov 25/Suriname National Day
Nov 28/Mauritania National Day
Nov 28/Albania Flags Day

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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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
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CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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MH.....5611116
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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



RAWALPINDI : A Two-Day International Confedsfor Ber SAPM for Human rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, attending the opening ceremony of the two day international conference on transformative nexus: higher education and women empowerment at Fatima Jinnah University.—DNA

NADRA brings digital transformation to France

Chairman NADRA Lieutenant General Muhammad Munir Afsar represented Pakistan at the three-day exhibition which is related to digital technologies and identification solutions

ISLAMABAD: The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) is showcasing its journey of digital transformation at a global event TrusTech 2023 being held in France, Paris till November 30. Chairman NADRA Lieutenant General Muhammad Munir Afsar represented Pakistan at the three-day exhibition which is related to digital technologies and identification solutions. Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman NADRA highlighted the evolving role of NADRA since its establishment in 2000 and its accomplishments including identity documents

(national identity card, overseas card), financial systems (mobile/branch-less banking, remittances, pension disbursement), and e-governance (online visa, taxation system, e-passport, legal inheritance). He also mentioned the steps taken by NADRA in the areas of health and education (vaccination system, scholarship programs) and social protection (disaster relief programs, subsidy programs). The Chairman NADRA said that several countries benefitted from the services offered by the organization in their journey of digital transformation. The

NADRA's clients were able to make use of customized solutions together with complete transfer of technology - building trust and mutual learning, he added. Pakistan's Ambassador to France Asim Iftikhar Ahmad referred to NADRA's work as 'empowerment through identity' and lauded the new services being introduced by NADRA, especially its mobile app facility. The TrusTech is an annual meeting place for professionals in the Cards and Digital Trust technologies industries, attracting visitors from across the globe. The 39th edition of the

TrusTech exhibition in Paris has brought into the spotlight representatives from tech, smart card, and innovative payment industries, as well as financial and governmental institutions. The said exhibition provides an opportunity for the exhibitors, sponsors, and startups to exchange views on their latest innovations. During the three days, the exhibition will hold 70 conferences featuring over 100 international experts with almost 200 exhibitors and 6,500 professionals from 92 countries. It is expected that 80 percent of visitors will be attending the

TrusTech exhibition with specific investment projects in mind. "The participation of Pakistan at the exhibition will provide NADRA with an excellent opportunity to hold important meetings with various stakeholders and will likely open new vistas for its growth and development in the future," said the Pakistan ambassador in Paris in a statement issued here. Earlier, the Chairman NADRA visited the Pakistan embassy and appreciated its role regarding the efficient delivery mechanism adopted for the online visa facility to the Pakistani diaspora and others.—Agencies

Significant legislations in place to protect and empower Women

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for human rights and women empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, has said that higher education is not just a pursuit of knowledge but a gateway to critical thinking and skills acquisition. It provides individuals, especially women, with the necessary resources to navigate an ever evolving world. She was addressing the opening ceremony of the two-day international conference at Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi. The two days international conference would bring together distinguished guests, scholars, and policymakers to explore the nexus between higher education and women empowerment. Mushaal Hussein Mullick threw light on the systematic obstacles women had faced in accessing higher education in the past. She said that though some milestone in this regard had been achieved, challenges such as gender bias, cultural norms and

economic disparities are still hindering women's educational access. SAPM said that Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act, 2020; Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act 2020; The Anti Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act 2021; and The Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace (Amendment) Act, 2022 are significant legislation enacted by the Government to protect and empower women. She stressed the connection between women's education and economic progress. Spending on women's higher education is an investment in the country's economy, leading to a more diverse and innovative workforce and reduced poverty rates, she added. Mushaal Mallick highlighted that education goes beyond academic accomplishments to critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills which are essential for effective leadership. Women with education are not merely economic contributors but also act as agents for driving social transfor-

mation. She further said. Sharing her personal commitment to gender equality and women empowerment, SAPM said that she had initiated a 100 days Action Plan to support human rights and women empowerment. She further said that Ministry of human rights had initiated work on a National Gender Policy in consultation with all stakeholders to end violence against women. She further said that the Legal Aid and Justice Authority Act, 2020 enacted by the Federal Government provided legal and financial assistance to ensure access to justice to vulnerable groups, including women, in criminal cases. She underscored the need to extend women's empowerment beyond the classroom to mentorship and supportive networks. Mushaal said that the establishment of Provincial Commission on status of women (PCSW) helplines 1043, KPK Bolo helpline, Sindh Women Development Department Helpline 1094, and Tele Psycho Social Support Services

were crucial in combating Gender Based Violence (GBV). Describing the distressing situation in the Indian illegally occupied Kashmir and Palestine, Mushaal Hussein Mullick said that Kashmiri and Palestinian women were facing a complex and challenging reality due to the prolonged land disputes in the region. She said that many women have lost their loved ones, and the militarized environment has exposed them to violence and trauma. Despite these challenges, Kashmiri and Palestinian women exhibited resilience by actively participating in their communities and steadfastly facing the brutality of Indian and Israeli forces. Praising Ahd Tamimi for her courage in the face of adversity, SAPM said that Kashmiri and Palestinian women were the women of substance and a beacon of hope for the women around the World. Mushaal Hussein Mullick called for a future where every woman had the opportunity to access higher education.

Hospitality management degree launched

ISLAMABAD: Beaconhouse National University (BNU), Pakistan's first not-for-profit Liberal Arts University, and Hashoo School of Hospitality Management (HSHM) have formally launched a first-of-its-kind, joint Bachelor of Science (BS) Degree in Hospitality Management, a step that is set to transform the landscape of hospitality education in Pakistan. Hashoo School of Hospitality Management (HSHM) is Pakistan's premier hospitality and tourism education institution dedicated to producing skilled professionals who will shape the future of the industry. After a notable presence in Peshawar, Karachi, and Islamabad, HSHM is now expanding its network of collaborations to Lahore. An agreement signing and program launch ceremony was held at the Pearl Continental Hotel, Lahore. The agreement was signed by Dr. Moeed W. Yusuf, Vice Chancellor, BNU, and Mr. Haseeb Gardezi, Chief Operating Officer, Hospitality and Education Division, Hashoo Group, in the presence of Mr. Murtaza Hashwani, Deputy Chairman and CEO, Hashoo Group and Mrs. Nasreen Mahmud Kasuri, Chairperson, BNU. Senior faculty and key officials from both institutions were also in attendance. The curriculum closely follows the hospitality industry's gold standard and best practices and remains entirely in sync with the international curriculum of the Confederation of Hospitality (CTH), UK, while meeting all requirements laid out by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan. Under the agreement, all practical and hands-on training of students of the BS Hospitality Management program will be conducted at hotels owned and operated by Hashoo Group across Pakistan under the aegis of HSHM. The collaboration further ensures that all enrolled students of the program shall be provided internship opportunities by Hashoo Group as mandated in the curriculum with guaranteed job placements upon completion of the degree.—DNA

WASA to take strict action against defaulters: MD

RAWALPINDI: Managing Director (MD), of Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), Rawalpindi Muhammad Tanveer has said that strict action in accordance with the law would be taken against the defaulters. He said that the officers concerned had been directed to ensure revenue recovery, disconnect all illegal connections and lodge FIRs against the defaulters. The operation against the defaulters would continue without any discrimination, he said. Sewage and water connections of the defaulters would be disconnected, the MD added. He informed that instructions had been issued to the authorities concerned to review the performance of all revenue inspectors on a daily basis. The performance reports of all revenue inspectors would be prepared in the light of specified targets. Strict disciplinary action would be taken against the official concerned to show negligence in revenue collection, Muhammad Tanveer said.—APP

IESCO imposes over Rs 6.1 mn fine

ISLAMABAD, Nov 29 (AP-P): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has imposed fine of Rs 6.1 million on 166 power pilferers during last 24 hour across all five circles of the company during the ongoing anti power theft and recovery drive. The IESCO spokesperson told that over Rs 110.1 million fine has been imposed on 2,754 power thieves during the current month. Around 124 FIRs have also been registered in the concern police stations while 64 have already been arrested, he said. He requested the consumers to report power theft cases at toll free help line 118 or 051-9252933.—APP

HHRD donated medical equipment to AIOU

ISLAMABAD: Helping Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD), an International NGO, has donated medical equipment and other supplies to Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Medical Center as part of the King Gift Pakistan program. Director Coordination and Follow-up Dr. Syed Ameer Shah, Controller of Examinations Mian Muhammad Riaz, Dr. Hira Ibrahim, and the staff of the Medical Center were present on this occasion. Dr. Amir Shah and Dr. Hira Ibrahim expressed their gratitude to the Helping Hand Organization for their contribution to strengthening the University Medical Center. Dr. Hira further mentioned that the items received from HHRD were much needed and would be of great help. He also stated that the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, is committed to enhancing the health facilities for the employees and plans to further strengthen the medical center.—DNA

IPO-Pak, US for improving IP policies, laws in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to promote intellectual property rights in the country, Intellectual Property Organization Of Pakistan (IPO-Pakistan) and US Intellectual Property Counselor for South Asia Wednesday reaffirm the commitment to carry forward the agenda of improving Intellectual Properties (IP) policies, laws and regulations in Pakistan. This was discussed during a high level visit of the US delegation to IPO-Pakistan Headquarters here headed by US IP Counselor for South Asia, John Cabecca, and consisted of Ms. Dong Eun, Zach Bailey and Hamza Khan. While the Pakistani side was led by Chairperson IPO, Farukh Amil, Director General, Ms. Shazia Adnan, and senior management of IPO-Pakistan were also present in the meeting, said a press release issued here. The chairperson IPO-Pakistan briefed the delegation about the measurements taken by the organization for promoting IPRs. He said that IPO-Pakistan believed that Patents, Trademarks and Copyrights had an important role in economic growth and development and in that regard it had already taken a number of initiatives to improve the IPR regime in the country. Regarding the establishment of IP tribunals in the country, the chairperson informed the US delegation that two new IP tribunals had been established in Quetta and Rawalpindi and approval of two more had been granted. Appreciating the advancement and development of IPRs by the US, Farukh Amil desired that IPO-Pakistan would like to benefit from the US experience and expertise in IP. To raise IP awareness in Pakistan, it was useful to have high profile engagement such as an MoU that would chart further action. It would also help provide a conducive environment for stronger commercial ties and greatly strengthen investor confidence, he added. Shazia Adnan informed that IPO-Pakistan's accession to the Marrakesh Treaty was also in the final stage and would be signed by the President soon. She said that after deliberate discussions on the draft amendments in the Copyright Bill, 2023, it would be soon forwarded to the Parliament for its final approval. Emphasizing on the capacity building, the DG said that IPO-Pakistan might face some post copyright amendment/treaties accession capacity building issues and sought help in training judiciary, enforcement agencies and copyright staff.—DNA

