



Islamabad POST

Monday, January 01, 2024

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Kim Jong seeking reunification with S.Korea a 'mistake'

Detailed News On Page-07

Disqualified as my victory was assured

Detailed News On Page-08

PCB appoints Junaid as U19 bowling coach

Detailed News On Page-06



Foreign mission expels Pak staff for wrongdoing

The sources emphasized that this diplomatic entity has repeatedly garnered attention due to allegations of corruption involving both local officials and members of the host country's staff. Notably, even high-ranking officers within this specific mission have been implicated in amassing substantial wealth through questionable means, for which they had to face serious consequences as well

Exclusive

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a recent development, a foreign mission operating in Islamabad has taken decisive action against corruption within its ranks by expelling two Pakistani staff members implicated in fraudulent activities. Diplomatic insiders, who opted to remain anonymous, shared this information with our correspondent. The embassy in question received a credible tip-off, prompting an internal investigation that revealed the involvement of the two staff members in illicit enterprises. These activities included the unauthorized importation of vehicles and liquor. Furthermore, the expelled individuals were found to be extending unwarranted support to individuals seeking visas for the host country. This move by the embassy underscores its commitment to maintain-

ing the integrity of its operations and upholding ethical standards among its personnel. The diplomatic sources emphasized the importance of accountability and transparency in diplomatic missions, regardless of the nationality of the individuals involved. The action taken serves as a reminder of the diplomatic community's vigilance in addressing issues of corruption and fraud, even within its own ranks, and reinforces the embassy's dedication to fostering a culture of trust and adherence to legal and ethical standards. The sources, who, for confidentiality reasons, preferred not to disclose the identity of the foreign mission, emphasized that this diplomatic entity has repeatedly garnered attention due to allegations of corruption involving both local officials and members of the host country's staff. Notably, even high-ranking officers within this specific mission have been implicated in amassing substantial wealth through questionable means, for which they had to face serious

consequences as well. It is important to highlight that this is not an isolated incident; instances of staff from foreign missions engaging in malpractices have unfortunately become a recurring phenomenon. Regrettably, this trend has now become a pervasive issue, affecting a considerable number of missions. It is rare to find a mission that has remained untouched by this menace. Upon a news published in this newspaper few years ago an Ambassador was removed from his post. The diplomat, whose identity is being kept confidential, faced accusations of engaging in the illegal import of cars and unscrupulously selling his liquor quotas to a third party in exchange for substantial bribes. Following a thorough investigation conducted by the host country, the damning evidence against the ambassador proved irrefutable. In response to the conclusive findings of the investigation, the host country took decisive action by terminating the ambassador's services.

Happy New Year

Daily Islamabad POST management wishes a very happy new year to all its readers and advertisers. May the Year 2024 bring peace and happiness for all. - Editor

Fzal remains unhurt in convoy attack

JUI-F chief was travelling through DI Khan when his convoy came under attack near the toll plaza

SHAMIM SHAHID

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman's convoy came under attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Ismail Khan on Sunday. The veteran politician's convoy was fired upon from multiple sides at Yarik interchange, the party's spokesperson Mufti Abrar confirmed. The spokesperson added that the JUI-F chief was travelling through DI Khan when his convoy came under attack near the toll plaza. In response to a query regarding Fazl's safety, he assured that the veteran politician was safe. Speaking to Geo News, Fazl's brother denied the attack on veteran politician, saying that the JUI-F chief was at home when the incident happened. "Maulana's car stopped for refuelling near the Yarik interchange [when the incident happened]," he added. The alleged attack comes in the backdrop of repeated security concerns raised by Fazl who, on multiple occasions, has cast doubts over the staging of polls due to the "unstable" security situation in some parts of the



ISLAMABAD: A breathtaking sunset over the cityscape in the year 2023, skillfully captured by the talented photographer Mudassar Raja. This mesmerizing image not only showcases the natural beauty of the sun bidding farewell to the day but also highlights the photographer's keen eye for composition and timing. - DNA

Murtaza Solangi says Govt has nothing to do with rejection or of nomination papers

Caretaker govt was committed to assist ECP in providing financial and administrative support to the electoral watchdog for the elections

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Saturday categorically rejected the notion that the caretaker government had any involvement in either acceptance or rejection of the nomination papers of the aspiring candidates for the general election.

Third phase of polls kicks off

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The third phase of the general elections began yesterday (Sunday) during which appeals

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Briefs

New year to bring political stability

STAFF REPORT

MULTAN: Senator Yousuf Raza Gilani - a senior PPP leader who also served a prime minister after the 2008 elections - on Sunday predicted that no one would be able to form the next govt without his party. He gave these remarks while talking to reporters in his hometown, which clearly indicate that the PPP is anticipating, or hoping for, a split mandate and a hung Parliament after the February 8 elections - a desire which was neither fulfilled in 2013 nor 2018. Gilani also introduced a new term of "equal level-playing field" that is not specific to any particular political party and insisted that everyone should enjoy equal opportunities. ECP was responsible for holding free and fair elections, he said.

Atta Tarar censures Bilawal

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Attaullah Tarar censured on Sunday Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari over contesting general elections from NA-127, Lahore. Addressing the workers convention in Lahore, Tarar said that PPP did not complete any significant project in Karachi that Bilawal made his way to Lahore for general elections. "Lahore is the stronghold of PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif. The Lahorites love Nawaz Sharif and they have voted the PML-N to the power many times," said Tarar. He said Nawaz came back to pull country out of crises.

Terrorists attempting to infiltrate Pak-Afghan border killed in Bajaur

Earlier this month, as many as 25 soldiers of the Pakistan Army embraced martyrdom in two separate incidents on a single day

SAID ALAM KHAN

PESHAWAR: Three terrorists attempting to infiltrate the Pakistan-Afghanistan border were killed in Batwar area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district, the military's media affairs wing said on Sunday. In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) the movement of the three militants was picked up by security forces. "After fire exchange, all three terrorists were sent to hell. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists," it said. The ISPR went on to say that last night militants from inside Afghanistan opened fire on a Pakistani border post in Spinwam area of KP's North Waziristan district. "Own troops responded in a befitting manner causing considerable losses to the terrorists," the ISPR said. However, 31-year-old Naik Abdul Rauf embraced martyrdom, it added. "Pakistan has consistently been ask-



ing Interim Afghan government to ensure effective border management on their side of the border. Interim Afghan government is expected to fulfil its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by terrorists for perpetuating acts of terrorism against Pakistan," the ISPR said. 5 terrorists killed in Awaran IBO: Earlier in the day, the ISPR said five terrorists were killed in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the general Mashkai area of Balochistan's Awaran district. It said security forces conducted

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Petrol prices remain unchanged

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Government of Pakistan has decided to maintain the current prices of Petrol and High Speed Diesel during the fortnight starting from 1st January, 2024, as recommended by Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA). The prices of petroleum prices w.e.f. 01-01-2024, will be as follows: **Petrol 267.34** per liter and **High Speed Diesel Rs 276.21** per liter.

Palestinians end dark year amid Israeli genocidal attacks

The Palestinian death toll this year is the largest Palestine has witnessed since the 1948 Nakba

NEWS DESK

GAZA: As the US-backed Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip entered day 86 on Sunday, massive aerial and artillery strikes continued to pound and level whole blocks and homes and massacre more civilians, mostly children and women. The Palestinian death toll this year is the largest Palestine has witnessed since the 1948 Nakba. The Central Bureau of Statistics says at the end of 2023 the number of people killed in the occupied territories stands at 22,404, including 22,141 since October 7. At least 98 percent were in the Gaza Strip, including about 9,000 children and 6,450 women. The number of people killed in the occupied West Bank since October 7 reached 319, including 111 children and four women. More than 100 journalists were also killed, according to the Health Ministry, while the number of missing persons in Gaza is more than 7,000 people, 67 percent women and children. Palestinian Information Center (PIC) said that the Israeli occupation army continued to attack different areas of Gaza last night and on Sunday morning, targeting homes, civilian gatherings and shelter centers, and massacring dozens of citizens.

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US admits failure of Red Sea coalition

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States' military has admitted to the failure of a Washington-led multinational task force recently formed under the pretext of protecting shipping in the strategic Red Sea following Yemen's retaliatory attacks on Israeli-owned and -bound vessels in support of the Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, the top commander of US naval forces in the Middle East, said in an interview with the Associated Press on Saturday that Yemen's Armed Forces and popular Houthis Ansarullah resistance movement show no signs of ending their "reckless" attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea even as more nations join the international maritime mission to protect vessels in the vital waterway. Cooper said there are currently five

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FREE ACCOMMODATION: PER LIMITED KINGDOM, IRELAND, USA, SINGAPORE PASSENGERS

Business: BUSINESS CLASS PASSENGERS CAN STOP OVER FOR FREE IN A 5 STAR HOTEL.

Ashrafi urges Khilafat-e-Rashida principles for judicial reforms

Ashrafi also stressed the importance of a robust Zakat system, asserting that with a proper implementation, hunger could be eradicated

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC) Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi on Sunday stated that Pakistan, being an ideological state, is founded on the principles of Khilafat-e-Rashida, emphasizing justice and fairness. Speaking at a seminar on Syedna Siddique Akbar, he highlighted the need to emulate Siddique Akbar's adherence to Islamic beliefs and duties. Ashrafi stressed the importance of a robust Zakat system, asserting that with a proper implementation, hunger could be eradicated. Expressing concern over the stagnant justice system after 76 years, he lamented the lack of accountability for those attacking state defense institutions and urged the judiciary to deliver fair decisions, especially regarding the events of May 9. He expressed concern, stating that if the culprits of May 9 go unpunished, then Allah safeguards the nation. He questioned the

impediments preventing their punishment and raised the issue of the necessity of military courts, suggesting a potential challenge in the absence of such a system. Ashrafi emphasized the deterioration of the justice system in the country and urged the Chief Justice of Pakistan to institute reforms in the lower-level courts. Expressing condemnation for Israeli brutality in Palestine, he suggested that, rather than mere celebrations on the new year, Pakistanis should actively contribute financial aid to Palestinians and offer prayers for them. Highlighting international perspectives, he expressed that the stance of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League is to foster a consensus on the two-state solution adding that discussions are proposed with Egypt and Qatar to address the Palestinian issue in a bid to secure a lasting ceasefire. Ashrafi said Commander-in-Chief of the Nation, General Syed Asim Munir, forthrightly conveyed to American leadership that

persistent Israeli aggression could result in global repercussions affirming that Pakistan stands in solidarity with oppressed Palestine and pledges unwavering support. He, paying tribute to Syedna Siddique Akbar, stated that Hazrat Siddique Akbar holds the esteemed position of being the first Caliph of Muslims. Emphasizing the fundamental tenet of the Khilafat system, he underscored the paramount role of justice adding that regardless of one's religious affiliation, the scales of justice must remain impartial. Ashrafi advocated for the implementation of the Khilafat-e-Rashida system in Pakistan, with the foremost demand being an equitable and unbiased justice system. Furthermore, he asserted that universal Zakat contributions could alleviate hunger across the nation. Allama Zubair Abid, Maulana Aslam Qadri, Maulana Qari Abdul Hakeem Athar, Maulana Mufti Falak Shabir, Maulana Ghaffar Anees, and Maulana Abdul Muffari were also present on this occasion.

Minister warns against weapons, aerial firing

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI : The Caretaker Sindh Minister for Home and Prison, Haris Nawaz on Sunday said that the citizens would not be cramped to celebrate New Year celebrations if they act like civilised, law-abiding and well-behaved citizens. He said, 'Nobody will be allowed to carry a weapon, use narcotics and resort to aerial firing on the eve of New Year'. He ordered to ensure strict action against those found involved in aerial firing on New Year's night. 'It is evident that celebratory aerial firing, besides loss of precious lives, disturbs the peace and causes a feeling of fear and danger among the citizens, so consequently the Police must cease it, using all the legal mechanisms available, including the preemptive action', he maintained. The Caretaker Home Minister issued the directives to the IGP Sindh that the police must remain proactively vigilant to maintain law and order ensuring on-ground security measures at all the markets, public parks, food outlets, shopping malls and other places specially by deploying police at strategic points for quick response to protect the lives and property of the citizens.

Peshawar Institute of Cardiology treats 61k heart patients

PESHAWAR: Over 61,000 heart patients, including 9,000 children, have been examined in the Out-Patient Department (OPD) of the Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC) during the year 2023. PIC Spokesman Rifat Anjum told the media on Sunday that more than 1,400 patients underwent cardiac surgeries, besides 11,000 angiography and angioplasty procedures, including 450 children, during the year. Similarly, she said, around 13,000 heart patients were brought to the emergency hospital, while over 15,600 patients

underwent angiography, angioplasty, heart operations and other treatment on health cards. She disclosed that 21 TAVI (transcatheter aortic valve implantation) surgeries of international standards were performed without chest surgery. Rifat Anjum said not only the patients of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other provinces but also of the neighbouring country of Afghanistan were given the best medical facilities in the PIC. About 4,000 Afghan patients were treated at the OPD during the year, while over 600 underwent

angiography, angioplasty and heart surgeries, she added. Rifat Anjum said around 28,400 patients benefited from the PIC's state-of-the-art CT scan, MRI, ultrasound and X-ray. She said the PIC achieved various international and national level achievements during 2023. Being the first category government hospital of the province, it got re-certification of ISO. For the first time in Pakistan, Rota Pro Plus and LA appendage technology were introduced for heart disease at PIC, Rifat Anjum added.—APP

SNGPL cuts off another 485 connections

LAHORE : In a relentless effort to curb gas theft, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) conducted a series of targeted raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Islamabad. During the operations, 485 unauthorized connections were disconnected, and fines totaling Rs 4.14 million were imposed. According to a spokesman for the department, in Lahore, the regional team acted decisively, severing 25 connections for illegal gas usage and an additional 24 for compressor-related violations. Fines amounting to Rs 0.08 million were imposed on gas theft. In Rawalpindi, 183 connections were severed for unauthorized gas consumption, and 4 for compressor misuse, with fines totaling Rs 0.11 million. The crackdown extended to Islamabad, where three connections were disconnected due to illegal gas usage. In Multan, the team disconnected 4 connections for unauthorized gas usage and 36 for compressor violations, resulting in fines of Rs 0.45 million. One FIR was lodged against gas pilferers. In Peshawar and Karak, SNGPL took stringent action by disconnecting 66 connections for direct and illegal gas usage, imposing fines amounting to Rs 2.33 million, and filing 2 FIRs against gas theft. The Mardan team disconnected 20 connections for illegal gas usage, with fines totaling Rs 0.92 million. Sahiwal witnessed the disconnection of one connection for illegal gas usage and three for compressor violations, along with fines totaling Rs 0.21 million. In Sheikhupura, 18 connections were severed for unauthorized gas usage and 6 for compressor misuse, resulting in fines of Rs 0.01 million. The Sargodha team disconnected one connection for illegal gas usage, while Bahawalpur disconnected 63 connections for unauthorized gas usage and four for compressor violations. In Faisalabad, the team took action against one connection for illegal gas usage and another for compressor misuse, imposing fines totaling Rs 0.03 million.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Senior Vice Chairman All Pakistan Hotels Association Mian Akram Farid congratulates newly elected President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh.—DNA

CM KP emphasizes role of journalists in Society

CM emphasized the media's significance as a pillar of the state and acknowledged the vital function of journalists in highlighting prevalent issues

ABBOTTABAD : Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice (ret'd) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah on Sunday underscored the pivotal role of journalists in identifying societal issues, raising awareness, and fortifying democracy. He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of journalists from Abbottabad. The chief minister emphasized the media's significance as a pillar of the state and acknowledged the vital function of journalists in highlighting prevalent issues. He commended their role in steering public awareness and contributing to the robustness of democ-

racy. The meeting was attended by key officials, including Commissioner Hazara Division Syed Zaheer-ul-Islam, Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Khalid Iqbal, DPO Omar Tufail and others. The CM asserted that journalists have the power to contribute to the eradication of corruption and steer the country out of crises. He urged journalists to foster unity and consensus among themselves, providing leadership to the public and collectively working towards eliminating societal evils. Highlighting the importance of mutual understanding and love in society,

the chief minister stated that such qualities invite the descent of blessings from Allah. Conversely, societies lacking unity, love, and compassion may face a withholding of divine mercy. Expressing optimism for the continued positive role of journalists in Abbottabad, the chief minister hoped they would actively contribute to the well-being and prosperity of the journalistic society. He reassured the delegation that the provincial government is committed to addressing journalists' issues and promoting their welfare through every possible means.—APP



KARACHI: Former ICCI president Zafar Bakhtawari congratulating Atif Ikram on being elected as the President of FPCCI.DNA

Health Department battles illegal drug activities

DNA

PESHAWAR : The Health Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, under the guidance of Secretary Health Mahmood Aslam Wazir, on Sunday commenced a targeted campaign in response to the escalating illegal sale, storage, and distribution of narcotic drugs in the province. According to Secretary Health Mahmood Aslam Wazir, the Department of Health has received numerous complaints regarding the illicit trade of narcotic medicines in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These substances, falling under Schedule B & G of The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Drug Rules 1982 (amended 2017), require a separate license (Form-11) for authorized sale. Executed by Drug Inspectors, a focused effort unfolded on December 26 and 27, 2023, across multiple districts. The campaign's findings were promptly reported to the Secretary Health by the Director General of Drug Control and Pharmacy Services, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. An extensive report reveals inspections of medical stores in various districts, resulting in actions taken against violators of drug laws. In Abbottabad, 43 medical stores were inspected, leading to actions against 9 establishments. Similar interventions occurred in Bannu, Buner, Chitral, DI Khan, Mardan, Haripur, Mansehra, Lakkhi Marwat, Nowshera, Orakzai, Dir Lower, Swabi, Kohat, Malakand, North Waziristan, Swat, Charsadda, and Tank, with multiple stores facing consequences for drug law violations. Secretary Health emphasized the continuity of this campaign until the complete eradication of illegal drug activities in the province.

Punjab police finalizes New Year's eve security plan

IG Punjab Dr Usman Anwar warns of strict action against aerial firing, rioting, and one-wheeling

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Punjab police has finalized security preparations across the province ahead of New Year's Eve. In a statement released today, the Punjab police spokesperson said that more than 21,000 police personnel were deployed across the province. In Lahore, 2,373 officers were deployed. It said 2,312 metal detectors and thousands of security cameras were being used in the security of new year events. Similar arrangements were also made in Multan, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala and

other cities. IG Punjab Dr Usman Anwar warns of strict action against aerial firing, rioting, and one-wheeling. Dr Usman Anwar advised citizens to report violations and urges parents to monitor their children's activities, preventing involvement in illegal actions. Special squads have been formed for maintaining law and order, while additional personnel are deployed by district traffic officers, including CTO Lahore, to manage traffic on busy routes. Meanwhile, the Karachi police chief and DIG Traffic, has made a policy to tackle the traffic flow on New Year's Night.

influence of alcohol on the New Year's eve. According to a statement issued by police, the force will use breathalysers on New Year's Eve to arrest drunk drivers. In a statement, police spokesperson Ibrar Husain Baloch said carrying alcohol and narcotics in cars would not be allowed at any cost. 'No leniency will be shown to such persons,' said the police statement. 'The Karachi City Traffic Police, on the instructions of the Karachi police chief and DIG Traffic, has made a policy to tackle the traffic flow on New Year's Night.'

Power suspension schedules for 1st January 2024

DNA

ISLAMABAD: According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: On 1st January 2024, From 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Wapad Colony, G-6/3, Filtration Plant, Pandorian, Koral, Charah, Azadabad, F-10/3, G-9/1, I-8/1, I-10/1, G-11/1, Dargah, Rahara, CM Pak Zong, Kurry, Isolation Hospital, Sunny Bank, Cecil, Kohala, Pearl Cantonal, Patriata, Upper Topa, Anguri, Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, 6th Road, T&T, New Milpur, C-Block, A-Block, Affendi Colony, Khuram Colony, Khanna-2, Farooq Azam,

Gulzar Quaid, Tamsnahabad, Dhok Khaba, Gulshanabad, Sarafa Bazar, Janah Road, Pirwadahi, Quaidabad, Asghar Mall, People Colony, Masrial Road, Kamalabad, Nogzi, F-17/1&2, I-16, Mohanpura Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Mall Road, Adamji Road, Bostan Khan Road, FECHS, Model Town, Scheme III, Park View, Lala Zar, Adiala, Murt, Quaid-e-Azam Colony, Cantt, Chakri, Newrawat, Sagri, Hanif Shaheed, Sep Abrar, New Chawah, Fazal Ahmed, Ghazin Khan, Mandra-2, PAECHS, 6th Road, Nishan Haider, Gagan Feeders, Attock Circle, Taxila, Margala, HMC Road, Nisar Shaheed, Museum, Pind Parvan, Sangjani, Kohistan Enclave, Mix Industrial, Kashif Gul Shaheed, Model Town, Garhi Afghana, Kohsar Valley, Baba Rakhhi, Maskinabad, Musa, Hattian, Qaziabad, P Channel Colony, Aminabad, Akhori, Shamsabad,

Muslim Town, Gharibwal, Muthial, Qutbal, Jund-1&2, Mahfuz Shaheed, Hamdal, Fateh Jang Rural, Laniwala, Dhaknir Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Bharpur, Ara Bazar, Magan, Miani, Sarpak, Jund Awan, Dhadyal Rural, Drogi Rajgan, Chakral, Dandut, Rawal, Katas, Lala Town, KS Maniz, Jalalpur, Dhala, Dharnal, Sikho, Main Bazar, Jatla, Pirafitayal, Tau Muharram Khan, Bhadyal, Patwali Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Abbaspora, Ajmal Shaheed, P-7 Kachhari, Sanaulah Shaheed, CMH Jhelum, Shukrila, Fatehpur, Parvan, Kohar, F-6 Machine Mohalla, Pakhwal, Bong-2, Madu Kalas, Sohan, New Dorneli, Neosinghni, Colonel Muhammad Akram, Dharna, Bahi Khan, Mal Awan, Thakra, Qazia Feeders and surrounding areas will remain closed. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work is completed ahead of time, the power supply can be restored even before the scheduled time.