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Briefs

Three more dengue cases surface in RWP

RAWALPINDI: As many as three more dengue cases were reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 2,680 in the district. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood, Wednesday said that one of each case had arrived from Potohar town urban, Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi and Chaklala Cantonment area. He added that presently 25 patients were admitted to district hospitals of which 17 were confirmed cases while 2,661 were discharged after treatment. Dr Sajjad informed that during indoor surveillance, in the last 24 hours, the teams checked 1,950 houses and found larvae in 30 homes. Similarly, he added that while checking 1,701 places, the teams found larvae at eight sites during outdoor surveillance.—APP

NPO to organize webinar on solar system for electricity generation

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) will conduct a Webinar on 'Solar System for Electricity Generation' on December 05 (Wednesday). "Energy growth is directly linked to the well-being and prosperity of a country and in Pakistan, the economy is mainly reliant on the electricity being produced by conventional energy resources such as coal, oil, and natural gas," according to an NPO document shared here. "Given adequate support, renewable energy technologies can meet the growing demand at lower prices than those usually forecast for conventional energy. Renewable energy technologies like solar, wind, bio, hydro, ocean and hydrogen are clean sources of energy; that have a much lower environmental impact than conventional energy technologies," it added. The workshop will provide information about renewable energy, solar energy, basic concepts of electricity, photovoltaic (PV) modules and their new models, PV system components, type and application of PV systems, basics of PV system sizing for the domestic sector, financial benefit analysis and financing options, ON grid, OFF grid, ONGRID hybrid & net metering, and Battery selection.—APP

The country is seriously threatened by climate change

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Wednesday that discussing climate change is no longer a fashion but has become a real threat. Ignoring this danger would be tantamount to suicide; thus, efforts should be made to manage resources to deal with the problem, he said. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that Pakistan is among the ten countries in the world that are most affected by climate change. Millions have been affected, while more than 1700 precious lives have been exposed to the devastating rains caused by climate change. Yet, unfortunately, no comprehensive plan has been put in place to deal with this menace permanently. The business leader said we must work independently because the international community is doing nothing except making promises. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the IMF has also realized this weakness and advised the government to make progress in this regard, give importance to this sector in the budget, and pave the way for investments. He informed that the IMF wants to create a better database for these matters, allocate funds in the budget.

ICCI demands auto city in capital to boost car business

Addressing the delegation, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that car showrooms provide employment to thousands of people along with promoting business activities

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Motor and Importer Dealers Association led by its President Haji Tariq visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and discussed the issues being faced by their sector. Raja Amir Karim President Rawalpindi Region, Sardar Irfan President Islamabad Region, Muhammad Waseem Abbasi General Secretary Islamabad Region, Azhar Akhlaq Abbasi Chairman Islamabad Region, Ajab Gul President Islamabad Motor Dealers Association and others were in the delegation. Addressing the delegation, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that car showrooms provide employment to thousands of people along with promoting business activities, but the action against them by CDA authorities not only affects the business of this sector, it also increases unemployment. Therefore, he demanded that CDA should establish Auto City for car showrooms in Islamabad in consultation with motor dealers and importers so that the parking problems in the markets can be better solved and the business activities of this sector can be promoted smoothly. He assured that ICCI will cooperate with the Association to solve the problems of motor dealers. Haji Tariq, President, Motor and Importer



Dealers Association, said that motor dealers have an important role in the development of business and providing employment, but many times CDA moved to close car showrooms in Islamabad due to which the business community of this sector had to suffer. He said that the Islamabad High Court has also issued instructions to the CDA to find a permanent solution to the problem of car showrooms in Islamabad and for this purpose it should analyze the best models of this business in other major cities of the world including London, Malaysia and Singapore. He stressed that the

CDA should find a sustainable solution for car showrooms by taking all stakeholders into confidence. Engr. Azharul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI termed it important to address the problems of motor dealers for the better growth of the business activities of this sector and assured that ICCI will cooperate with the Association to solve their issues. Former President ICCI and Secretary General of UBG Pakistan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the auto industry is playing a vital role in the development of the economy by paying taxes of around 30 billion rupees and stressed that the

government should facilitate this industry and motor dealers by creating favorable conditions for their business. It will enable the auto industry to play more effective role in the revival of the economy. Raja Amir Karim President Rawalpindi Region, Sardar Irfan President Islamabad Region, Muhammad Waseem Abbasi General Secretary Islamabad Region, Azhar Akhlaq Abbasi Chairman Islamabad Region and Ajab Gul President Islamabad Motor Dealers Association also spoke on the occasion and stressed that the CDA should address their issues on priority basis.

Alvi directs bank to refund Rs 344,600 to fraud victim

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi, upholding the orders of Banking Mohtasib, has directed Allied Bank Ltd (ABL) to pay Rs 344,600 to a customer as the amount fraudulently transferred from his account. The bank had committed maladministration by opening the fund transfer facility without the consent of customer which caused him financial loss, the President House said Wednesday. Deciding upon a representation filed by ABL against the decision of the Banking Mohtasib, the president held that the bank failed to discharge the burden and statutory liability cast upon it under the law and that it had committed basic irregularity and non-compliance by activating In-

ternet Banking/Electronic Funds Transfer (IB/EFT) channel without customer consent. In his decision, he observed that although the complainant received a phone call from a number similar to the bank's helpline, after which, a sum of Rs 344,602 was transferred from his account, however, if the IB/EFT facility had not been opened by ABL, the customer could have been saved from the financial loss caused to him with no fault on his part. The president pointed out that the complainant had neither requested the IB/EFT facility nor had conducted any transaction through such channels in the past. Ameer Ali Wasan (the complainant), a citizen of Hyderabad, immediately filed a complaint with the bank after the fraud but his grievance was not resolved. Lat-

er, he approached Banking Mohtasib to get a refund of the lost amount. The Mohtasib directed ABL to refund the defrauded amount, but ABL filed a representation with the President against the decision. The president held a personal hearing of the case and in his decision noted that ABL failed to establish the legitimacy of the disputed transaction in terms of Section 41 of the Payment System and Electronic Funds Transfer Act, 2007. "From the perusal of the record, it is apparent that the transactions were conducted on a single date and almost in a very short span of time and on the same pattern. It could have evoked the alert system of the Bank, to at least call the customer about it. It is a matter of concern to be

addressed by the Banks and the regulator i.e., State Bank of Pakistan," the President noted. He added that the citizen was not conversant with digital banking and did not have adequate knowledge of the present-day banking products based on modern technology. In view of the facts, the president concluded that IB/EFT was an unsolicited facility and the bank had failed to comply with various binding and mandatory provisions of the Payment Systems and EFT Act 2007 as well as directives issued by the State Bank of Pakistan regarding the opening of such channels. The president, therefore, rejected the representation filed by ABL and directed it to report compliance to Banking Mohtasib within 30 days from the date of the order.

China and Pak promote agro-forestry economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The third Science and Technology Exchange Conference on China-Pakistan Tropical Arid Non-wood Forest was held both online and offline this week in Zhengzhou, China, and Gwadar simultaneously. The exchange conference was aimed at to showcase achievements and research progress of both nations in the field of economic forestry. It also sought to facilitate academic exchanges of woody medicinal herbs and active substances between China and Pakistan, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday. The event, co-hosted by the Chinese Society of Forestry (CSF) and Central South

University of Forestry and Technology (CSUFT), drew over 220 officials, scholars, students and business representatives from both countries. In 2021, to enhance the economic and ecological development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), CSUFT, China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC), and Yulin Holdings collaborated to establish an Engineering Research Center for Tropical Arid Non-wood Forest. The center aims to showcase a green and sustainable development approach, focusing on the non-wood forest industry and its compatibility with ecological, economic, and social benefits in Gwadar. During the review and discussion of the pro-

gress made over the past years, Zhang Baozhong, chairman of COPHC, introduced the impact of eco-economic forest construction on the business environment in Gwadar. Focusing on the collection and utilization of germplasm resources of arid and salt-tolerant and non-wood barren forests, the organizer invited experts to make special presentations on the research progress and development prospects of different plants, including *Eucommia ulmoides*, *Elaeis guineensis*, *Moringa oleifera*, and *Hippophae rhamnoides*. The event was organized by Henan Agricultural University, Henan Forestry Society, Economic Forest Branch of CSF, COPHC and Yulin Holdings.

FGEHA to complete Green Enclave-II in 2025

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) would complete the development work of Green Enclave-II residential project of the government employees by 2025. "The work of the first part of the project Green Enclave-II (Commoners Sky Garden) is going on vigorously. The Housing Authority Green Enclave II-Project is a joint venture of the Ministry of Housing and Construction, with Sky Garden to provide low-cost plots/flats to government employees," an official told APP. He said the work on the first part of Green Enclave-II was progressing towards completion, which consisted of about 11,000 kanals of land.—APP

Pak locally produced 15.66 million phones in Jan-Oct 2023

DNA

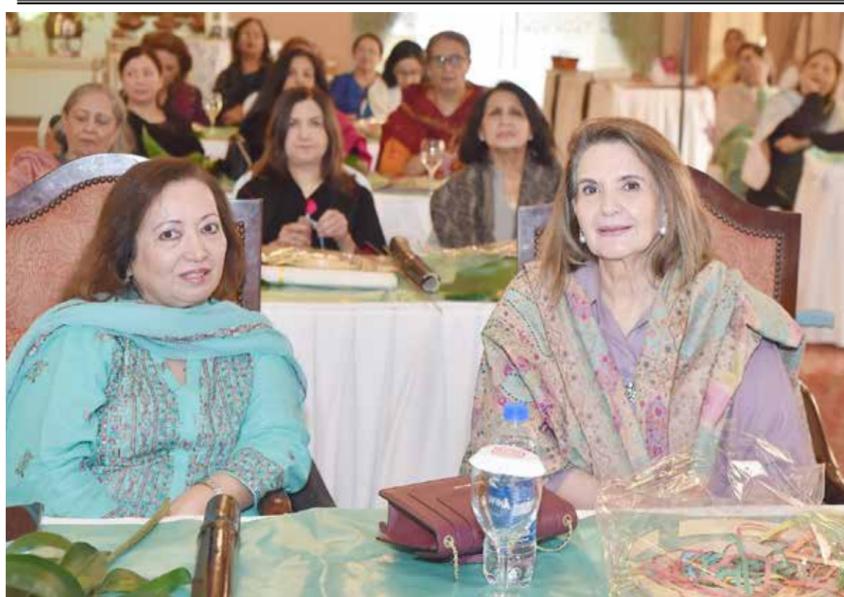
ISLAMABAD: In the initial ten months of 2023, Pakistan has manufactured or assembled 15.66 million mobile sets domestically, as per the latest data from Pakistan Telecommunication (PTA). The country also commercially imported 1.26 million mobile phones during the same period. The data shows that 92.6% of the phones have been locally assembled/manufactured, highlighting massive reliance on domestic productions. In contrast, 7.4% of the phones have been imported, contributing to the reduction of the country's import bill. As per PTA's data, out of the 15.66 million mobile sets, 10.25 million are classified as Second Generation Mobile (2G mobile), commonly known as GSM phones while 1.41 million of these mobile sets are smartphones. The data shows the dominant role of Chinese companies within the top 10 brands actively involved in local manufacturing and assembling of phone sets. Leading the chart is China's VGO Tel with the production of 1.96 million phone sets, followed closely by 'itel' with 1.89 million sets. Infinix has contributed 1.70 million mobile sets, while Xiaomi's Redmi follows with 0.92 million phone sets manufactured/assembled, and Tecno has assembled/manufactured 0.89 million mobile sets. In 2022, Pakistan locally manufactured 21.95 million phone sets alongside the commercial imports of 1.53 million phone sets. The leading brand in this race was China's itel with 3.03 million sets. Similarly, VGO Tel produced 2.40 million sets, and Vivo and Infinix manufactured/assembled 1.72 million sets each in 2022. China's Tecno and Oppo were also among the top 10 brands each engaging in the assembling/manufacturing of 1.34 million and 1.12 million mobile sets, respectively, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday.

Model CCI students visit Parliament House

ISLAMABAD: A 30-member group from Model Council of Common Interests (CCI), a flagship project of the Hanns Siedel Foundation (HSF) Pakistan, comprising students from 27 universities, participated in a comprehensive visit to the Parliament House on Wednesday. The students had the opportunity to interact with Senator Sana Jamali, the Convener of the Education Parliamentarians Caucus, and Mir Shae Mazar Baloch, Director General (DG) of Coordination Senate. Senator Sana Jamali shared insights into the purpose of the Education Parliamentarians Caucus and its various initiatives, emphasizing the crucial role of education in parliamentary affairs. She also provided an insightful overview of the Senate of Pakistan, delving into its historical significance, composition, and pivotal role in the nation's legislative process. The students were treated to a documentary chronicling the rich history of the Senate, offering a deeper understanding of its evolution over time.—APP

NEPRA concludes hearing into FCA of DISCOs for Oct

ISLAMABAD: National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Wednesday concluded public hearing into fuel cost adjustment (FCA) of all power distribution companies (DISCOs) for October. The hearing was presided over by the NEPRA Authority comprising Chairman Waseem Mukhtar, Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Engr Maqsood Khan, Member Balochistan Mithar Niaz Rana, Member Sindh Rafique Ahmad Shaikh and Member Punjab Amina Ahmed. Central Power Purchasing Agency-Guarantee (CPPA-G) on behalf of XWDISCO sought Rs 3.53 per unit increase in power tariff for the said period. The financial impact of the increase was estimated as Rs 32.7 billion. Out of total, around Rs 25 billion and Rs 3.2 billion were included old adjustment of Thar Coal Block 1 and China Power respectively. The net increase has been calculated as Rs 3.13 per unit for the said period. Hydel generation accounted for the largest share, constituting 32.54%, local coal-based production followed with a contribution of 13.94% and imported coal with a 3.51% share. Similarly, gas-based electricity accounted for 7.35% of total generation while re-gasified liquefied natural gas (RLNG) represented a substantial 20.25% share in electricity.—APP



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Mrs Samina Alvi along with Mrs Aziz Boolani attending the floral arrangement workshop, held at the Islamabad Serena Hotel. —DNA



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Preparedness for spillover natural precaution

A month into the so-called Operation 1027, a joint offensive against the Myanmar government forces by the Brotherhood Alliance of three ethnic armies in the country's northern region, fighting continues along the China-Myanmar border. In light of this, the People's Liberation Army has conducted live-fire drills on the Chinese side of the border since Saturday. While there is no denying the two are interrelated, it is groundless overstretch to talk about a Chinese attempt to interfere in Myanmar's internal affairs, as some Western observers have done. At both government-to-government and people-to-people levels, China and Myanmar have been on good terms. So good that the close official relationship has been a constant target of Western criticism as some Western countries aspire for changes in Myanmar politics. Beijing's critics, however, often ignore the fact that the Chinese government's good-neighborly ties with the government in Myanmar is based on the principle of mutual noninterference. This principle sits at the center of the Chinese diplomatic compass – the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. With no signs of the fighting abating along the border, it is only natural for China to upgrade its own preparedness to deal with any unexpected scenarios. "It is the responsibility of the PLA to safeguard border security and protect the lives and property of people living in the border areas," said the PLA Daily. "The drills being conducted ... are aimed at testing the mobility, border control abilities and firepower capabilities of the military units so that the People's Liberation Army is ready for any emergency." According to the PLA Southern Theater Command, the drills are being carried out in accordance with an annual training plan. Those who accuse the Chinese of siding with the ethnic forces should not neglect what the Myanmar military has to say. A spokesman of the Myanmar government stated on Saturday that Myanmar had been informed of the drills. Military relations between China and Myanmar are firm, collaboration between the two militaries is friendly, and getting closer. Nor should they ignore the fact that the PLA's exercises are only part of Beijing's response to the situation. Wary of the fighting's effects spilling over and disturbing peace on the Chinese side, Beijing has repeatedly appealed to the conflicting parties to agree to a cease-fire and negotiate. It has also coordinated with the Myanmar authorities to accommodate displaced refugees and help third-country nationals withdraw via China. China and Myanmar share a border of more than 2,000 kilometers. The surge in fighting has displaced more than 2 million people in Myanmar, according to a United Nations' estimate. The domestic conflict on the other side of the border is certainly a grim and genuine concern for China.



UK must return looted relics to where they belong

The dispute between the United Kingdom and Greece over the ownership of the Parthenon Sculptures escalated, with UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak canceling a meeting in London with his visiting Greek counterpart Kyriakos Mitsotakis following the latter's renewed call for the return of the 2,500-year-old marbles. The Greek prime minister said that the Parthenon Sculptures, which were removed from Greece by the British diplomat Lord Elgin in the early 19th century, had been "essentially stolen" and asked for their early restitution. Greece has long insisted that the works were illegally removed from the country and they should be handed back to join other surviving relics in the purpose-built Acropolis Museum. The UK government has steadfastly rejected Greece's demand, citing the 1963 British Museum Act – which prohibits the removal of objects from the British Museum's collection – as an excuse. That the UK prime minister canceled his scheduled meeting with his Greek counterpart, only hours before it was due to take place just because the guest had repeated the international consensus that looted artifacts should be returned to their country of origin, shows the sensitivity of the UK to the issue. Thanks to its colonial past, the UK, like many other Western colonial powers, removed countless relics and artifacts from its colonies and other countries. Of the more than 8 million items that the British Museum now holds, the majority were either light-fingered or smashed-and-grabbed from other countries, including more than 23,000 pieces of cultural relics that were looted from China. The return and restitution of cultural property is central to the 1970 UNESCO Convention on Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. And calls from the international community for the museums in Western countries to return the plundered relics they hold have intensified in recent years. Some countries have already taken steps to right their wrong. Germany, for example, last year returned 22 Benin Bronzes including sculptures and plaques looted from the ancient Kingdom of Benin to Nigeria, in a crucial step to address the country's "dark colonial history", as its foreign minister said. Yet despite this, the British Museum has so far refused to return the artifacts to their country of origin, partly on the grounds that they would not be taken good care of. Yet a scandal exposed in August involving some 2,000 artifacts that have inexplicably gone missing from the museum points to the huge loopholes in its security and management. The UK must face up to the crimes it committed during its colonial past and take concrete steps to correct some of its historical wrongs by returning all looted or stolen artifacts to their country of origin.

Unprecedented bloodshed

I got a message to join a session about prevailing conditions of Palestine particularly the Gaza; the speaker of the session was the president of Alkhidmat Foundation Dr. Hafeez ur Rehman. We all are quite updated about the atrocities of Gazans due to the social media platforms despite biased policies of a few social media applications. In the morning once I had a thought that probably it will be the waste of time to attend the presentation but the grief of the people of Gaza drove me to the head office of Alkhidmat Foundation to listen to the speaker. The gallantry of people of Gaza is simply exceptional from a child to the elderly. In early days of the conflict we all witnessed a video of a lady in her eighties refusing to leave her home while majority of her neighborhood left following the ultimatum of Israeli defense forces, hours later there was all rubble including her house while reporters were certain that the lady embraced martyrdom. Throughout the conflict we did not witness even a single clip of misconduct by any Hamas fighters with Israeli prisoners of war while there is abundance of videos on social media platforms depicting indiscriminate manhandling of Israeli troops with men, women and children. Israeli spokespersons quote and refer to the data and trends of wars during last hundred years, a few of cold-hearted representatives did mention even about Hiroshima and Nagasaki in a cunning manner. Attacking Jabaliya refugee camp with 2000-pound bombs twice in a few days speaks volume about savagery and madness of Israeli military. The brutality of Israel is unprecedented in the known human history. If we compare death toll of children during 48 days of the conflict with entire six years of World War Two (WWII), it is 80% more than the per day death toll of children in WWII. According to the estimates around 69 children were killed per day during WWII while in Gaza count stands at 125 children per day. Save

the Children reported on November 28, 2023 that at least 6,000 children have been killed in Gaza since the start of the escalation. According to the reports over 1.8 million people in Gaza, or nearly 80 per cent of the population, are estimated to be internally displaced. Of them, nearly 1.1 million IDPs are sheltering in 156 UNRWA facilities across Gaza. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported, "About 15,100 housing units were destroyed, and 10,656 housing units were rendered uninhabitable, 139,000 housing units were subjected to minor to moderate damage, pointing to the destruction of entire neighborhoods, especially in Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahia, Shujaiya, the area between Gaza and the Beach refugee camp, and Abasan Kabira in Khan Yunis." Vanessa Romo from NPR's news desk reported on November 21, 2023, "Israeli attacks have killed more than 200 health care workers in Gaza since the start of the war, and another 215 health workers have been wounded. And those left behind say there is little time to mourn the dead." According to Lauren Leatherby of New York Times (November 26, 2023), "More than twice as many women and children have already been reported killed in Gaza than in Ukraine after almost two years of Russian attacks, according to United Nations estimates. And the number of women and children reported killed in Gaza since the Israeli campaign began last month has already started to approach the civilians documented to have been killed by the United States and its allies in Afghanistan during nearly 20 years of war. More than 60,000 buildings have been damaged or destroyed in the Gaza Strip, satellite analysis indicates, including about half of the buildings in northern Gaza." Alkhidmat is working on several fronts. Initially Alkhidmat extended ready food in collaboration with Turkish NGOs. The speaker

of the session explained that how relief goods are supplied utilizing Egypt's El Arish airport and how odd mechanism at Rafah Crossing is causing difficulties for relief activities; while audience were astonished that Palestinians are being discriminated and denied right of free movement ceasing Gazans in a real-life cage for people. Alkhidmat plans to establish a field hospital with the technical help from a Turkish institution which requires around 2.5 billion rupees. He emphasized that Alkhidmat has abundance of supplies of relief goods but the real challenge is the transportation. They are working in close liaison with the government to extend every possible relief to the civilians in the Gaza to contribute a bit in relieving their agony. However, they need facilitation for exclusive cargo plans to transport winter packages for the people of Gaza which costs around six thousand rupees per person. I am taking this opportunity to request every Pakistani to contribute to this noble cause to the fullest of their capacity in any given manner. Alkhidmat also launched an app to register volunteer doctors to travel to the Gaza to extend medical support to the wounded and sick civilians of the Strip. It was a moment of gratitude for the speaker to mention that around three thousand doctors have already volunteered to travel to Gaza while more than fifteen hundred are female doctors among them which indeed shows a deep concern and commitment to the humanity. We all have to extend what we can to the orphans, widows, elderly, sick and wounded human beings of Gaza to give them hope that morality has not yet vanished.