INVITATION TO BID

The Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority, WAPDA (the Employer) through Resident Engineer, Jinnah Hydrel Power Station, WAPDA, Kalabagh invites sealed bids from original manufacturers/authorized distributors/suppliers/Contractors registered with Income Tax and Sale Tax Department and are on Active Tax payers list (ATL) of FBR for supply and repair of following items on FCS basis:

Sr #	Tender No.	Description	Time for Performance of Contract	Bid Security (Rs.)	Last Date of obtaining bidding documents	Closing time & date for submitting tender documents	Time & date for tender opening
01	JHPS/ITR/HMI-106	Procurement of Human Machine Interfaces and hiring of services regarding programming, testing and commissioning of new HMI's	180 days	200,000	22.01.2024 during office hours	12:00 Hrs dated 23.01.2024	12:30 Hrs dated 23.01.2024
02	JHPS/ITR/CONS-107	Procurement of consumable & T&P items	30 days	170,000	24.01.2024 during office hours	12:00 Hrs dated 25.01.2024	12:30 Hrs dated 25.01.2024
03	JHPS/ITR/HPOP-108	Procurement of high pressure hose pipe	30 days	30,000	24.01.2024 during office hours	14:00 Hrs dated 25.01.2024	14:30 Hrs dated 25.01.2024
04	JHPS/ITR/GOMP-109	Procurement of screw spindle pumps	90 days	450,000	29.01.2024 during office hours	12:00 Hrs dated 30.01.2024	12:30 Hrs dated 30.01.2024
05	JHPS/ITR/SCCE-110	Procurement of miscellaneous power cables	60 days	65,000	30.01.2024 during office hours	14:00 Hrs dated 30.01.2024	14:30 Hrs dated 30.01.2024
06	JHPS/ITR/BOCR-111	Repair of plate type heat exchangers	60 days	45,000	31.01.2024 during office hours	12:00 Hrs dated 01.02.2024	12:30 Hrs dated 01.02.2024
07	JHPS/ITR/MEPI-112	Repair of miscellaneous equipments for protection & instrument	60 days	125,000	31.01.2024 during office hours	14:00 Hrs dated 01.02.2024	14:30 Hrs dated 01.02.2024
08	JHPS/ITR/MMRE-113	Repair /rewinding of miscellaneous motors	90 day	93,000	06.02.2024 during office hours	12:00 Hrs dated 07.02.2024	12:30 Hrs dated 07.02.2024
09	JHPS/ITR/TEPI-114	Procurement of testing equipments for protection & instrumentation	60 days	17,000	07.02.2024 during office hours	14:00 Hrs dated 07.02.2024	14:30 Hrs dated 07.02.2024

Bidding documents which contains detailed Terms and Conditions, Method of Procurement, Procedure for Submission of Bids, Bid Security, Bid Validity, Opening of Bid, Evaluation Criteria, Clarification/Rejection of Bids, Performance Guarantee etc. are available for the interested bidders at the following offices upon a payment of Rs. 2,000/- (Non-Refundable) against each tender one day before opening of the tender in the shape of a Pay Order/ Bank Draft/online deposit in the favour of: The Resident Engineer, Jinnah Hydrel Power Station, Kalabagh District Mianwali. Ph: +92-459-395220, E-mail: re_jhm@yahoo.com payable on United Bank Limited, Iskandarabad Branch, Daudkhel (A/C No: 1583-37100642).

The bids prepared in accordance with the instructions in the bidding documents along with bid security must reach in O/o Resident Engineer, Jinnah Hydrel Power Station near Jinnah Barrage, Kalabagh on aforementioned dates. This advertisement is also available at Wapda's Website www.wapda.gov.pk & PPRA's website www.ppra.org.pk.

Note:
1. All above tenders will be opened at office of Resident Engineer, Jinnah Hydrel Power Station, Kot-Chandria district Mianwali on the date mentioned against each tender.
2. The procurement agency reserves the rights as per PPRA Rule.
3. Tender received after the closing time of the tender opening date either by hand or through courier service will not be entertained.
All rights reserved.

Bakhtiar Khan, Resident Engineer
Jinnah Hydrel Power Station, WAPDA, Kalabagh

This notice is also available at PPRA Website: www.ppra.org.pk

PID(L)

Website: www.wapda.gov.pk

PRD(L)/WAPDA/217(2023-24)

Donate for Diar Basha & Mohmand Dams

National Days and Armed Forces Days

DECEMBER

- Dec 01/Romania National Day
- Dec 02/United Arab Emirates National Day
- Dec 02/Laos Republic National Day
- Dec 05/Thailand National Day
- Dec 06/Finland Independence Day
- Dec 07/India Armed Forces Flag Day
- Dec 09/Tanzania National Day
- Dec 11/Oman Armed Forces Day
- Dec 12/Kenya Independence Day
- Dec 12/Turkmenistan Neutrality Day
- Dec 16/Bahrain National Day
- Dec 16/Kazakhstan Independence Day
- Dec 18/Qatar National Day
- Dec 18/Niger National Day
- Dec 23/Philippines Armed Forces Day
- Dec 23/Japan National Day

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Under-training civil servants meet with business community

Such visits are undertaken by the NIM Islamabad for under training officers to give them knowledge and practical skill beyond classroom environment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A group of 14 under training civil servants from National Institute of Management Islamabad visited Sialkot and Lahore. Mr. Muhammad Masood Ahmad was heading the under-training officers in the visit. The visit is a part of senior Management course which is currently in progress at NIM academy Islamabad. The delegation visited Sialkot chamber of commerce, Sialkot international airport, Forward sports Sialkot, Sialkot surgical industry. In Lahore the delegation visited Akhuwat college university Kasur and orange line train project. Such visits are undertaken by the NIM Islamabad for under training officers to give them knowledge and practical skill beyond classroom environment.



5 days left for AIOU convocation registration

Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, emphasized that convocation is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for students, and he encourages all eligible students to register and be a part of this historic event in their lives

ISLAMABAD :Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is organizing a convocation, and the last date for registration is January 5, 2024. According to the AIOU, the graduates who have secured at least 70% marks in their respective degree programmes from the semester of Autumn 2004 to the semester of

Spring 2022 are eligible for registration. The students are directed to visit the convocation website 'convocation.aiou.edu.pk' to register or learn more about the convocation. The convocation will take place on January 31, 2024, at the Jinnah Convention Center in Islamabad. The President of the Islamic Re-

public of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi, will award degrees and gold medals to graduates. Many distinguished guests, including federal ministers, secretaries, senior officials of HEC, vice chancellors of various universities, rectors, renowned journalists, eminent social personalities, deans, professors, principal officers, faculty

members, and students of AIOU will participate in the convocation. Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, emphasized that convocation is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for students, and he encourages all eligible students to register and be a part of this historic event in their lives.—DNA

Pak earns \$892.972m from IT services' export in 4 months

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$892.972 million by providing different Information Technology (IT) services to various countries during the first four months of the current fiscal year 2023-24. This shows a growth of 4.45 per cent as compared with the US \$854.918 million earned through the provision of services during the corresponding months of the last fiscal year 2022-23, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the months under review, the export of computer services grew by 4.81 per cent as it surged from US \$688.078 million last year to US \$721.162 million during July-October 2023. Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed an increase of 93.76 per cent, from US \$1.009 million to US \$1.955 million this year while the export of hardware consultancy services also surged by 1.13 per cent, from US \$253.543 million to US \$256.408 million.—APP

Pakistani hackers hacked Indian govt's Gazette website

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani hackers have hacked the website of the Indian Gazette and displayed the movie name Dhai Chaal, a recently released thriller based on real life events, whereas the Indian flag was also replaced with Pakistan's flag bearing an eagle on it. According to an X (formerly Twitter) user, SOURCE (@SourceOSINT) who claimed the development on his handle revealed that the official website of Indian Gazette was hacked. He wrote in his post, "I speak The website of The Gazette of India Hacked with the message Dhai Chaal Na Waqt Ho Gaya Hai. @ShivAroor (an Indian journalist) Watch #MovieDhaiChaal for further details about the Hack. Hack courtesy Bugtits. The revenge of Balochs has started. http://egazette.nic.in He also mentioned the official website of the Indian Gazette for the X users and masses at large to verify the claim while sharing a screenshot of the website showing the messages of hackers written on it. When contacted, the Producer of the film Dhai Chaal (The Knight's Move), Dr Irfan Ashraf said the film was pictured on the real life events that took place during the arrest of Indian Spy Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav that was a great success of the security forces of the country. Dr Ashraf said the basic theme of the movie is to pay tribute to the sacrifices of locals of Balochistan, to promote the positive impact of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), to expose the Indian-sponsored terrorism in Balochistan, to expose the Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav and his terrorist activities in Balochistan, and to show the reality of Pakistan to the world in a soft way. There have been movies like 'Khuda Ke Liye', 'WAAR', 'Yalghar', and others but there was much need for a film project that could focus on digging up the hidden stories of successful and hard-earned achievements of the country's people and its security forces against the inimical forces, he added. Dhai Chaal (Knight's Move), a well-conceived and aptly designed film project by Faisal Production is revolving around an Indian spy, Kulbhushan Jadhav, who was arrested by the law enforcement agencies of Pakistan on March 3, 2016. After World War II, this is a unique incident that a serving intelligence officer of a country (India) got arrested while spying in another country (Pakistan). The story is based on how Pakistani security forces arrested Kulbhushan Jadhav. The blockbuster thriller "Dhai Chaal" had also bagged huge public acclaim at the box office after the release of the movie whereas the hashtags "#DhaiChaalMovie, #StandWithDrIrfan, #CPEC, and #DhaiChaalinCinema" remained the top trend on X for the past many days. The film Dhai Chaal created a sensation in the Pakistani industry as soon as it was released. A large number of young people reached the theaters on the past Friday, Saturday, and Sunday to watch the movie. After watching the film, the people said that the way the producer of the film, Dr Irfan Ashraf, has presented the story of Pakistan's Balochistan province to the world for the first time is unprecedented.—DNA

'Economic zone of 5000 acres to be set up in Rawalpindi'

RAWALPINDI :The administration would set up an economic zone of 5000 acres in Rawalpindi to facilitate the business community, said Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatta. He informed that the master planning of Rawalpindi includes an economic zone of 5000 acres where the traders would set up the factories and provide economic opportunities to the local people. The Commissioner said that Rawalpindi is a division of six districts covering 22,993 square kilometers. Rawalpindi division has 22 tehsils and a total population of the division is 11.406 million. Rawalpindi Division has a literacy rate of 72.25% and there are 12 universities and five specialized institutions in the division, Liaquat Ali Chatta added. The division has a total of 544 schemes worth Rs 179,576 million under the Annual Development Program (2023-24) and 33 percent funds had been utilized so far on the development schemes, the Commissioner added. At present, work on various mega projects is underway in Rawalpindi. Phase-I of the Rawalpindi Ring Road, a mega project to reshape Rawalpindi, was swiftly being completed, he said. Economic Corridors would be created along the Rawalpindi Ring Road to provide maximum economic opportunities by promoting local industry in Rawalpindi. An economic zone of 5000 acres would be created under the master planning of Rawalpindi on the proposal of the business community, he said. The construction work of Dadocha Dam was also swiftly being completed to provide Rawalpindi with 35 million gallons of clean drinking water per day. Several other projects including Leh Expressway, Katchehari Chowk, Safe City Project, Water Supply Schemes and revamping of Holy Family hospital project would be completed. Construction of 150-bed Rehab Center at Wah General Hospital, up-gradation of Pirwadhai Bus Stand, Slaughter house, VICS Centre, Freelance IT center and Gymkhana in all the districts of the division were also included in the development schemes of the current year.—APP

Admin sets up 13 centers in Murree to facilitate tourists

RAWALPINDI: Murree district administration on the directives of the Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatta has set up 13 centers at 13 different places in Murree at Satara Meel, Lower Topa, Jika Gali, GPO, Kashmir Point, Kuldana, Kali Matti, Masiyari, Sindhan, Sunny Bank, Bhorban, Thanda Jungle and Saharbagla to facilitate the tourists. According to a Commissioner Office spokesman, the Commissioner Rawalpindi Division had directed the authorities concerned to provide all possible facilities to the tourists during snowfall season. Under the Murree Contingency Plan, an additional 140 traffic police personnel had been deployed in Murree, he added. The Commissioner had instructed that there should be no delay in preparations at the local level for the implementation of the plan. The biggest problem of Murree is traffic jams, he said adding, that the role of police and traffic wardens is the most important. The concerned forum would be approached to ensure the early appointment of a separate DPO for Murree district, he added. A large number of tourists are expected to arrive in Murree on the occasion of New Year's Night. The administration was directed to complete all the arrangements and the officials of the departments concerned should not be allowed to remain absent from their duties. 13 SMDs had been made functional within Murree city and public service messages were being displayed on the SMDs to inform the tourists, he added. A 24/7 helpline had also been arranged by the Tourism Department for the guidance of the tourists and to update them about weather and traffic conditions.—APP

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Briefs

PIAF hopes for firm economy in 2024

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial & Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has said that the role of the business community is vital for the economic uplift and stability of the country, as the businessmen are the backbone of the economy and a leading contributor to the economic progress and prosperity of the country. In a New Year message issued here today, the PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol, expressing the hope and good wishes for the upcoming year 2024, prayed for the strengthening of the country's economy and promotion of trade and industry, which has been the motto and priority of the PIAF. He said that the present caretaker government has steered the country's economy out of the crisis by making sincere efforts. He said that PIAF would continue to utilize its best abilities to bring closer the various besides to promote trade and industry. He said that the country's economy was showing the signs of stability which bodes well for the development and prosperity of the country.