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Europe's rising tide of immigration hysteria

Jonathan Gornall

Make no mistake. This is not about "illegal" immigration. It is about racism, pure and simple. For instance, it suits the UK government to make an issue out of "stopping the boats" crossing the English Channel. But the numbers involved are tiny compared with the number of migrants coming to the UK legally to work as doctors, nurses and care home assistants, or to study as students. And even those students are coming under fire. Make no mistake. This is not about 'illegal' immigration. It is about racism, pure and simple. The UK is seeing a record number of students coming from overseas to study

In the Netherlands, a formerly fringe far-right party wins more seats in the Dutch general election than any other political group. In Dublin, a knife attack outside a school triggers rioting and looting by right-wing thugs. In the UK, support for the right-wing Reform party is increasing. The common theme in each of these stories is immigration, a topic that has risen to the top of political agendas across Europe, threatening to transform liberal democracies into illiberal bastions of intolerance. Make no mistake. This is not about "illegal" immigration. It is about racism, pure and simple. For instance, it suits the UK government to make an issue out of "stopping the boats" crossing the English Channel. But the numbers involved are tiny compared with the number of migrants coming to the UK legally to work as doctors, nurses and care home assistants, or to study as students. And even those students are coming under fire. Make no mistake. This is not about 'illegal' immigration. It is about racism, pure and simple. The UK is seeing a record number of students coming from overseas to study. Worth millions of pounds to universities, which charge foreign students far higher fees than their British counterparts, they contribute significantly to the nation's gross domestic product. Some stay on in the country after completing their course. If they do, it is because they have got a job and are paying taxes to the treasury. Regardless, right-wing politicians are now demanding that such students should not be allowed to bring family to live with them. Europe is walking, eyes tight shut, into a new dark age that makes a mockery of the 70 million-plus lives lost during the Second World War in the effort to rid the world of the cancerous, supremacist ideology of the Nazis. A fundamental misunderstanding underpins Europe's rising tide of immigration hysteria:

Europe, with birth rates declining, needs immigration. In the UK in particular, migrants form a large part of the workforce, including doctors and nurses, but also carry out many of the low-paid jobs. But at the same time, right-wing politicians are peddling the false trope that migrants are taking "our" jobs and housing, clogging up "our" health system and – most sinister of all – "changing the shape of our country before our very eyes." That latest incendiary quote comes from Richard Tice, a wealthy British property developer who founded the Brexit Party and is now the leader of its successor, Reform UK, which says Britain is "broken" and "needs net-zero lawful immigration." The Conservative government, he said, had "totally betrayed" the British people because immigration to the UK was at a record high. It is, but only because, if it was not, Britain's economy would collapse. Europe is increasingly under the spell of those who would highlight our differences rather than our similarities. Regardless, traditional, more reasonable political parties across Europe are in a bind. If they ignore the rising tide of racist hysteria, they will be swept away, and so they are pandering to the mob. In the UK, the Conservative government is fragmenting, torn apart by the competing narratives of the beleaguered party's few remaining centrist MPs and extremists like the recently sacked Home Secretary Suella Braverman, the key cheerleader of the bizarre policy of dispatching boat people to Rwanda. In the Netherlands, a four-party coalition government collapsed in July after failing to reach agreement over measures to control the flow of migrants. Into the moral vacuum stepped radical right-winger Geert Wilders, a preposterous man who rants about the "tsunami of asylum and immigration" and who has pledged to "ban" the Qur'an, close the country's borders and deliver "Next," a Dutch version of Brexit.

On one level, this growing distaste for non-European foreigners is hilarious, given that it is a direct consequence of the colonialism that European states such as the UK and Holland imposed on the world for centuries. But such truths cast no shadows on the fantasy landscapes occupied by the likes of Wilders. The advantages of cultural diversity are obvious, and too numerous to list, and in choosing to present multiculturalism as a threat rather than an asset, right-wing politicians expose themselves for what they are – racists. In Ireland last week, anti-migrant mobs gathered following an incident in which five people, including a five-year-old girl, were stabbed outside a primary school in Dublin. In the words of the police, "hateful assumptions" that the attacker was a foreign national spread quickly and mobs took to the streets, expressing their disdain for foreigners by, oddly, vandalizing and looting Irish shops. Ironically, the man who risked his own life to save the wounded victims was himself a migrant – a fast-food courier and a father of two originally from Brazil. Unfortunately, Europe is increasingly under the spell of those who would highlight our differences rather than our similarities in a cynical bid to seize power. The roots of all the disruptions in the Middle East and North Africa that have, to a significant extent, contributed to Europe's migrant problems can be traced to European intervention in the region dating back to the First World War. The challenge now for Europe's moderate, mainstream politicians is to recognize and own this history, to hold the line of decency and to combat, rather than pander to, the false narratives of the extremists. So far, however, none have appeared capable of rising to this challenge and Europe is slipping inexorably into a moral dark age as a result.

—Sourced by Arab news.

Briefs

Pak-Kuwait
agree to
deepen ties...

FROM PAGE 01

It is unclear if the meeting will still take place. Earlier today, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad had received PM Kakar upon his arrival at the Bayan Palace. On the occasion, the prime minister was presented with a guard of honour and the national anthems of both countries were played. Pakistan signed several memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with Kuwait to attract multi-billion dollar investment from the Gulf country, as the South Asian nation seeks foreign inflows to boost its dismal economy. A statement from the PM's Office mentioned that the interim premier and Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al Sabah underlined the importance of historical brotherly ties between the two countries.

KSA extends
\$3bn deposit
term for...

FROM PAGE 01

the "royal directives that reflect the continuation of the close relationship between the two brotherly countries". Pakistan's economy is in dire straits with its foreign reserves depleting quickly amid less inflows from overseas investors. Analysts also see the Pakistani rupee falling to 350 by the end of 2024 as the local unit is set to end this year as the worst-performing currency. The country was on the brink of default last year, but it was averted after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a short-term bailout with strict conditions — pushing the inflation up as Pakistan underwent several structural reforms, which saw an increase in gas, energy, and petrol prices.

Ceasefire
expiry...

FROM PAGE 01

their homes amid violent confrontations. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud has called on the UN Security Council to "live up to its responsibilities" and enforce a lasting ceasefire in Gaza. He said the aid that is currently trickling into the enclave is "by far less than is needed". "The danger is that if this... truce expires, that we will return to the killing at the scale that we have seen, which is unbearable," he told reporters at UN headquarters. "We are here to make a clear statement — that a truce is not enough. What is needed is a ceasefire," he said.

World marks
Palestine...

FROM PAGE 01

threat and deliberate and systematic targeting of civilians. He called for an end to the silent annexation, settlement and racial discrimination measures in the entire occupied Palestinian territory, noting that what is required is to provide urgent international protection for Palestinian people and achieve justice through accountability and responsibility. The President stressed the necessity of taking strategic steps to address the strategic threat to the two-state solution.

Global coop
needed...

FROM PAGE 01

Talent Partnership. He also held meeting with Vice President of the European Parliament and the Rapporteur of the new GSP Plus Scheme, Heidi Hautala, Chairperson of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, David Macalister, and EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpainen. Terming GSP Plus as a template for mutually beneficial economic cooperation, the Foreign Minister expressed the hope that the scheme would continue to support developing economies without adding excessive conditionalities.



ISLAMABAD: President and the Secretary General of the Rising Stars Hockey Club presenting a souvenir to Charge d Affaires Eduard Preda on occasion of the National Day of Romania, on behalf of the Rising Stars Hockey Club. The event was held at the Islamabad Serena Hotel. — DNA

Shan Masood aims to make history in Australia

Pakistan have never won a Test series in the 12 times they have toured down under, with the South Asian side losing the last 14 five-dayers in a row there

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

LAHORE: Newly appointed captain of Pakistan cricket team Shan Masood set his side a tough target on Wednesday for their forthcoming tour of Australia — make history. Pakistan have never won a Test series in the 12 times they have toured down under, with the South Asian side losing the last 14 five-dayers in a row there. But Masood, 34, who took over the Test side after Babar Azam relinquished the captaincy in all formats of cricket following Pakistan's disastrous World Cup campaign, sees an opportunity. "When you have not achieved something in history, then you have an opportunity to change it," he told a news conference in Lahore ahead of the team's departure. "So we will make an effort to produce positive results for Pakistan and for the World Test championship." Pakistan are on the top of the World Test Championship 2023-25 cycle with wins in both Tests against Sri Lanka, while India are second and Australia are third on the nine-team table. But Australia are flying high after winning the



last cycle of the championship and lifting the 50-over World Cup earlier this month. The Test series starts with the first match in Perth from December 14, followed by Melbourne (December 26-30), and Sydney (January 3-7). Pakistan lost both Tests by an innings margin during

their last tour — a series Masood was part of. "We need to score 400 and then take 20 wickets," said Shan Masood of what was required. "We did not do that on our last tour in 2019, so that is the goal." Shan Masood admitted Australia would be high on confidence. "The positive thing will be to have the belief to play well, and all those playing contribute to give Australia some tough times." Masood insisted the tourists had prepared well for this series. "We tried to replicate the Australian conditions in our training camp in Rawalpindi, which has a bouncy pitch," he said. He also hailed the appointment of former England skipper Adam Hobbins, who coaches in Australia, as the team's new batting coach. "Teams hire people who have local knowledge, and he is an expert in Australian conditions so his appointment will help us to apply ourselves in those conditions." He also backed his predecessor Azam to have a big tour, saying the team's batting "will go around him". "We want to play the type of cricket that our fans enjoy — a good and fighting brand," he said.