The PIAF Chairman pointed out the problems faced by the business community along with suggestions for their solution. He appreciated the role being played by the private sector, particularly the PIAF, in the country's economic development. He said at present, tough economic conditions called for taking difficult decisions but the government should have been committed to improve the economy. He also stressed the need for technical education's close linkage with the industry. He said the government should give great importance to the business community and continue to support them by resolving their problems on top priority.

Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that the concerns of people associated with the SMEs should be conveyed to the concerned circles. He said that the government should be aware of the problems of the business community and all possible resources be utilized to solve them. He said that it is the responsibility of the government to provide conducive environment for businesses. On this occasion, he expressed his gratitude to the businessmen for their felicitations and said that with a view to ensuring trade facilitation in the region the problems regarding removal of trade barriers including acceptance of standard certificate, limitations of infrastructure in the land ports, should be removed. He also emphasized on restructuring production and export processes to improve trans-boundary trade in South Asia.

Gold prices in Pakistan see slight decline

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On Saturday, the gold market in Pakistan witnessed a slight decrease of Rs900, with 24-karat gold sliding to Rs220,000 per tola. Meanwhile, the allure of these prices persisted even in smaller quantities, with 10 grams of 24-karat gold priced at Rs188,615. These fluctuations are closely tied to changes in the value of the US Dollar, highlighting the intricate relationship between currency values and gold prices. On the global stage, the current gold price stands at \$2,062 per ounce. It's noteworthy that gold rates in Pakistan can undergo significant variations throughout the day, influenced by trends in the global market. The provided rates are sourced from reliable outlets, primarily situated in Karachi and Multan. For the latest and most accurate gold rates, it is recommended to consult with local gold merchants and jewellers. Remaining well-informed about the dynamic nature of gold prices in Pakistan is crucial for individuals keen on staying abreast of market trends.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Malaysia Azhar Mazlan paid a visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries (ICSTSI), Islamabad. He was accompanied by Mr. Mohd Syafik, Counsellor of the High Commission.—DNA

Naqvi wants early completion of Rawalpindi Ring Road project

The Chief Minister was given a briefing by the FWO officials on the progress being made on the project. Mohsin Naqvi while talking with the media apprised that 12 percent work on the Rawalpindi Ring Road project has been completed and 2 years period was allocated for the completion of this project

DNA

ISLAMABAD: 12 percent work on the 38 km long Mega Rawalpindi Ring Road project has been completed. Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi conducted a detailed visit to the Rawalpindi Ring Road project today and reviewed progress being made on the project. CM inspected ongoing construction work on the project. Mohsin Naqvi also inspected the temporary bridge being built at Sawan and appreciated the performance of FWO for doing swift work on the project. He was given a briefing by the FWO officials on the progress being made on the project. Mohsin Naqvi while talking with the media apprised that 12

percent work on the Rawalpindi Ring Road project has been completed and 2 years period was allocated for the completion of this project. Hopefully, the project will be completed by August. The citizens of Islamabad and Rawalpindi will be greatly benefited with the completion of this project. The 38 km long Rawalpindi Ring Road project had been postponed for a long period of time. The Rawalpindi Ring Road project is likewise Motorway project and the Rawalpindi Ring Road project is the biggest project of Punjab. 5 big interchanges will be built on the 38 km Ring Road. Full payment will be paid to the owners for the land acquisition. Not a single rupee will be left unpaid. The ongoing projects in

Punjab will be completed before the deadline. Mohsin Naqvi stated that work on Dadocha Dam is ongoing and the problem of provision of clean water to the residents of Rawalpindi will be resolved with the construction of Dadocha Dam. Commissioner Rawalpindi has worked with great dedication to resolve the issue of the provision of water for the residents of Rawalpindi. Dadocha Dam will be completed in 2 years. We are working on an extension project to resolve traffic problems at the Katchehri Chowk of Rawalpindi. The hospital issues of Murree have been resolved on preferential basis. The amount of promotions which have been made in every department including Police in the last 10 months

have not been made during the last 10 years. Promotion is the right of every official which we have granted. The projects of Rawalpindi are unique in their nature. CM apprised that the whole process of holding elections is being taken care by the Election Commission. Wherever any complaint was reported then we took action on our own before the Election Commission. The Punjab government is providing assistance to hold an independent and transparent elections. Hopefully, the next government will continue work on the projects exceeding our pace. Mohsin Naqvi informed that the Holy Family Hospital is the biggest hospital of Rawalpindi and will be completed by 31st January. The already built

hospital will become new which was established in 1945. Orders of beds and all basic machinery have been placed. CM was informed during the briefing that the utility services are being shifted permanently which were being used in the project. 176 structures have been cleared and the whole land has been handed over to FWO. Construction work of underpasses, bridges and water ways has been started. The machinery of the project was not passing through the Sawan bridge and now temporary bridge has been built. Provincial Minister Dr. Nasir Jamal, IG Police Dr. Usman Anwar, Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Chatha, RPO, CPO, Deputy Commissioner, DG Ring Road Authority and officials of FWO were also present on the occasion.

'Economic indicators remain depressed throughout 2023'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has stressed the need for a revisit of the economic policies, as the economic indicators throughout the 2023 remained very depressed amidst high inflation, low exports, depleting foreign reserves and continued uncertain position of the local currency. FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said that almost all indicators of the economy continued to show poor performance during 2023, including volatile exchange rate, unprecedented hike in markup rate, repeated increases in electricity rates, gas shortage, price spiral, mismanagement and bad governance, becoming the hallmarks of the govt. He observed the negative economic indicators and uncertainty over resumption of the International Monetary Fund program continued to push the rupee towards a new historic low against the US dollar especially in first half of the calendar year of 2023.

163 traffic wardens to regulate traffic in Murree

RAWALPINDI: 163 traffic wardens and officers of traffic police have been deployed at all important points of Murree to regulate traffic and facilitate the tourists, said a City Traffic Police spokesman. Traffic police had devised a comprehensive plan for Murree for the snowfall season according to which entry of heavy vehicles in the city would be banned, he added. He said an emergency Help Line 051-9269200, had also been introduced for facilitating the tourists. The citizens, having complaints, could contact police round the clock, he added. He informed that Help Line center was also serving as control room from where all possible facilities were being provided to the tourists.—APP

Consumer brands asked to make full disclosure on product discounts

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) advises shoe and clothing brands offering discounts to ensure complete and visible disclosures regarding actual and discounted prices. Brands violating this directive may face enforcement actions by the CCP. During the ongoing seasonal surge in discounts, particularly within clothing and shoe brands, CCP uncovered instances of deceptive marketing practices. Preliminary investigations indicate that such practices may violate Section 10 of the Competition Act, 2010, constituting deceptive marketing. The CCP's survey and preliminary probe identified 27 brands offering 'flat' discounts on their products. However, CCP noticed that

the 'Flat discount' didn't apply to all items. The discount advertised outside the shop was higher than the actual sale prices inside. The disclaimer about 'Terms & Conditions' had an illegible font size. In numerous cases, 'Terms & Conditions' weren't mentioned at all. Additionally, certain offers, like 'Flat 50% plus 20% on bank cards', had differing terms for online and retail purchases, leading to confusion and potentially misleading consumers into uninformed purchases. These discrepancies were observed in approximately 96% of the outlets surveyed. This lack of disclosure containing essential information hampers consumers' ability to make informed decisions. CCP advises consumers to exercise vigilance and thoroughly review the terms and conditions of discounts and sales offers to avoid falling vic-

tim to deceptive marketing practices. CCP has already issued "Guidelines on Section 10: Deceptive Marketing Practices," which also prohibit 'Bait and Switch Advertising'. It is the act of advertising a product at a low price but charging a higher price at the point of purchase. These guidelines emphasize the responsibility of undertakings to ensure clear disclosure of terms and conditions across all media to avoid creating false impressions about the goods on offer. Fine print disclaimers and qualifications that are difficult to read or hide important information are strongly discouraged. CCP remains committed to its mandate under the Competition Act, striving to ensure free competition, enhance economic efficiency, and protect consumers from anti-competitive behaviour.

54 PTI candidates move to ECP for level playing field

ISLAMABAD: 54 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) candidates on Saturday moved to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in a bid to level the playing field. The federal and provincial governments, 17 DROs, the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra), the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra), and the PTA had been made parties. The PTI candidates had urged the need to "halt the crack-down" against the party leaders and workers. Along with the application, details about the events that "transpired" in NA-49 had also been sent to the ECP. Verdict reserved on Sheikh Rashid's nomination papers from NA-56 - Separately, the verdict regarding the nomination papers of Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid from NA-56 had been reserved on Saturday.—APP

PTI tickets should be distributed fairly, says PTI leader

ISLAMABAD: The residents and business community of Peshawar Cantt demand that the ticket for PK-81 should not be given to parachute candidates or those involved in photo sessions. Instead, it should be given to the former Deputy Organizer PTI Peshawar, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, who stands with the party during challenging times. Syed Qasim Ali Shah's connection to a political family in Peshawar, particularly his father's notable services as Mayor and Provincial Minister, is acknowledged and praised. Ghulam Bilal Javaid, leader of the business community in Peshawar Cantt, and others have unanimously decided to provide complete support if Syed Qasim Ali Shah is nominated. Javaid emphasized that not only the business community but also residents of Cantt have expressed their demand for Qasim Ali Shah to be given the ticket for PK-81.—DNA

Chinese language learning brings job opportunities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese language learning brings job opportunities to Pakistani youth, said Dr. Tahir Mumtaz Awan, Director of the China Study Centre at COMSATS University at the 2023 CPEC and People-to-People Exchange Forum. China is Pakistan's largest trading partner. Proficiency in Chinese can open up job opportunities, especially in sectors related to trade, technology, and infrastructure. According to Dr. Tahir Mumtaz Awan China is becoming an increasingly popular destination for Pakistani students

pursuing higher education. As Pakistan's youth population represents a significant proportion of the country's workforce, investing in their skills development through language learning is crucial for national development. Learning Chinese can promote cultural understanding and exchange between the people of China and Pakistan, fostering stronger people-to-people ties. Efforts are being made in Pakistan for Chinese learning, including establishing China-Pakistan Higher Education Research Institutes and the CPEC Consortium of Universities," he added, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

The Confucius Institute at the University of Karachi has been committed to promoting people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan. It has implemented the 2+2 joint training program for undergraduate Chinese language majors with Sichuan Normal University, co-built a Chinese language practice base with the Karachi Branch of the Bank of China, and set up the first Chinese language teaching center under CPEC in the Thar Block-1 Integrated Mine-Power Project undertaken by Shanghai Electric, providing language support for the construction of CPEC. "With their excel-

lent language skills, the outstanding students trained by the Confucius Institute hold important positions in our bank, effectively communicating with Chinese employees and customers. They become an important link of cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan, creating a more harmonious and inclusive environment for the development of our bank," said Mr. Yin Xiaohu, Deputy CEO of Bank of China, Karachi Branch on the occasion. The forum, organized by the Confucius Institute at the University of Karachi and co-organized by Confucius Institutes at Faisalabad Agricultural University.



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The view on abolishing inheritance tax

Britain's public finances are in a "parlous state", according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies. More than a decade of public spending cuts has ripped the welfare safety net and left the NHS and other public services more stretched than ever, while it is costing increasingly more to service the country's high and rising debt burden. Yet speculation increased last week that the chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, may be considering the abolition of inheritance tax in his spring budget in March. This would be a pre-election giveaway for some of the country's wealthiest families that the UK can ill afford. There is a conundrum at the heart of inheritance tax that makes it an appealing prospect to some Conservatives ahead of an election. It is paid by a relatively small number of people; currently, only the wealthiest 5% at death. Yet it is unpopular; voters see it as the least fair tax in the UK. While scrapping it would leave a £7bn hole in the budget today, rising to an estimated £15bn a year by the early 2030s, it accounts for a far smaller slice of exchequer revenue than income tax or VAT. So the calculation by some on the right is that scrapping it could be an eye-catching but relatively cheap way to win votes. But the reality is that abolishing inheritance tax would deliver huge gains to the rich. Analysis by the IFS shows that almost half of the tax giveaway would go to people in the top 1% of the wealth distribution league, a group that has amassed average wealth of £2.1m each by the time they die, and that they would receive an average tax cut of £1m each. This windfall for the wealthy would need to be paid for by others, either by increasing the tax burden on the less affluent, or through further cuts to already underfunded public services and to tax credits and benefits. Inheritance tax is unpopular because many perceive it to be a form of "double taxation". But people pay more than one tax in relation to money they earn all the time; on their income, and then on the things they spend it on, for example. Inheritance should be taxed because it damages social mobility in a society where wealth is already unevenly spread. Inheritance should be taxed because it is damaging to social mobility in a society where wealth is already unevenly spread, partly because of a dysfunctional housing market that has delivered huge gains to people lucky enough to buy in the right place at the right time; gains that have come directly at the expense of a younger generation now facing stratospheric housing costs. Wealth begets wealth when it comes to inheritance: people whose parents are in the bottom fifth of the wealth distribution inherit just £2,000 on average despite themselves only having wealth of less than £200,000. People whose parents are in the top fifth of the wealth distribution stand to add more than £370,000 of pre-tax inheritance to their own average worth of over £800,000. The average inheritance today goes to someone in their 50s; for today's generation of young people, the average age of inheritance will rise to 61. If anything, inheritance tax makes too marginal a difference: it reduces the average inheritance for those whose parents are in the top fifth of the wealth distribution by less than £40,000. There is plenty of scope for it to go up more by tightening the exemptions that mean the very wealthiest end up paying proportionately less – estates of more than £10m have an average tax rate of 17%, compared with an average tax rate of 24% for estates of between £2m and £3m.



The view on the AI conundrum

Intelligent machines have been serving and enslaving people in the realm of the imagination for decades. The all-knowing computer – sometimes benign, usually malevolent – was a staple of the science fiction genre long before any such entity was feasible in the real world. That moment may now be approaching faster than societies can draft appropriate rules. In 2023, the capabilities of artificial intelligence (AI) came to the attention of a wide audience well beyond tech circles, thanks largely to ChatGPT (which launched in November 2022) and similar products. Given how rapidly progress in the field is advancing, that fascination is sure to accelerate in 2024, coupled with alarm at some of the more apocalyptic scenarios possible if the technology is not adequately regulated. The nearest historical parallel is humankind's acquisition of nuclear power. The challenge posed by AI is arguably greater. To get from a theoretical understanding of how to split the atom to the assembly of a reactor or bomb is hard and expensive. Malicious applications of code online can be transmitted and replicated with viral efficiency. The worst-case outcome – human civilisation accidentally programming itself into obsolescence and collapse – is still the stuff of science fiction, but even the low probability of a catastrophe has to be taken seriously. Meanwhile, harms on a more mundane scale are not only feasible, but present. The use of AI in automated systems in the administration of public and private services risks embedding and amplifying racial and gender bias. An "intelligent" system trained on data skewed by centuries in which white men dominated culture and science will produce medical diagnoses or evaluate job applications by criteria that have prejudice built-in. This is the less glamorous end of concern about AI, which perhaps explains why it receives less political attention than lurid fantasies of robot insurrection, but it is also the most urgent task for regulators. While in the medium and long term there is a risk of underestimating what AI can do, in the shorter term the opposite tendency – being needlessly overawed by the technology – impedes prompt action. The systems currently being rolled out in all kinds of spheres, making useful scientific discoveries as well as sinister deepfake political propaganda, use concepts that are fiercely complex at the level of code, but not conceptually unfathomable. Organic nature Large language model technology works by absorbing and processing vast data sets (much of it scraped from the internet without permission from the original content producers) and generating solutions to problems at astonishing speed. The end result resembles human intelligence but is, in reality, a brilliantly plausible synthetic product. It has almost nothing in common with the subjective human experience of cognition and consciousness. Some neuroscientists argue plausibly that the organic nature of a human mind – the way we have evolved to navigate in the universe through biochemical mediation of sensory perception – is so qualitatively different to the modelling of an external world by machines that the two experiences will never converge. That doesn't preclude robots outgunning humans in the performance of increasingly sophisticated tasks, which is plainly happening. But it does mean the essence of what it means to be human is not as soluble in the rising tide of AI as some gloomy prognostications imply.

US engagement with Ukraine

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



There's also a need for better border policies. Many Americans don't understand why the U.S. military doesn't protect the country's borders. Immigration policy is closely tied to foreign policy and the U.S. economy. A majority of Americans think the U.S. is doing a poor job managing its borders, and there's a surge in illegal border crossings. The military is restricted by the Posse Comitatus Act from acting as a domestic police force, but political leaders should invest in border security. This includes more funding for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency

As the conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues, people are getting tired of emotional appeals about Ukrainian bravery and Russian actions. Republicans have valid concerns: they want to cut government spending, make sure U.S. aid to Ukraine isn't misused by corrupt officials, and figure out where helping Ukraine fits in U.S. priorities. One thing most Americans agree on is the importance of a strong U.S. military. However, President Biden is providing enough aid for Ukraine to keep fighting but not enough to win. There's a strong argument from conservatives to increase U.S. assistance to Ukraine. For a relatively small cost, Americans can support Ukraine in a war that NATO was worried about. It's important to note that a significant portion of U.S. aid to Ukraine goes to American companies that produce weapons for Kyiv. Engaging with Ukraine is also revealing weaknesses in the U.S. defense system. To fund defense adequately, changes to entitlement programs like Social Security and Medicare are necessary. Both Democrats and Republicans need to reconsider their stance on entitlement reform, as these programs make up a large portion of federal spending. If not addressed, the cost of entitlements will limit spending on defense and other domestic programs. There's also a need for better border policies. Many Americans don't understand why the U.S. military doesn't protect the country's borders. Immigration policy is closely tied to foreign policy and the U.S. economy. A majority of Americans think the U.S. is doing a poor job managing its borders, and there's a surge in illegal border crossings. The military is restricted by the Posse Comitatus Act from acting as a domestic police force, but political leaders should invest in border security. This includes more funding for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency, as well as technology to track migrant movements. Cooperation with Mexico and addressing the root causes of migration are also crucial. Failure to regulate immigration properly hinders the U.S. from maximizing its geopolitical opportunities, especially in North American cooperation. Clearer immigration policies could lead to stronger collaboration with neighboring countries, benefiting the U.S. economy.

However, until Americans are confident in border control, they may be hesitant to support these cooperation opportunities. According to experts at the Brennan Center, many Americans are confused about why the U.S. military doesn't protect the country's borders. Republicans could improve their policies on this issue. Immigration is crucial for foreign policy and the U.S. economy. A survey in January 2021 by Pew Research Institute showed that 68% of Americans believe the U.S. is not managing its borders well. Indeed, since January 2020, about 200,000 people try to enter the U.S. illegally every month through the Mexican border, the highest in 20 years. Contrary to what the media says, most of these people are adults, not kids. The 1878 Posse Comitatus Act stops the military from acting like a police force within the U.S. Generals, who are already busy, don't want to protect the borders, fearing it might harm people's respect for the military. To get more support for U.S. activities abroad, leaders need to show they can put more effort and resources into border security. A survey in January 2023 found that most Americans want to give more money to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency. It's not just about money and more people. Over 60% of recent migrants aren't from Mexico or Central America but start their journey in places like Colombia, Cuba, Peru, and Venezuela. The U.S. should invest in surveillance and technology to track migrants in Central America, speed up asylum claims in new immigration courts, work more with Mexico to stop migrants passing through, and engage with migrants' home countries to solve problems and help those who don't meet U.S. immigration rules return. Not handling immigration properly makes the U.S. miss its biggest opportunity for North American cooperation. Politicians should worry more about Mexico becoming unsafe and find creative ways to make Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. work together in energy, labor, and manufacturing. With better immigration policies, we can relocate supply chains to Mexico, strengthen energy grids in California and Texas by trading energy with Canada and Mexico, and create opportunities for neighbors to prosper, boosting the U.S. economy. But until Americans trust that the U.S. controls its borders, they may not support these cooperation opportunities.

The world that the United States and its friends made after World War II made America safer and richer. But we must remember that if the U.S. doesn't make sure this global order is followed, someone else will, probably China. If China takes charge, the world could become dangerous. China, along with its authoritarian allies like Russia and Iran, might gather enough military and economic power to force a repressive vision on the world. To make things better, the U.S. should rejoin the Trans-Pacific Partnership, make and approve other trade agreements, spend more on defense while fixing entitlements and reducing national debt, secure the U.S.-Mexican border, and help countries fighting for their freedom. These are big goals. Fred Kagan, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, says people don't want to die for the international order because it's too vague. But convincing voters to support a foreign policy that helps other countries might not be as hard as politicians think. They should focus on concrete arguments based on U.S. national interest. The Biden administration and some Republican leaders are making misleading appeals that say internationalism makes the U.S. weaker or that caring about the U.S. national interest means ignoring the world. This is not true. The choices the U.S. makes internationally affect its own well-being. Right now, leaders are making confusing foreign policy decisions that make the country less safe and less prosperous, and fixing them will be difficult later on. The U.S. is divided politically, and many people are confused and disappointed. A Pew poll from June-July 2023 found that only 16% of Americans trust the federal government, the lowest in 70 years. Only 10% feel hopeful about politics. In an August Wall Street Journal poll, 93% of likely Republican voters thought the U.S. is headed in the wrong direction. These are not good results, but they also present an opportunity for good policies because people are clearly unhappy. The solution is not to adopt policies that give up on trade, weaken the military, leave the U.S.-Mexican border in chaos, and stop helping deserving allies. Americans still want the U.S. to be a leader in the world for the sake of the country and their own safety and prosperity. U.S. leaders need to prove they know how to do it.