Imad Wasim joins Islamabad United, Hassan Ali moves to KK



LAHORE: The Pakistan Super League saw one of the biggest trades in its history as Karachi Kings' skipper Imad Wasim joined Islamabad United while Hassan Ali has joined the 2020 PSL winners, confirmed the league on Wednesday. "HBL PSL 5 winning captain Imad Wasim will don Islamabad United colours in the ninth edition of the tournament. Imad, who was named as the All-Rounder of HBL PSL 8, has been snapped by Islamabad United in the Platinum category," the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a brief press release. "Hassan Ali (Diamond category) moves to Karachi Kings. By virtue of this player trade, Karachi Kings have received Islamabad United's first round silver pick in exchange for their second round silver pick," it added. Things are starting to take place as the PSL 9 draft nears and we just witnessed a historic trade today as the Karachi Kings captain, who has been with the team since the first season, left the team to join the 2016 PSL winners. Imad was the player of the tournament of PSL 8 with 404 runs and nine wickets in 10 matches. "Eight seasons of passion and dedication, steering us through victories and providing leadership that brought us a trophy and countless golden memories. You've been the heartbeat of Karachi Kings," Karachi Kings said as they bid farewell to Imad Wasim. "Thank you for painting the Kings' canvas with glory. Wishing you all the best as you begin your new journey. You'll always be a King in our hearts. Farewell, @simadwasim!" On the other hand, Islamabad United also shared their good wishes to pacer Hassan Ali, who made his debut for the team in PSL 7. "Today we bid farewell to a true #Sheru. Hassan Ali, our #Generator, will be lighting up a new path with Karachi Kings in #HBLPSL9. Your passion & incredible performances have left an indelible mark on our hearts. Once a #Sheru, always a #Sheru. Good luck, Hassan," said Islamabad United in a farewell post for Hassan Ali. It must be noted that the PCB has already revealed the pick order for the Player Draft of the PSL 9. Quetta Gladiators will make the first pick, meanwhile Karachi Kings and two-time champions Islamabad United will have the second and third picks. The fourth and fifth picks will be done by Peshawar Zalmi and last season's runners-up Multan Sultans respectively while winners of the past two editions Lahore Qalandars will finish the first round with the sixth pick. —DNA

Pakistan team named for Junior Hockey WC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan team has been named to feature in the Junior Hockey World Cup to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from December 5 to 16. According to the details, after the approval of Pakistan Hockey Federation President Brig (R) Khalid Sajjad Khokhar, PHF Selection Committee Chairman Olympian Asif Bajwa has selected 20 players for the World Cup organized by FIH. The member squad was announced by Member Selection Committee Olympian Anjum Saeed while Manager Lt. Col. (R) Asif Naz Khokhar, and Head Coach Roelant Oltmans were also present on this occasion. The team officials include Team Manager Asif Naz Khokhar, Head Coach Roelant Oltmans, Coaches Olympian Shakeel Abbasi, International Muhammad Ali, International Muhammad Asif, Physiotherapist Muhammad Aslam and Video Analyst Nadeem Lodhi.

Al Hilal reach Champions League knockouts

ABU DHABI: Salem Al Dawsari missed two penalties but scored with a lob from distance as Saudi Arabian side Al Hilal sealed a spot in the Asian Champions League knockout stages on Tuesday. The winger, who was last month named the continent's best men's player, spurned a spot-kick in either half in the Group D tie against Navbahor in Uzbekistan. But after substitute Malcolm struck the game's opening goal, Al Dawsari atoned with some distinction for the four-time champions late on in a 2-0 win. Malcolm's effort, a rebound from Al Dawsari's second saved penalty on 68 minutes, was the Brazilian's first touch of the match. The goal was also his first in the competition since a summer move from Zenit Saint Petersburg. With four minutes remaining, Al Dawsari made the result safe when he beat goalkeeper Utkir Yusupov from around 35 yards. Navbahor's Ibrokhim Yuldoshev was sent off late on for a second bookable offence. The victory was enough to take Hilal, Champions League runners-up last season, through to the last 16 as group winners with one game to spare. In Group A, UAE's Al Ain suffered their first defeat of this continental campaign when they lost 3-1 at home to Pakhtakor of Uzbekistan. The result mattered little to the 2003 champions, though, since Al Ain had already secured their place in the last 16. In the group's other fixture, Saudi side Al Fayha got only a second win of this campaign with a 3-1 home victory against Turkmenistan's Ahal. Pakhtakor are second going into the final matchday. Only the group winners are guaranteed to advance to the last 16, with the six best runners-up joining them. In the East Asian side of the draw, Japan's Kawasaki Frontale made it five wins from five Group I matches to ease into the knockout stage, defeating Malaysia's Johor 5-0 at home. South Korean side Ulsan stay second following a 3-1 victory against BG Pathum United in Thailand. Both BG Pathum United and Johor will exit the competition at the group stage. — Agencies

IHC acquits Nawaz in Avenfield...

FROM PAGE 01

nullifying the conviction handed to them in 2018 by an accountability court. On July 6, 2018, the trial court sentenced Nawaz to 10 years in jail upon conviction along with a £8 million fine (approximately Rs1.3 billion), in the Avenfield corruption reference for owning assets beyond known sources of income and an additional year for not cooperating with NAB, both of them to be served concurrently. Maryam was sentenced to seven years in prison with a fine of £2 million, and one year for non-cooperation with the bureau, while her husband was handed down two-year rigorous imprisonment.

Leaders from...

FROM PAGE 01

saying, "The PTI chief ignored Quetta." He expressed his thoughts about the upcoming elections and said, "It will be clear on February 8 which party is the choice of the people." Kundi credited former president Asif Ali Zardari, saying, "Zardari has given the gift to people in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). PPP senior leader Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said that former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari will be the party's candidate for the prime minister slot.

Gohar nominated...

FROM PAGE 01

Islamabad had convicted the PTI chief in the case filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) that involved concealing details of state gifts and jailed him for three years. The verdict meant he was disqualified from contesting general elections for five years. However, the same month the Islamabad High Court (IHC) had suspended PTI Chairman Imran Khan's three-year sentence but he still remains in jail in other cases.

MQM-P, PML-N...

FROM PAGE 01

different options for political alliance, seat adjustment and others. They also held consultations on ongoing talks with other political parties regarding the seat adjustment besides discussing the election campaign, rallies in Sindh and forming a grand alliance. MQM-P leaders presented a charter of constitutional amendments to the Local Government (LG) Act. PML-N and MQM-P agreed on holding consultations with local leadership. While addressing a press conference, Ahsan Iqbal said PML-N assured MQM-P of maximum cooperation and it will pass a constitutional amendment regarding the local governments after coming into power. Iqbal said PML-N is ready to work with MQM-P to address issues in major cities. He announced that both parties will work together in the forthcoming general elections.

Manchester City claim top spot to beat Leipzig

Erling and Foden also netted in the second period after one of City's most underwhelming recent first-half performances to give Pep Guardiola's team 15 points after five games

SPORTS DESK

MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Julian Alvarez scored in the 87th minute as the European champions clawed their way back from two goals down to beat RB Leipzig 3-2 and clinch top spot in Champions League Group G with one round of matches remaining. Erling Haaland and Phil Foden also netted in the second period after one of City's most underwhelming recent first-half performances to give Pep Guardiola's team 15 points after five games. Leipzig, who had also reached the last 16, have nine. "First half was the worst I've seen us," midfielder Foden told TNT. "Courage and motivation changed it around. This team has great mentality and its so nice to see." Haaland added another record to his bulging resume, becoming the fastest player to 40 Champions League goals. The striker became the quickest to 50 Premier League goals on Saturday. Lois Openda pounced on a pair of City defensive blunders for both Leipzig goals, sprinting onto a long ball from goalkeeper Janis Blaswich that bounced over a lackadaisical Manuel Akanji



in the 13th minute. He struck again with seemingly similar ease in the 33rd, spinning around Ruben Dias en route to scoring. "We had to be as relaxed as possible and we reacted really well," Guardiola told TNT. "We are first in the group and I am very satisfied for the reaction at the end. The team runs and fights and has spirit." Haaland, who poured in five goals against

Leipzig in a 7-0 rout in the Champions League last 16 in March, finally gave City fans something to cheer in the 54th minute when he ran onto a pass from Foden and struck a low left-foot shot into the net. "We just needed that (first) goal to get going," Foden said. "Even the fans were a lot louder after the goal. Once the first went in the motivation was there. We've got a

great record at the Etihad and it only takes one goal to change things." City levelled with Foden's excellent first touch and finish in the 70th and Alvarez fired the hosts ahead when Foden's pass was deflected into his path for a close-range effort. "What I told the guys was that we made (City) angry in the first half," Leipzig manager Marco Rose told reporters. "If we kept the clean sheet a little bit longer, maybe then the chance became bigger to win or to take something home." Guardiola's side narrowly avoided their first defeat in European competition at the Etihad since a group stage loss to Olympique Lyonnais in 2018, which was also the last time City trailed by two goals the Champions League. Three days after their 1-1 top-of-the-table Premier League draw with Liverpool, City looked like zombies through the first half, although they had a flurry of chances before the break, their best being Dias's header over the bar. It was Guardiola's second comeback from a two-goal deficit in his Champions League managerial career after his Bayern Munich side rallied to beat Juventus in the 2016 quarter-finals.

Briefs

Ukraine says
downed
21 drones,
missiles

KYIV : Ukraine said Wednesday that its air force had destroyed nearly two dozen Russian attack drones and several missiles in Moscow's latest aerial assault on targets across the country. Officials in Kyiv say Russian forces have been stockpiling drones and missiles for systematic attacks on Ukraine's struggling energy grid over winter months. "In total, the strike involved: 21 Shahed-136/131 strike drones; three X-59 guided missiles," Ukraine's airforce announced on social media, claiming to have downed all the drones and two of the missiles. It said it used fighter jets, anti-aircraft and mobile air defense units to down the drones and missiles in southern and central regions of Ukraine. It added that the third missile, which was not downed, did not reach its target. There was no immediate comment from the Russian side. Russian strikes on Ukraine's energy infrastructure last winter left millions in the cold and dark for extended periods. The Kremlin said Kyiv was ultimately responsible for not entering negotiations.—APP

Myanmar
military
strikes
Rakhine
town in latest
offensive

NAYPYIDAW : Myanmar's military is carrying out a sustained offensive involving fighter jets to regain control of a key town from an armed ethnic minority group. Accounts from the residents, as well as a statement from the Arakan Army, provided the most detailed accounts of the battle for control of the town. "They (the junta) have been firing heavy weapons at the town continuously," one resident said on Wednesday, requesting anonymity for security reasons. "Yesterday a jet fighter dropped two bombs that started a fire," said the resident who said they were sheltering in a nearby village, adding the blaze was still burning. A resident of Sittwe said the military was shelling Paultaw from bases around Sittwe. "They are firing artillery from Sittwe towards other towns especially Paultaw every day, day and night," a resident said also requesting anonymity. The Arakan Army said it was "rescuing" civilians still trapped. Junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun on Tuesday said the military was engaged in fighting around Paultaw but did not give details. The Arakan Army moved into Paultaw, a town of 20,000 people close to a crucial deepwater port in the capital of western Rakhine state, on November 15.