Individual transformation and collective harmony

Zahra Ali



Throughout history, the pursuit of power has been a cause behind many conflicts, both on an individual and societal level. Nations vie for dominance, leaders compete for control, and individuals seek to assert authority over others. This love for power often results in

In a world often marked by conflicts, power struggles, and discord, the idea that the power of love can replace the love for power may seem idealistic. However, history and human experience have shown that genuine, transformative change often begins with a shift in values and perspectives. The profound impact of embracing the power of love over the pursuit of power and how this shift can pave the way for a more peaceful world. Throughout history, the pursuit of power has been a cause behind many conflicts, both on an individual and societal level. Nations vie for dominance, leaders compete for control, and individuals seek to assert authority over others. This love for power often results in a zero-sum game, where one's gain is perceived as another's loss, leading to a cycle of animosity and strife. In such a paradigm, the potential for cooperation, understanding, and empathy is often overshadowed by the desire for dominance. Contrastingly, the power of love carries transformative potential that can break this cycle of conflict. Love, in its broadest sense, encompasses compassion, empathy, un-

derstanding, and a genuine concern for the well-being of others. When individuals and societies prioritize love over power, a profound shift occurs—one that fosters cooperation, unity, and shared goals. Love promotes empathy, allowing individuals to see beyond their differences and connect on a fundamental human level. It encourages collaboration rather than competition, emphasizing the idea that true strength lies in unity. Love seeks to understand, to heal, and to build bridges, creating an environment conducive to peaceful coexistence. On an individual level, embracing the power of love leads to personal growth and transformation. When people prioritize love, they cultivate qualities such as kindness, forgiveness, and tolerance. These virtues, in turn, contribute to healthier relationships, both at the personal and societal levels. As individuals embody love, they become agents of positive change, inspiring others to follow suit. Collectively, a society that values the power of love fosters an environment where cooperation and mutual respect thrive. Policies are crafted with empathy and the well-being of all in mind, rather than being driven by

a desire for dominance. In such a society, diversity is celebrated, and conflicts are resolved through dialogue and understanding rather than force. The transformation from a love for power to the power of love is not instantaneous, nor is it without challenges. It requires a collective commitment to values that prioritize humanity over individual gain. Education, dialogue, and fostering a culture of empathy are essential components in this process. Leaders, influencers, and ordinary citizens alike play pivotal roles in shaping a world where the power of love reigns supreme. In the pursuit of a more peaceful world, it is essential to recognize the transformative potential of love. When individuals and societies choose to prioritize the power of love over the love for power, a profound shift occurs—one that has the capacity to break the cycle of conflict, promote understanding, and pave the way for a harmonious global community. As history has shown, lasting change often begins with a change of heart, and by embracing the power of love, humanity can aspire to a future characterized by peace, compassion, and unity.

Briefs

Palestinians
end dark year
a mid Israeli
genocidal...

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According to local sources, at least 10 displaced civilians were injured following an Israeli artillery attack on Khan Yunis School in Khan Yunis refugee camp. Four other civilians were martyred when the Israeli army bombed a house belonging to the family of Abu Shahada in al-Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza. The health ministry in Gaza said on Sunday that the Israeli occupation army committed, over the past 24 hours, 12 massacres in the Gaza Strip, which resulted in the martyrdom of at least 150 civilians and the injury of 286 others. In a brief statement, the health ministry said that the death toll from the ongoing Israeli bombardments, which started on October 7, climbed to 21,822 martyrs and the number of the wounded surged to 56,451 people. In a related context, spokesman for the health ministry Ashraf al-Qudra said that the Israeli occupation army had killed in Gaza 312 health personnel, including doctors with rare medical specialties, and kidnapped 99 medical professionals, including directors of hospitals in northern Gaza. President Ebrahim Raeisi has condemned Israel's assassination of a senior Iranian military advisor of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in Syria, stressing that the occupying regime will pay the price for the crime. President Raeisi made the remarks during an unannounced visit to the family of martyr Brigadier General Seyed Razi Mousavi on Sunday, as he extended his condolences to his family. The Iranian president called the murder a "cowardly act" and went on to say that the sacrifices and dedication of the martyrs form the cornerstone of the country's security and power. "The services and sacrifices of this great commander in supporting and strengthening the Islamic resistance front will forever remain honored," he added. Raeisi further attributed the heinous crime committed by the Israeli regime to its incompetence and frustration in the face of the resistance front in the region.

US admits
failure of
Red Sea
coalition

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warships from the United States, France, and the United Kingdom patrolling the waters of the southern Red Sea and the western Gulf of Aden as part of Operation Prosperity Guardian. The top commander claimed that since the operation started more than 10 days ago, the ships have shot down a total of 17 drones and four anti-ship ballistic missiles. Cooper said the Houthi have since the start of Operation Prosperity Guardian stepped up their use of anti-ship ballistic missiles, adding, "We are clear-eyed that the Houthi reckless attacks will likely continue." Cooper also said the task force is in direct communication with commercial ships to provide guidance on "maneuvering and the best practices to avoid being attacked," and working closely with the shipping industry to coordinate security. Mohammad al-Bakhiti, a member of Ansarullah's politburo, announced on Friday that the Yemeni armed forces were "eager" to engage in a confrontation with the United States in case of escalating tensions in the strategic Red Sea. The popular resistance movement earlier said the international waterways as well as the Red Sea were secure for all passing vessels, except for Israeli ones or those heading towards the occupied territories. US Central Command announced on Sunday that a container ship run by the Danish shipping company Maersk had been struck by a missile in southern part of the Red Sea. "Today at approximately 8:30 p.m. (Sana'a time), the container ship Maersk Hangzhou reported that they were struck by a missile while transiting Southern Red Sea," the Central Command was cited by Russia's official TASS news agency as saying in an X post.

Aqeel, Sarah wins Serena
Hotels National C'ship titles

Aisam ul Haq Qureshi and Aqeel Khan clinched the men's doubles title against Barkatullah and Yousaf Khalil



AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Top tennis player Aqeel Khan continued his dominance at the national level as he annexed another men's singles ti-

tle by beating Muhammad Shoaib 2-1 in the final of the 8th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Championships 2023 at SDA-PTF Tennis Complex Islamabad on Sunday. In the Mens Singles Final, Aqeel Kha beat Muhammad

Shoaib 6-3,1-6,6-2 and won the Serena Hotels Mens Title. In the Ladies' Singles Final, Sarah Mahboob Khan beat Meheq Khokhar 6-3,6-2 and won the Serena Hotels Ladies' Title. Aisam ul Haq Qureshi and Aqeel

Khan clinched the men's doubles title against Barkatullah and Yousaf Khalil with a commanding 6-0, 6-2 victory. In the Boys Single 14 under Final, Amir Mazari beat Abdul Basit 7-5,5-7,7-5 and won the Serena

Hotels Boys Single 14 & under Title. Aziz Boolani CEO of Serena Hotels was the Chief Guest at the Closing Ceremony. Senator Salim Saifullah Khan President Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) was the Guest of honour at the closing ceremony while Col. (r) Gul Rehman Secretary General PTF, Imran Hassan Director TPS Serena Hotels, Hina Nazir, Muhammad Saleem Marwat President-KP Tennis Association and a large number of players, coaches, officials and tennis lovers witnessed the concluding ceremony. Senator Salim Saifullah Khan President-PTF thanked the Management of Serena Hotels, especially Aziz Boolani-CEO Serena Hotels for the promotion of tennis in Pakistan. **Results:** Mens Singles Final: Aqeel Khan bt Muhammad Shoaib 6-3,1-6,6-2. Ladies Singles Final: Sarah Mahboob Khan bt Meheq Khokhar 6-3,6-2 Boys Single 14 & Final: Amir Muhammad Khan Mazari bt Abdul Basit 7-5,5-7,7-5

PCB appoints Junaid as
Pak U19 bowling coach

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former left-arm pacer Junaid Khan has been appointed as the bowling coach for Pakistan U19, stepping in absence of Rehan Riaz. Riaz withdrew from the ICC U19 World Cup due to a family emergency. Junaid, who previously held the position of head coach for Islamabad Region, guided the team to success in the Hanif Mohammad Trophy and Hanif Mohammad Cup during 2023-24. The 34-year-old cricketer has featured in 107 international matches for Pakistan, claiming 189 wickets. Earlier, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) confirmed the squad for the ICC U19 World Cup, which will be played from 19 January to 11 February, 2024 in South Africa. Last month, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) appointed legendary crick-



eter Mohammad Yousuf as the head coach of the national U-19 team. On this occasion, Yousuf had expressed his grati-

tude to PCB management committee chairman Zaka Ashraf for appointing him as the head coach of the national U-19 team.

Yousuf had vowed to utilise his experience of working with senior teams for the U-19 team, which will pave the way for the young players to rise on the international level. Saad Baig will lead the 15-player Pakistan U19 squad in the event. Ali Asfand and Mohammad Zeeshan are also part of the squad. The duo also represented Pakistan in the previous edition of U19 World Cup held in West Indies in 2022. The training camp for the tournament has been started which will carry on till January 6. **Support staff:** Shoaib Mohammad (Team Manager), Mohammad Yousaf (Head Coach), Junaid Khan (Bowling Coach), Mansoor Amjad (Fielding Coach), Muhammad Masroor (Assistant Batting Coach), Umer Rashid Dar (Assistant Coach), Hafiz Naeem Ul Rasul (Team Physio), Usman Hashmi (Team Analyst) and Imran Ullah (Strength & Conditioning Coach).

Ronaldo addresses
retirement rumours

RIYADH: Al Nassr, led by Cristiano Ronaldo, exhibited their ruthless prowess against Al Taawoun. While the match was anticipated to be closely contested, Luis Castro's team demonstrated their true quality with a convincing 4-1 triumph. Ronaldo, who delivered an impressive performance, secured a well-deserved goal in the 92nd minute. After the game, the elated Portuguese player shared on Instagram, and it appears he's nowhere near 'finished'. The goal against Al Taawoun brings the football icon's tally to 20 goals in 18 league matches. Ronaldo concludes the year as the league's leading goal-scorer, a remarkable feat considering his age of 38. After the triumph over Al Taawoun, the Portuguese star turned to social media to express his thoughts. The caption for his post read: "54 - I'll say when it's finished! Thanks, team!" Here, 54 refers to the number of goals that Ronaldo managed to score in the calendar year. It seems like he wants to put to bed all the rumours of his retirement. The star ends 2023 as the leading goalscorer in the year. Behind him are Harry Kane & Kylian Mbappe with 52 each. A huge turnaround for a player who scored just 16 goals in 2022. If he continues like this, there is no reason as to why CR7 can't continue to excel at the highest level. Upon moving to Saudi Arabia, the Portuguese boldly proclaimed the Saudi top-flight would become one of the top-five leagues in the world. "I'm happy because when I made the decision to come here nobody believe what I said," the Portuguese told Saudi broadcaster SSC Sport. "But that is the past. It doesn't matter anymore, the most important is that the league has grown and that players want to come because they know the league is competitive and the whole world is watching now," he added. Previously, the Portuguese icon stated his desire to secure at least five titles with Al Nassr before retiring. Therefore, it appears that the five-time Ballon d'Or winner isn't considering retirement in the near future. This sentiment aligns precisely with that of his Portuguese teammate. - Agencies

Terrorists
attempting
to infiltrate
Pak-Afghan
border...

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the IBO on the night of Dec 30 and Dec 31 over the reported presence of terrorists. "During the conduct of the operation, after intense fire exchange between own troops and the terrorists, five terrorists were sent to hell," it said. The terrorists' hideout was also busted and a cache of arms, ammunition and explosives was recovered, the ISPR said, adding that a sanitisation operation was being carried out to eliminate other terrorists in the area. "The security forces of Pakistan, in step with the nation, remain determined to thwart attempts of sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan," the statement concluded. Pakistan has witnessed an uptick in terror activities in recent months, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, after the banned militant Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan ended its ceasefire with the government last year.

Govt has
nothing to
do with...

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The caretaker government had nothing to do with the acceptance or rejection of nomination papers which was part of the constitutional process, the minister said while speaking in a Television (TV) talk show of the private media. "Only the Election Commission has authority to decide on election-related matters," the minister stressed. He said the caretaker government was committed to assist the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in providing financial and administrative support to the electoral watchdog for the elections. Solangi said an amount of Rs17.4 billion had been released to the Election Commission of Pakistan in addition to Rs10 billion which was released earlier for holding elections.