Heavy
snowfall in
Germany
causes traffic
deaths

BERLIN : Heavy snowfall in Germany has caused severe traffic disruptions in several states across the country, and led to the deaths of two people in car accidents. The German Weather Service (DWD) on Wednesday warned of icy conditions with snow, and storms in some areas. Central and southern Germany are particularly affected. In the Hessian state capital of Wiesbaden, 55 people including 27 children had to spend the night in a school because they were unable to leave due to the weather. Many people in the state had to be freed from their vehicles due to trees collapsing under the weight of the snow. Local authorities in affected states called on citizens to stay at home, and not to walk in the forest. "The situation is acutely life-threatening due to the danger of falling trees," a statement from the Rheingau-Taunus district said. Northern Germany was less affected, but there were also numerous accidents. In addition to road traffic, public and air traffic is also affected. At Frankfurt Airport alone, nearly 300 flights were canceled on Monday and Tuesday, operator told local media.—APP

Vietnamese PM visits
Ankara for diplomatic talks

Pham Minh Chinh's visit to Ankara was the first of its kind on a prime ministerial level, marking the 46th anniversary of Vietnamese-Turkish diplomatic ties

WEB DESKS

ANKARA : President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday welcomed Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh in the capital of Ankara. The pair held a closed-door meeting at the Presidential Complex, the Turkish Presidency said in a statement. Ankara is set to open a consulate general in Vietnam's economic capital, Ho Chi Minh City, Turkish Vice President Cevdet Yılmaz confirmed after holding talks with Pham Minh Chinh earlier in the day. Pham Minh Chinh's visit to Ankara was the first of its kind on a prime ministerial level, marking the 46th anniversary of Vietnamese-Turkish diplomatic ties. In 2015, then-Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu paid the first visit to Vietnam on a foreign minister level after a 17-year interval. Both nations have resident embassies in Hanoi and Ankara. Vietnam sent a large search-and-rescue team to southeastern Türkiye in February when two



massive earthquakes leveled 11 provinces and claimed over 52,000 lives. "We have also agreed to increase our mutual visits and dialogue," Yılmaz told reporters. Vietnam is a key trading

partner for Türkiye in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region. "Military issues and the defense industry are a dimension of our relations that need to be developed," Yılmaz

said. He and Pham Minh Chinh agreed to increase cooperation in combating international terrorism and transnational crimes. The pair further discussed the "grave developments" in Pales-

tine, expressing the "will to end the attacks on Gaza as soon as possible and to initiate a political process that will result in a just and permanent peace based on the two-state solution." The talks and meetings between the top Vietnamese and Turkish officials will mostly focus on economic and trade cooperation matters. Vietnam has seen its export turnover in the Turkish market on the rise over the past two years. In the year to October, bilateral trade inched up 13.6 percent year on year to US\$1.9 billion. Of this, Vietnam exported \$1.5 billion worth of products to Turkey, up over 16 percent year on year, while importing \$369.2 million worth of items from Turkey, up 8.5 percent. Turkey remains a potential buyer of many Vietnamese items, such as mobile phones, garments, textile materials, footwear, computers, and others. Meanwhile, Turkey is a supplier of machines and equipment, fabrics, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, auto parts, and household appliances to the Vietnamese market.

Moscow-NATO ties unlikely
to normalize: Ryabkov

Moscow ready to find common ground 'only on an equal and mutually respectful basis,' but this has always been problem for NATO, says Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov

FOREIGN DESKS

MOSCOW : Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said on Wednesday that Russia-NATO relations are unlikely to normalize in the foreseeable future. Moscow is ready to find common ground "only on an equal and mutually respectful basis," but this "has always been a problem for the North Atlantic Alliance and its member countries," Ryabkov said in an interview with the Russian daily Izvestia. When asked if a Russia-NATO conflict is possible in the absence of prospects for



normalization, Ryabkov said it depends on the alliance. Russia, for its part, "is ready to defend its national interests with all means at (its) disposal." "Those who continue to test us for strength, apparently, have come to believe that there are no limits to

their own gambling, the game of raising bets. But they may be among the losers," he warned. The diplomat believes there are no prospects for peace talks with Ukraine because the West, which backs Kyiv, "repeats like a mantra" that Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's "peace formula" is the only basis for agreement, "but on such a basis dialogue is impossible." Concerning arms control, Ryabkov said there are no draft agreements between Russia and the US to extend the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), which expires in Feb. 2026. However, if the

US expects to win the next arms race if START-3 is not renewed, Ryabkov says it is mistaken. "We will not fall to provocations, which are very characteristic of American policy in the Russian direction, but we are guaranteed to ensure our security," he said. The official also reiterated his previous assessment of the possibility of breaking the Russian-US diplomatic relations. "But we emphasize again and again at different levels that the Russian side will never initiate such a step," he said, adding, "If this happens, it will happen as a result of Washington's decisions and actions."

COP28 puts out
welcome mat to
lobbyists

DUBAI : "All views are welcome. All views are needed," declared Sultan Al Jaber, president of the UN's COP28 and head of the Emirates state oil and gas company in the run-up to the climate talks in Dubai. That welcome also extends to lobbyists and big oil companies, some of whom will be part of national delegations when negotiations start on Thursday. Here we look at some of the questions that raises. "Leaders, experts and people of influence" come together in the COP's "blue zone", where talks take place, the UN states, without mentioning lobbyists. But lobbyists can get accreditation by joining a national delegation or from one of the 2,000 "observer" groups made up of NGOs and professional groups. "When people think about lobbying, they think about behind-closed-doors meetings between a company or their representatives and a policymaker. And that's certainly a lot of it," Faye Holder, program manager at think tank InfluenceMap, told AFP. But it can also "include things like social media posts, advertising, sponsorships, the use of trade groups or astroturf groups", fake organisations made to look like grassroots groups, she said. The lack of clear rules at the talks about conflict of interest has long been criticised. Indeed, hosts the UAE were accused this week of using its role as COP28 hosts to discuss fossil fuel deals with other governments, according to leaked documents obtained by the BBC.—Agencies

Russia mulls 'loyalty'
pledge for foreigners
to enter country

MOSCOW : Foreigners entering Russia could be required to sign a "loyalty agreement" upon arrival, pledging not to criticise Moscow's offensive in Ukraine, under new rules being prepared by the interior ministry. The move would oblige foreigners to comply with strict laws banning criticism of the conflict in Ukraine, and not to distort the Soviet's role in World War II, the state-run news agency reported. The person would agree not to "discredit in any form the foreign and domestic state policy of the Russian Federation." The foreigner would also comply with refraining from "distorting the historical truth" of the Soviet role in World War II. Ukraine has said that Russian forces had ratcheted up attacks on the nearly-encircled industrial town of Avdiivka in the eastern Donetsk region, a recent flashpoint of Moscow's attack. Russia launched a renewed bid to capture the war-battered town last month and analysts suggest Moscow's forces have made incremental gains. "The enemy of the last day has significantly increased its activity. It is using armoured vehicles," Oleksandr Tarnavsky, the Ukrainian commander responsible for the territory, said. Ukraine's foreign minister has said that it won't "back down" in its fight against Russia, despite doubts over US support and minimal progress on the front line. "We have to continue, we have to keep fighting. Ukraine is not going to back down," Ukraine's top diplomat Dmytro Kuleba told Kiev's NATO backers in Brussels. "Our strategic goal, which is territorial integrity within internationally recognised borders as of 1991, remains unchanged," he said. "The issue here is not just Ukraine's security it is the security and safety of the entire Euro-Atlantic space." It is in the interest of both Ukraine and NATO for Kiev to prevail in its war with Russia, the alliance's chief has said. "So therefore, it is important that our solidarity with Ukraine is not only demonstrated in words, but also in deeds," Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said in a joint news conference with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba in Brussels. The European Union has delivered about 300,000 of its promised million shells to Ukraine so far, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba has said while visiting a NATO event in Brussels.—APP

El Nino-induced flooding claims 120 lives

NAIROBI : Severe flooding caused by the El Nino weather phenomenon has killed 120 people in Kenya, while people in almost 90,000 households have been forced to leave their homes, the government said. The latest estimated death toll in Kenya has doubled as heavy seasonal rains following the worst drought in four decades have submerged towns and villages across East Africa, rendering hundreds of thousands of people homeless. Thousands of homes have been washed away or are marooned, while farmland has been submerged and tens of thousands of livestock drowned, aid agencies said. In neighbouring Somalia, floods have killed at least 96 people and displaced 700,000, a disaster management official said. Kiambera nears overflow Four counties in eastern Kenya - Tana River, Garissa, Wajir and Mandera - are most severely affected. Interior Minister Raymond Omollo said. "All major dams are being monitored, but Kiambera has a meter remaining to overflow," Omollo said in a statement, referring to the Kiambera Hydroelectric Power Station in Tana River. "We call on those downstream to move to higher ground even as government enhances power generation to mitigate the challenge." The Kenya Meteorological Department forecast that heavy rainfall will continue until January 2024. The climate crisis is causing more intense and more frequent extreme weather events, according to scientists. In response, African leaders have proposed new global taxes and changes to international financial institutions to help fund climate crisis action.—DNA



MAKAH : Former Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi receiving King Abdul Aziz Medal from commander western region of Saudi armed forces in Makkah Saudi Arabia. —DNA

Africa is a 'double victim' of injustice: Guterres

"The deal has played a key role in addressing the global food crisis. Türkiye always stresses that it is ready to do what is necessary to send grain to poor African countries"

NEWS DESKS

WASHINGTON : UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has expressed strong support for Africa, saying the United Nations is ready to work with the African Union to bolster cooperation. "Africa has been the double victim of injustice. First of all, historic injustice linked to colonialism and to slavery. And second, the present injustice in relation to the way power relations are established in the world and namely in relation to financial and economic power," Guterres said on Tuesday at a

news conference with Moussa Faki Mahamat, the chairperson of the African Union Commission. Mahamat was in New York to attend the 7th AU/UN High-Level Conference to evaluate progress on the implementation of existing cooperation framework agreements. He and Guterres also signed a new joint framework agreement on human rights. Guterres said the partnership between the African Union and the UN is "essential" and Africa remains "one of the key priorities" for the UN. "What Africa needs above all is justice in international relations because Africa has been the vic-



tim of the structural injustices of our international relations. "At the same time, I would like to say that we are totally committed to work with the

African Union in all areas of our common activity," he added. Mahamat said that Africa is going through a difficult period in terms of peace and security. "Unfortunately, it has become a haven for terrorism and extremism. Many of our regions are affected by these phenomena," he added. Africa is facing economic challenges due to the Covid-19 crisis, climate crisis, and the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia. Turning to last year's Black Sea grain deal brokered by Türkiye and the UN to resume grain exports from three Ukrainian Black Sea ports that

were paused after the Ukraine war, Mahamat said that what is happening in Ukraine is having a direct impact all over the world, particularly on the African continent. Increases in the prices of energy, food products and fertilizers negatively affected the productivity of African agriculture, he said. "That's why we welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts together with Türkiye to reach this grain agreement," he stressed. "The deal has played a key role in addressing the global food crisis. Türkiye always stresses that it is ready to do what is necessary to send grain to poor African countries."