Third phase
of polls
kicks off

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can be filed against the returning officers (ROs) decision to reject or accept the nomination papers of the contesting candidates. The embattled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) which suffered a major blow as the nomination papers of their top leaders failed to sail through the scrutiny process is expected to file appeals before the appellate tribunals against the rejection on "flimsy grounds". Those candidates whose nomination papers were rejected can appeal the ROs decision by January 3 which will be decided upon by the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) appellate tribunals by January 10. Following that, the ECP will publish the revised list of candidates on January 11 and candidates contesting the polls will be allotted electoral symbols on January 13. Among 24 judges, nine judges will act as tribunals in Punjab, followed by six in Sindh, five in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and two each in Balochistan and the federal capital.

Fzal remains
unhurt in
convoy...

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Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. "There is no police in Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, and Lakki Marwat. Can the polls be staged in this situation of unrest?" the senior politician wondered while addressing a press conference in Islamabad on December 5. Fazl's remarks came after the Supreme Court of Pakistan ordered the caretaker government to ensure timely elections warning against any delay in the polls slated for February 8, 2024. The party has suffered major losses due to being in the crosshairs of banned outfits over the years. In September, senior JUI-F leader Hafiz Hamdullah was injured in a blast - that wounded 10 others - in Balochistan's Mastung area.

Rafael Nadal loses
comeback doubles
match in Brisbane

BRISBANE: Spanish superstar Rafael Nadal's first match back after a 12-month injury layoff ended in defeat when he and doubles partner Marc Lopez went down to Australian pair Jordan Thompson and Max Purcell on Sunday. The Australian duo were too consistent, winning their Brisbane International first-round match 6-4, 6-4 on Pat Rafter Arena. Nadal looked sharp on the court and appeared to have no issues with his movement after the long lay-off for a hip problem. He takes to the singles court on Tuesday against former US Open champion Dominic Thiem of Austria. Prior to the match, Rafael Nadal left the door ajar to continue after the 2024 season but conceded there was "a high percentage" that he was on his last trip as a player to Australia. Speaking ahead of his comeback from a 12-month injury absence at the season-opening Brisbane International, the 37-year-old Spaniard said he did not know for sure what the future held. "The problem about saying that's going to be my last season is I can't predict what's going on 100 percent in the future," he said. "That's why I say 'probably'. It's obvious it's a high percentage that it's going to be my last time playing here in Australia. "But if I am here next year, don't tell me, 'You said it was going to be your last season', because I didn't say it. "You never know what's going on, you know? I can't predict how I'm going to be in the next six months. - Agencies

Stephens
into Brisbane
second round

BRISBANE: Former US Open champion Sloane Stephens battled into the second round of the season-opening Brisbane International with a hard-fought 7-5, 6-3 win over Katerina Siniakova on Sunday. Stephens, who reached a career-best ranking of three in 2018, broke her Czech opponent once in each set to book a second-round clash against 13th seeded Belgian Elise Mertens. "It was obviously a good match," Stephens said. "It's always really tough starting the year - you just don't really know what's going to happen, so I think being able to come here and get a win was really nice. "I'm really proud of that performance." In other first-round matches, there were wins for Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk over Romanian Ana Bogdan and Italian Camilla Giorgi, who beat American Peyton Stearns. - Agencies

Australia unveil 13-member
squad for Sydney Test

SYDNEY: Cricket Australia (CA) announced their 13-member squad for the third Test against Pakistan, which is scheduled to commence on January 3, 2024 at Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG). Australia have made no changes to their squad from the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne, which they won and sealed the series 2-0. The enthralling Boxing Day Test between Pakistan and Australia concluded on the fourth day when Pakistan, in pursuit of 317, bumbled out on 237 in the second innings. The touring side was at one stage in a comfortable position to seal a historic victory when they required a further 100 runs with five wickets in hand. However, Mohammad Rizwan's debated dismissal

off Pat Cummins opened the floodgates for Pakistan and they collapsed from 219/5 to 237 all out. Notably, the Sydney Test will witness the final appearance of David Warner in Test cricket, as confirmed by Australian chief selector George Bailey. "We look forward to celebrating David Warner's final Test match and his incredible career at his home ground," said Bailey. **Australia Test squad:** Pat Cummins (c), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Mitch Marsh, Steve Smith, Mitch Starc, David Warner. - DNA

NZ win third T20I to square series with BD
Mitchell Santner took four wickets as they beat Bangladesh by 17 runs in a rain-affected third and final Twenty20 international

SPORTS DESK

MOUNT MAUNGANUI: New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner took four wickets as they beat Bangladesh by 17 runs in a rain-affected third and final Twenty20 international on Sunday to draw the series 1-1. After dismissing the tourists for 110 in Mount Maunganui, New Zealand's top-order collapsed to 49-5 before Jimmy Neesham and Santner recovered to reach 95-5 off 14.4 overs. When heavy rain halted play, the Black Caps were comfortably ahead of the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) target, thanks largely to an unbeaten 28 from all-rounder Neesham. The result denied Bangladesh a first series victory on New Zealand soil in any format, having lost the preceding ODI series 2-1. "Our bowlers did the job up front keeping them to 110 and it's good to get across the line in what's been a pretty tough-fought series," Santner said. "It

got quite tight in the end today. Credit to Bangladesh, their bowlers have bowled extremely well. They put us under some real pressure again."



After asking Bangladesh to bat first on a lively Bay Oval pitch, Santner claimed 4-16 off his four overs, stifling an innings that was already struggling at 41-3 when he was

introduced. Seamers Tim Southee, Adam Milne and Ben Sears all took two wickets. Milne (2-23) removed Bangladesh captain and top-scorer Najmul Hossain Shanto for 17 when he skied a full-pitched delivery to point. Shanto rued the fact that he and four other Bangladesh batsmen reached double figures, but all failed to convert into a substantial score. "The bowlers did a great job but the batsmen didn't get runs today," he said. "In T20s the top of the order is very important. Our batsmen got starts, like 15 or 17, but they're not taking the game deep." Four of New Zealand's top order were dismissed for one run and when Finn Allen followed after scoring 38, Neesham held the innings together as the storm clouds gathered, with solid support from Santner who was unbeaten on 18. Seam bowler Shoriful Islam took 2-17 off 3.4 overs. Bangladesh won the first game in Napier on Wednesday by five wickets, before Friday's second match was abandoned after 11 overs because of rain in Mount Maunganui.

Briefs

Venezuelan troops stay until British vessel departs

MEXICO CITY: Venezuela said Saturday it will continue to deploy nearly 6,000 troops until a British military vessel sent to neighboring Guyana leaves the waters off the coast of the two South American nations. In a video posted to X, Venezuelan Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino appeared surrounded by military officers in front of a marked up map of Venezuela and Guyana, a former British colony. Padrino said the forces are "safeguarding our national sovereignty." "Armed forces have been deployed not just in the east of the country, but across the entire territory," he said. "They will be there until this British imperialist boat leaves the disputed waters between Venezuela and Guyana." The Defense Ministry confirmed to The Associated Press that the video was made at a military base in Venezuela's capital, Caracas. The video comes after weeks of tensions between the two countries over Venezuela's renewed claim to a region in Guyana known as Essequibo, a sparsely populated stretch of land roughly the size of Florida that is rich in oil and minerals. Operations generate some \$1 billion a year for the impoverished country of nearly 800,000 people that saw its economy expand by nearly 60 percent in the first half of this year. Venezuela has long argued it was cheated out of the territory when Europeans and the US set the border. —APP

Ukraine exports 13 million tons via black sea

KYIV: Ukraine has exported about 13 million tons of merchandise on some 400 ships since setting up a protected maritime corridor in August to fend off Russian threats, a government minister said Saturday. While Ukraine had few military achievements on land in 2023, on the Black Sea it has pushed Russia's much larger navy away from its coasts, allowing the resumption of grain exports. Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov said he was "grateful" to Ukraine's international partners "for ensuring the operation of the Corridor in conditions of military aggression." The corridor was created in August to link Ukraine's ports to the Bosphorus Straits, several weeks after Moscow refused to agree on a new accord to allow cereal exports through the contested Black Sea. The now-defunct accord had allowed Ukraine to export nearly 33 million tons of cereals and other foodstuffs over a year. The sea route is particularly important now because several land border crossings have been blocked in recent months by Polish trucks unhappy with Ukrainian competition. —APP

Somalia and Somaliland agree to restart stalled dialogue

MOGADISHU : Somalia and the breakaway region of Somaliland have agreed to resume dialogue to resolve outstanding issues, after long-running political tensions and years of deadlock. The deal signed on Friday followed two days of talks mediated by Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh, the first of their kind since 2020 when similar negotiations stalled. "After lengthy discussions, the two sides have agreed to resume the process of talks... with the focus on issues of national interest to reach a sustainable solution," said a joint statement published by the Somali presidency. The northern region has been seeking full statehood since claiming independence from Somalia in 1991, a move fiercely opposed by Mogadishu and not recognised internationally. Somaliland has often been seen as a beacon of stability in the chaotic Horn of Africa region, although political tensions surfaced there earlier this year, spilling over into deadly violence. —Agencies

CDA, Niaz support distribute wheelchairs to disabled

CDA, Niaz support join forces for wheelchair distribution to empower disabled individuals in Islamabad Ceremony

DNA

ISLAMABAD : With the collaboration of CDA Mazdoor Union (CBA) and Niaz Support, the ceremony regarding distribution of wheelchairs to disabled people was held at the Central Chairman Office, Sector G-7/4. Member Administration Talat Mahmood was the chief guest of the ceremony. CDA Director General Admin Aamir Khalil, Director Admin Fayyaz Ahmed Watto, Representatives of Niaz Support Air Commodore Syed Ahmer Raza, Mujtaba Haider, Hammad Malik, General Secretary CDA Mazdoor Union Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, Aurangzeb Khan, Sufi Mahmood Ali, Ali Asghar Mani Butt, Mirza Saeed Akhtar, Asad Mahmood, Muhammad Sarfraz Malik and hundreds of CDA employees also participated. Speaking at the event, Chief Organizer of All Disabled Alliance CDA, Mirza Kahil Ahmed, Syed Nadeem Haider Shah and others said that we are deeply grateful to CDA Mazdoor Union and Niaz Support who or-



ganized the program for disabled people and provided them with wheelchairs on this occasion. We are thankful to the General Secretary of CDA Mazdoor Union Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin and Niaz Support Founder Hussain Odhwani, Retd. Air Commodore

Syed Ahmer Raza, Mujtaba Haider, Hammad Malik and their entire team. Speaking closely, General Secretary of CDA Mazdoor Union Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin said that now a days specially qualified people are performing outstanding services in different

fields of life all over the world and are shining the iron of their abilities. The union is a representative organization of workers whose aim is to serve workers regardless of color, race and religion. In sha Allah very soon all the problems of disabled people will be

solved on priority basis. On this occasion, he demanded the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the relevant government institutions to ensure the implementation of the quota allocated for the disabled and solve their problems with the implementation of the existing laws regarding the disabled and special persons. Legislation should be enacted to provide free technical and educational training to disabled persons so that they can perform their duties efficiently in daily life. Speaking at the event, Member Administration of CDA Talat Mahmood said that special and disabled people have immense abilities and if they are given opportunities, they can play an important role in the construction and development of the country. Along with providing better facilities to the citizens, pay attention to the special people of the institution and solve their problems on a priority basis. Patron General Zamurrad Khan and DG Admin Amir Khalil announced to donate ten customised wheelchairs on their behalf.