NZ plans
to lift ban
on selling
cigarettes
to children

ANKARA : The New Zealand government on Wednesday confirmed its 49-point agenda for the first 100 days, which includes lifting a ban on selling cigarettes to children under the age of 14, as well as imposing a prohibition of cell phones in schools. Following his Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon confirmed his 49-point action plan, describing it as "ambitious for New Zealand," state-run media said. Luxon said his coalition government will repeal amendments to the "Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act 1990 and regulations," according to Radio New Zealand. His administration will also implement school reforms, such as a ban on cell phone use. In December last year, New Zealand's previous parliament passed legislation banning the sale of tobacco to anyone aged 14 or below, a significant step towards the country's goal of becoming smoke-free by 2025. The law, which was first proposed in July of last year, prohibits the sale of any tobacco product to anyone born after Jan. 1, 2009. The law took effect earlier in January this year. "New Zealanders voted not only for a change of government but for a change of policies and a change of approach - and our Coalition Government is ready to deliver that change," Premier Luxon said on X. He added that his government will introduce legislation to reform the Reserve Bank with a single mandate of price stability in order to reduce inflation.

Cambodia
makes 1.2 bln
USD from
exports

PHNOM PENH : Cambodia earned a total of 1.2 billion U.S. dollars from the exports of raw cashew nuts and dry rubber during the first 10 months of 2023, according to official reports on Wednesday. A report from the Cashew Nut Association of Cambodia showed that the kingdom exported a total of 615,000 tonnes of raw cashew nuts to Vietnam during the January-October period this year, down 16.7 percent year-on-year. The Southeast Asian country made 831 million dollars in revenue from the exports of the commodity, the report said. Meanwhile, the General Directorate of Rubber reported that Cambodia exported 283,829 tonnes of dry rubber in the first 10 months of this year, an increase of 3 percent compared to the same period last year. The kingdom earned 376.6 million dollars from the exports of dry rubber during the above-mentioned period, down 7.3 percent year-on-year, the report added. "A tonne of dry rubber averaged cost 1,327 dollars during the January-October period of 2023, about 154 dollars lower than that of the same period last year," Him Oun, director general of the General Directorate of Rubber, said in the report.—APP

Tokyo stocks
end lower

TOKYO : Tokyo stocks ended lower on Wednesday, as a higher yen against the dollar weighed on the market. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index was down 0.26 percent, or 87.17 points, to end at 33,321.22, while the broader Topix index slipped 0.51 percent, or 12.21 points, to 2,364.50. The dollar stood at 147.21 yen, against 147.50 yen in New York and 148.18 yen in Tokyo on Tuesday. Overnight, US Federal Reserve Governor Christopher Waller said he was "encouraged" by recent progress on the economy and more confident that inflation was returning to the Fed's desired level. The comments, seen as fairly dovish, helped weaken the dollar against its major peers including the yen, analysts said. The Tokyo market started lower "with investors spooked by the yen's shift toward appreciation," IwaiCosmo Securities said. But a subsequent pause on the yen's strengthening "prompted traders to buy high-priced stocks, which is bolstering the market," said Daiwa Securities.—APP

Briefs

Imran's plea rejected in threatening judge case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A sessions court rejected on Wednesday former prime minister Imran Khan's request for acquittal in the intimidation of a female judge case. Civil judge Muhammad Mureed Abbas ruling came as he presided over the case's hearing, in which prosecutor Rizwan Abbasi completed his arguments. At the last hearing, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief's lawyer, Salman Safdar, had completed his arguments. The deposed prime minister was booked under terrorism charges in August 2022 at Margalla police station in the federal capital for his remarks at a rally in F9 Park where he warned Additional District and Sessions Judge Zeba Chaudhry and police high-ups of dire consequences for their "biased" attitude towards his party. Imran had alleged that Judge Zeba was aware of the torture being inflicted upon PTI leader Shahbaz Gill - then in jail - and still did not release him on bail. He had also threatened to take action against the judge as well as the inspector general police (IGP) and deputy inspector general police (DIG) of Islamabad. The case was registered by complainant Magistrate Ali Javed. It should be noted that the FIR was lodged hours before another Islamabad police station received a written complaint from a resident of G-11/2 for lodging a case against the former premier for making hate speeches and inciting rebellion against the army, police as well as the judiciary.

US military aircraft crashes off Japan island

DNA

TOKYO: A US military aircraft with six people on board has crashed off Yakushima Island in south-western Japan. Japan's Coast Guard said one person had been found dead near the crash site. Japan's NHK broadcaster said the CV-22 Osprey hybrid plane had been trying to land at Yakushima Airport with one engine on fire. There is no US comment. Ospreys - which can function as a helicopter and a turboprop aircraft - have been involved in a string of fatal crashes over the years. The aircraft that went down on Wednesday was thought to be heading from Iwakuni base in the western Yamaguchi prefecture to Kadena base in the country's south-westernmost Okinawa region. Japan's defence ministry said the aircraft disappeared from the radar at 14:40 local time (05:40 GMT) on Wednesday. The Coast Guard received a distress call five minutes later, saying the plane had crashed. It then sent six boats and two helicopters to the scene. At 16:00, the helicopters spotted what looked like a part of the plane and a life raft, a spokesperson told media.

Gigi retracts her anti-Israel post

DNA

NEW YORK: Days later, American supermodel Gigi Hadid, of Palestinian roots, retracted her social media posts, against Israel, the only country that 'keeps children as prisoners of war' and offered an apology for not checking the facts. Supermodel Gigi Hadid, who is of Palestinian descent from her father, Mohamed Hadid, and has been a staunch supporter of the 'Free Palestine' movement, had taken to her Instagram handle recently, sharing a post about a young Palestinian prisoner, Ahmad Manasra, 22, who was arrested at the age of 13. 'Ahmed Al-Manasra, abducted by the Israeli occupation at the age of 12, has endured solitary confinement despite his severe health condition.

Pakistan important partner of Romania in South Asia

Charge d Affaires of Romania Eduard Preda says his country greatly valued its relations with Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Charge d Affaires of Romania Eduard Preda has said his country greatly valued its relations with Pakistan adding this relationship shall further be cemented. He made these remarks while speaking on the occasion of the National Day of Romania. Prime Minister Advisor on Overseas Pakistani Jawad Sohrab Malik was the chief guest. Besides, government high ranking officials, military personnel, members and of the civil society and media attended the reception in large number. Eduard Preda further said National Day is a moment of remembrance of the historical act of December 1st, 1918, representing a fundamental landmark for all Romanians, at home and abroad, an opportunity to reaffirm the national consciousness and unity, the vision and fundamental objectives of the Romanian nation. He added, this day is a symbol of our solidarity in the face of all the difficulties we have faced as a nation, which we have overcome and will continue to overcome, with confidence in our own strength, through common efforts and trust in the future we are building together. 'The history of Romania, like that of Europe, is not like a triumphal march and has never been always a luminous succession of happy events. On the contrary, Romania's history has been marked by numerous crises and difficult stages, which have often threatened the very lives of the people, our freedom, the identity of communities and the very existence of our state. Our forefathers lived through wars, faced natural disasters,



endured famine, survived periods of severe social tension and were victims of the darkest political regimes. Their determination, courage, capacity for sacrifice and will to live in freedom and peace made it possible for them to overcome all these difficult trials, despite almost unimaginable challenges.' He said, each year, the anniversary of the Great Union is giving us the opportunity to honour the memory of the sacrifices Romanians made for laying the foundation of the modern Romania, which ultimately placed us in the midst of the great European family. The end of the First World War and the armistice concluded in 1918, represents a crucial moment in the history of mankind causing deep changes both in international relations, and at socio-cultural level. 'We, in Romania and in Europe, will always



remember that over a million soldiers from South Asia had fought courageously and heroically in different battle fields of the WWI and 60,000 of them, mostly from today Pakistani Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, had paid the ultimate price in defending the ideals of peace, freedom, liberty, dignity, democracy and fundamental human rights. Today we pay tribute and honour them as much as we honour our heroes! Eduard Preda added, National Day has a special significance for Romania's diplomatic missions and consular offices, contributing to the promotion of Romanian cultural identity and the development of ties with Romanian communities in host countries. Talking about bilateral relations he said, Romania and Pakistan enjoy very good bilateral relations and Pakistan represents an

important partner for Romania in the South Asian region. We acknowledge Pakistan's efforts in fighting terrorism, militancy and radical extremism and hope that these endeavours will continue to be an important part of international war on terror. We are eager to work hard for taking forward the bilateral agenda, as well as the cooperation within the EU-Pakistan framework and in multilateral formats, especially in the UN. Moreover, we are engaged to improve the current status of Romania-Pakistan relations, characterized by friendship and collaboration and the new dynamism witnessed in the recent years that rendered a fruitful political dialogue, reflecting a clear desire of both states for developing a pragmatic relationship in fields of mutual interests, he concluded.

MQM-P seeking empowered local govts

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: MQM-P Convener Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said the conference - attended by politicians, social workers, journalists, lawyers and business representatives - aimed at bringing political parties under the same roof towards a collective goal of assisting the public in building a prosperous, empowered and robust Pakistan with the help of collaboration between religious and political factions. He said the Constitution, in its present form, could neither protect itself nor common citizens. 'Now there is a need for implementing a constitution that can ensure equal rights of citizens. Just as the powers of prime minister and chief ministers are listed in the Constitution, the powers of local governments should also be highlighted. The real reason behind the crisis in Pakistan is the lack of honest intention which is more problematic than the unfair distribution of resources. Pakistan needs a constitution in which workers are represented by workers and not landlords or feudals,' he added. MQM-P Senior Deputy Convener Mustafa Kamal expressed optimism with hopes for an end to the challenging times for Pakistanis and welcomed the presence of all parties at the conference. The former Karachi mayor lamented that five people are in control of the resources and authority of this country while there is no procedure defined in the Constitution to bring the resources and power to the lower level. He added that MQM-P was presenting three proposals for amendments to the Constitution. Just as the powers of chief ministers and prime minister are written in the Constitution, the powers of local government representatives should also be written.

No agency has exemption to pick up anyone they want: IHC judge

FIR to be lodged against PM if Baloch students not recovered, warns IHC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday ordered the federal government to recover all missing Baloch students, warning that a case would be registered against the caretaker prime minister if they failed to ensure the recovery of the students. IHC Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani made these remarks during a hearing of a case regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances. Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan told the court that 22 Baloch students had been recovered and reached home. However, the AGP said 28 Baloch students were still missing and efforts

would be made to recover all the missing persons. Expressing displeasure, Justice Kayani said the missing persons is a matter of basic human rights. Citing a report, the IHC judge said there is no law and order in the country. Referring to the missing persons, the senior judge wondered: 'Are such things take place in a civilised society? Every missing person who is recovered says I don't want to pursue the case.' If the missing persons are not recovered, the IHC judge said he will order the registration of the first information report (FIR) against caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and interim Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti. 'I am stating this in very clear words.' The judge's warning comes after the caretaker PM failed to appear before the court as he was summoned by the IHC to appear in person in the missing students'

case on November 29 (today).

However, the premier had stated that he would skip the hearing owing to his foreign trips as he is currently on an official visit to the Middle East. Justice Kayani said the defence secretary and the interior secretary would also be held responsible if Baloch students were not recovered. He further asked the authorities concerned to present the missing persons in court even if they are terrorists. He said if the trial of Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav can be held then anyone can be tried if they had committed any crime. The IHC directed to provide the details of the families of all the missing persons to the government committee and asked the interior minister to meet the Baloch families in two weeks. Justice Kayani said it has been determined in the high court and the Supreme Court judgment that the state is obligated to provide all possible support to the missing persons' families. The IHC adjourned the hearing of the case till January 10.

Shehbaz stresses on holding timely polls

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday stressed that the general elections, which are slated to be held on February 8 next year, should be conducted on time. '[Holding the elections on time] is the requirement of law and democracy,' said the former prime minister while speaking to journalists after he appeared before an accountability court in Lahore in the Ramzan Sugar Mills reference. The court had summoned Shehbaz a reference filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) alleging that the former chief minister of Punjab misused his authority by using public funds for the construction of a bridge to facilitate the Ramzan mills, owned by his sons. Shehbaz said that PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif will announce the party manifesto in the election campaign, adding that they are starting the campaign with full preparation. He also addressed the issues raised by the Pakistan Peoples Party

(PPP) of not being provided equal opportunities to contest the upcoming polls, Shehbaz said: 'I went to court today and this is called the level-playing field and Nawaz Sharif will also produce himself in an Islamabad court today.' The former premier said that the Sharif family has suffered hardships but Nawaz Sharif still bowed before the law. 'Nawaz Sharif ended his exile and came back to Pakistan. We always respected the judiciary,' he added. Shehbaz, speaking about the May 9 incidents which were followed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's arrest in the Al-Qadir Trust case, said that the facilitation of the perpetrators of the May 9 events would be anti-national. 'A conspiracy to overthrow the army was hatched on May 9 and any democratic government will not tolerate treason,' he stressed. Meanwhile, Shehbaz, during the hearing said that he was summoned in the clean water case but was arrested in Ashiana reference. 'I will not discuss the merits of the case, my lawyer will do it,' he told the court, adding that the court gave me justice in the Ashiana case. 'After that, NAB arrested me in the sewer case. I was told that I had issued a directive for the construction of a drain which was built by an MPA,' he said. The PML-N president told the court that they have installed thousands of clean water projects during his tenure. - DNA

Israeli crimes damaged West's reputation for good

"The Islamic Republic believes in a referendum in Palestine based on the Palestinian public opinion. The Islamic Republic is not of the view of throwing Zionists and Jews into the sea."

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the historic Hamas' Al-Aqsa Storm was mainly against the Zionist regime, but was able to disrupt the table of American policies in the region and will hopefully erase the "agenda." Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with hundreds of members of Iran's Basij volunteer forces in Tehran on Wednesday on the occasion of the National Basij Week. The historic event of al-Aqsa Storm is against the Zionist regime but it is aimed at de-Americanization. This incident literally managed to disrupt the table of American policies in the region, and God willing, if this Storm continues, it will wipe out the whole table,' Leader noted. Ayatollah Khamenei stressed that the Israeli atrocities in Gaza not only disgraced the Israeli regime but the United States, certain European countries and Western culture and civilization. 'The barbaric and cruel actions that the Zionist regime committed in its crimes against the people of Gaza, not only destroyed the reputation of the regime, but also that of the United States. It took away the reputation of several renowned European countries, and also ruined the reputation of Western culture and civilization,'

Ayatollah Khamenei said. 'The culture and civilization of the West is the very civilization that when 5,000 children are killed with phosphorus bombs, the regime of a certain Western country says Israel is defending itself. Is this self-defense? This is Western culture, which has been discredited,' he added. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution said the Israeli atrocities in Gaza over the past 50 days summarize the regime's decades-long crimes against Palestinians. 'The tragedies of the last 50 days are a small part of the 75-year-long crimes of the Zionist regime in Palestine,' Ayatollah Khamenei noted. 'Al-Aqsa Storm will not run out of steam and they should know that the current situation will not continue.' The Leader also underlined that, 'The Islamic Republic believes in a referendum in Palestine based on the Palestinian public opinion. The Islamic Republic is not of the view of throwing Zionists and Jews into the sea.' Elsewhere in his address, Ayatollah Khamenei said the United States failed to hatch it plots for the formation of a 'New Middle East,' adding that the so-called 'two-state solution' in the Palestinian territories was part of the same hostile policy which failed miserably. In the case of Lebanon, Americans said they are after formation of a 'New Middle East.' The Middle East means West Asia. They said that they want to give this region,

which is called the Middle East, a new political, geographical map based on the US's illegitimate needs and interests,' the Leader said. 'Of course, what they sought did not happen. On their new map, they intended to destroy Hezbollah but Hezbollah became 10 times stronger; they wanted to devour Iraq but they failed; they wanted to take over Syria and inflicted their proxies under the name of Daesh and al-Nusra on the Syrian government, and for seven, eight, ten years, they continuously supported and provided them with money and equipment, but again they failed,' the Leader added. Underlining that Western plots against the region had entirely fallen flat, the Leader said, 'One of the components of this New Middle East was to finalize the Palestinian issue in favor of the usurping Israeli regime, so that nothing called Palestine would be left at all; they reneged on the issue of the treacherous 'two-state' that they had earlier approved.' Ayatollah Khamenei stressed that the issue of Palestine is moving towards resolution, which secures Palestinian sovereignty and territorial integrity. 'We presented our plan, a referendum, a Palestinian referendum,' the Leader said. 'Of course, the occupiers have no right but the Palestinians themselves whether in Palestine or in the neighboring countries of Palestine or in the camps or in other places. There are several million

Palestinians. They can express their opinion, which is a globally-favored, acceptable and civilized logic for the administration of Palestine,' Ayatollah Khamenei said. Meanwhile, Iran's top nuclear official says the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which is a subsidiary of the United Nations, will be responsible for any incident that could be caused by the Zionist regime of Israel's nuclear threats against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Mohammad Eslami, who leads the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, said on Wednesday, that Israel continues to threaten the world with nuclear bomb attacks while it has refused to sign IAEA's protocols banning the spread of the use of such weapons. 'The IAEA bears the ultimate responsibility for any incident,' said Eslami while speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a Cabinet session in Tehran. The comments came weeks after an Israeli minister said that the regime should use nuclear bombs in its attacks against Gaza where it has been involved in a relentless military campaign since early October. That comes as Israel has not publicly admitted to possessing nuclear weapons. Eslami said the threats have revealed the real nature and intentions of the Zionist regime for the world. He said the regime had previously threatened to use nuclear bombs against Iran.

Turkey expecting to ratify Sweden's NATO accession

DNA

ANKARA: Turkey has told Sweden it expects to ratify its long-delayed accession to the NATO military alliance within weeks, Sweden's foreign minister said on Wednesday. Sweden and Finland asked to join NATO last year after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. But Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, whose country is a NATO member, raised objections over what he said was the two countries' protection of groups that Ankara deems terrorists. Turkey endorsed Finland's membership bid in April, but has kept Sweden waiting. 'I had a bilateral with my colleague, the (Turkish) foreign minister ... where he told me he expected the ratification to take place within weeks,' Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom told reporters before the second day of a meeting of NATO foreign ministers. There was no immediate confirmation or comment by Turkey. Turkey has demanded that Sweden take more steps to rein in local members of the Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK), which is considered a terrorist group by the European Union and the United States.

Canada to audit flight operations in Pakistan

DNA

KARACHI: A Transport Canada team is scheduled to visit Pakistan on December 04 to conduct the flight operations and airport security audit. According to the details, the delegation of Transport Canada will conduct the audit of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) direct flights to Canada from Karachi Airport on December 05. The Canadian Transport team will also inspect the PIA airplanes and audit the airport security arrangements as well. During their stay, the Canadian delegation is scheduled to receive detailed briefings on the security measures implemented at Karachi Airport, covering aspects like baggage screening, passenger boarding processes, and over all passenger safety protocols. It is worth mentioning here that the purpose of Transport Canada's visit is to enhance the security and efficiency of direct flights to Canada from Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi. The airport authorities will also Canadian delegation will also be given a visit to the Joint Search Baggage Counter established by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) at Karachi airport.

Ukraine downed 21 drones, missiles

DNA

KYIV: Ukraine said Wednesday that its air force had destroyed nearly two dozen Russian attack drones and several missiles in Moscow's latest aerial assault on targets across the country. Officials in Kyiv say Russian forces have been stockpiling drones and missiles for systematic attacks on Ukraine's struggling energy grid over winter months. 'In total, the strike involved: 21 Shahed-136/131 strike drones; three X-59 guided missiles,' Ukraine's airforce announced on social media, claiming to have downed all the drones and two of the missiles. It said it used fighter jets, anti-aircraft and mobile air defense units to down the drones and missiles in southern and central regions of Ukraine. It added that the third missile, which was not downed, did not reach its target. There was no immediate comment from the Russian side. Russian strikes on Ukraine's energy infrastructure last winter left millions in the cold and dark for extended periods.