Kim seeking reunification with S.Korea a 'mistake'

NEWS DESK

PYONGYANG : North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said he would no longer seek reconciliation and reunification with South Korea, state media reported. I believe that it is a mistake that we should no longer make to consider the people who declare us as the 'main enemy'... as someone to seek reconciliation and unification with," the official news agency cited Kim as saying at a year-end party meeting. On other hand, KCNA reported on Sunday that Pyongyang plans to launch three more spy satellites in 2024 as part of an effort to strengthen its military. Kim says Pyongyang has now ruled out the possibility of unifying with South Korea, adding the country must fundamentally change

its principle and direction towards South Korea. The task of launching three additional reconnaissance satellites in 2024 was declared "as one of the key policy decisions for next year at a year-end party meeting, the official KCNA said. The plan was laid out as part of Kim's address to the meeting, in which he said the country has no choice but to press forward with his nuclear ambitions and forge deeper ties with anti-US countries as Pyongyang is facing unprecedented confrontational moves by the US, a reference that likely includes Russia. Regional tensions North Korea says it successfully launched its first military spy satellite on November 21, transmitting photos of the White House, the Pentagon, US military bases and "target regions" in

South Korea. That successful launch was preceded by two failed attempts last year when its new Chollima-1 rocket crashed into the sea. The move raised regional tensions and sparked fresh sanctions from the U.S., Australia, Japan and South Korea. Pyongyang has yet to release any imagery from the new satellite, leaving analysts and foreign governments to debate its capabilities. The apparent success also came after Russian President Vladimir Putin promised to help North Korea build satellites. South Korean officials said Russian aid likely made a difference in the success of the mission, though experts said it was unclear how much help Moscow could have provided. MILITARY TECHNOLOGY

In the past year, North Korea says it successfully launched its first military spy satellite and test fired new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) seen as having the range to deliver a nuclear warhead to anywhere in the United States. A new reactor at North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear complex appears to be operating for the first time, the UN nuclear watchdog and independent experts said this month, which would mean an additional potential source of plutonium for nuclear weapons. North Korea has not tested a nuclear weapon since 2017 but in recent years has taken steps to resume operations at its testing site. Kim said 2024 would see further military development, including strengthening the nuclear and missile forces, building unmanned drones, expanding the submarine fleet and developing electronic warfare capabilities.

UN resumes Rohingya rations amid malnutrition

DHAKA: The UN's World Food Programme will increase food rations for all Rohingya in Cox's Bazar on Monday, months after severe aid cuts led to a rise in malnutrition in the refugee camps. WFP reduced food assistance to the Rohingya by 33 percent earlier this year to \$8 a month per person, citing a lack of funding, despite malnutrition being already widespread in the Cox's Bazar camps. "The year 2023 was a tumultuous one for the Rohingya in Bangladesh, who lived through multiple fire outbreaks, cyclones, and, for the first time, ration cuts. The rapid deterioration of the food and nutrition situation in the camps is extremely worrying," said Dom Scalpelli, WFP country director in Bangladesh. WFP's food assistance was cut twice in 2023, first in March when the value was reduced from \$12 to \$10, and again in June, when it was slashed to \$8. The UN body announced on Sunday that it will restore the critical food assistance to \$10 per person per month from Jan. 1, 2024. To restore aid to the full amount, WFP said it needs \$61 million to fill the current funding gap. Malnutrition was a major problem in Cox's Bazar even before the ration cut, with around 40 percent of children under 5 chronically malnourished, and 12 percent acutely malnourished. "We have noticed a sharp increase in cases of severe acute malnutrition and moderate acute malnutrition among the Rohingya," Dr. Abu Toha Bhuyan, health coordinator with Bangladesh's Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission, told Media reporters. —APP

Russia jails 200+ captured Ukrainian fighters: Lavrov

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: Russian courts have sentenced more than 200 Ukrainian fighters to prison terms since Moscow started its military operation in Ukraine, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in an interview with the state RIA news agency published on Sunday. "The courts of the Russian Federation have already sentenced more than 200 representatives of Ukrainian armed formations to long terms of imprisonment for committing atrocities," Lavrov told RIA. Both sides accuse each other of committing numerous atrocities in the war that Russia started with a full-scale invasion on Ukraine in February 2022. The United Nations has found continued evidence of war crimes and human rights violations committed by Russian authorities, including torture, rape and the deportation of children. In March, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin, alleging Moscow's forcible deportation of Ukrainian children is a war crime. "On our path to justice, the main result of the year is undoubtedly the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court for Putin," Ukraine's Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin said in a statement on Saturday, summing up 2023. "A historic decision and a clear signal that no one can be above the law." The Ukraine Prosecutor General's office has registered more than 121,000 Russian crimes of aggression and war crimes since the war started, according to its website.



ISLAMABAD: A worker is busy in making the wooden crates for keeping fruits outside Fruit and Vegetables Market in Federal Capital.—ONLINE

The Issue of Unemployment in Pakistan

KOMAL ASLAM



Many young people not having jobs is a big problem in the world. This is also a challenge in Pakistan right now. To solve this, we need to look at the main reasons for it and find ways to help young people get jobs. This will not only benefit them but also help the country grow economically and socially. The lack of good education and job skills is a big reason why young people can't find work. This is a serious problem because it can lead to hopelessness and misery. A report says that one-third

of young people in Pakistan are unemployed. Even those who are educated are having a hard time finding jobs that match their qualifications. Many people apply for jobs, but there are not enough positions available. This can lead to frustration and, in some cases, involvement in crime. High unemployment rates also make young people vulnerable to crime groups. Some end up working in dangerous conditions or being forced into illegal activities. The situation is made worse by inflation and a lack of opportunities. The government needs to take action to lower inflation, stabilize the currency, and provide better education and job training for young people. This will help create more opportunities and reduce stress. Population growth also needs to be managed, taking lessons from other countries like Iran and Bangladesh. Empowering women in the workforce is crucial for economic progress. The current economic situation discourages people from starting their own busi-

nesses. Encouraging startups and providing a good environment for them is important for creating jobs. Innovative solutions, like focusing on the gig economy and supporting startups, can help address unemployment. Technical skills should be a priority for young people to improve their job prospects. The mismatch between job requirements and skills needs to be addressed through better education and training. Youth unemployment is a big social problem that can lead to crimes, homelessness, drug addiction, and family tension. It also negatively impacts the economy by reducing consumption and investment. Managing population growth, empowering women, and supporting entrepreneurship are key steps to improve the situation. Many young people in Pakistan don't have jobs, and this is causing big problems for the country. There are different reasons for this issue. First, the government doesn't have enough money to spend

on creating jobs, especially for young people. Also, the number of young people looking for jobs is increasing, but there aren't enough opportunities. The lack of funds, slow economic growth, and problems with infrastructure make it even harder to create new jobs. As the population grows, there are fewer chances for young people to find work. This makes competition for jobs very tough, and many young people struggle to find good jobs. This unemployment issue affects both rural and urban areas in Pakistan. The future of the country and its progress are at risk because many young people can't find work. Pakistan has a lot of young people, around 62 million, but about half of them don't have jobs. This is one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in the world. One reason for this is that not many people in Pakistan have formal education only 43%. Because of this, many young people can't find jobs that match their skills and qual-

ifications. The lack of good education and training programs also means that young people don't have the skills they need for many jobs. This leads to long-term unemployment, where people can't find meaningful work. Pakistan's economy is not doing well, and there isn't much money to create new jobs. The country also has a weak job market with low wages and job security. Many young people end up in poorly paid and insecure jobs that don't provide enough for them or their families. The informal sector, which is not well-regulated, doesn't offer good job opportunities for young people either. Political problems in the country make it harder for businesses to grow and invest, creating even fewer job opportunities. Many young people also lack resources like money, technology, and mentors to help them find good jobs. The government's lack of investment in key areas like industry and agriculture also means fewer job possibilities. Another big issue is that many

young people can't get loans or money to start their own businesses. The country's financial sector is not well-developed, making it hard for young people to become entrepreneurs. Another big issue is that many young people can't get loans or money to start their own businesses. The country's financial sector is not well-developed, making it hard for young people to become entrepreneurs. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has made things worse by causing many companies to close down, leading to more job losses. There are many reasons why young people in Pakistan don't have jobs, including a lack of education, political problems, and economic issues. To fix this, the government needs to address the root causes and find ways to create more jobs. Pakistan should also encourage international investors to come to the country and create more job opportunities. Prioritizing education and job possibilities for young people is crucial for a better economic future in Pakistan.

Aust thunderstorms raise risk of flash flooding

SYDNEY : Parts of Australia's east face severe thunderstorms for the second straight day on Sunday, the weather bureau has warned, with heavy rains raising the risk of dangerous flash flooding. In the last 24 hours, a wild weather system across the southeastern regions of Queensland and northern New South Wales has produced torrential rains, hailstones as big as 5cm (2 inches) and wind gusts close to 100kph (62mph). The rural town of Beerburrum in Queensland's Sunshine Coast region picked up 127mm (5 inches) of rain, roughly a month's average. A local resident cleans up after storm damage in Oxenford on the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia, on December 28, 2023. Photo: EPA-EFE "Yet another day of severe thunderstorms is on the way... with the storm risk becoming more extensive throughout the first week of 2024," Miriam Bradbury, a forecaster at the Bureau of Meteorology. Some parts of Queensland will receive "locally intense rainfall which will lead to flash flooding", she said. Federal Emergency Management Minister Murray Watt said the government would deploy up to 70 military veterans and retired emergency service workers across southeast Queensland to assist with the clean-up efforts from recent storms. —Agencies

Congo opposition demands protests and rerun

KINSHASA : A group of opposition presidential candidates in the Democratic Republic of Congo asked supporters on Sunday to take to the streets to protest after provisional results of the disputed election are released. Congo's election commission is due on Sunday to release full provisional results from the Dec. 20 presidential election. The opposition has alleged widespread irregularities, which they say have enabled fraud. "We categorically reject the sham elections... and its results," the main opposition candidates said in a joint declaration. They demanded fresh elections be held with a new electoral body on a date to be agreed by all. "We call on our people to take to the streets en masse after the proclamation of the electoral fraud," it said. The government of Congo had previously rejected calls for a rerun of the elections. Logistical setbacks, an election day overrun, and an opaque vote-count have fueled a dispute that threatens to further destabilize a country roughly the size of Western Europe and the world's top producer of cobalt and other prized industrial commodities. A tally of votes released by the national election commission, known as the CENI, in the past week shows President Felix Tshisekedi with a commanding lead over his 18 challengers, with more than 72% of around 17.8 million. —APP

Briefs

PML-N bigwigs come 'face to face'

DNA
LAHORE: During the parliamentary board meeting held on Saturday, two senior leaders of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) engaged in a heated argument in an attempt to secure the party ticket from the National Assembly constituency in Lahore. Sources claimed that PML-N stalwarts Sheikh Rohail Asghar and Ayaz Sadiq engaged in a contentious debate over the party ticket for the NA-121 seat. PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif presided over a meeting of the PML-N's parliamentary board on Saturday in Lahore to select the names of candidates seeking party tickets. Other party officials, including Maryam Nawaz, the chief organiser of the PML-N, also attended the meeting. Sheikh Rohail was adamant before the party leadership, demanding the ticket from the constituency saying that it was his home ground. Former speaker of the National Assembly Sadiq was also a candidate for the party ticket from the same constituency.

FBR collects over Rs 1 trl revenue in a single month

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has created history by collecting Rs.1021 Billion in December 2023 and after adjusting refunds of Rs.38 billion issued during the month, reached net collection of Rs.984 billion. Targets for the month as well as for the first six months of the current financial year were also surpassed, said a news release here on Sunday. The target for the first six months was Rs.4425 billion (as agreed with IMF), which was surpassed by 43 billion and recorded a collection of Rs.4468 billion. FBR in the corresponding six months of the previous year collected Rs.3428, thus registering an increase of more than Rs 1 trillion. This is despite the fact that refunds of Rs.230 billion have been issued against Rs.177 billion during the corresponding period of the previous year and continuous import compression. Contraction in imports continues to impede revenues collected at the import stage. In the past, the revenue mix at the import stage and domestic taxes used to be 50:50. This has now changed to 36:64 and FBR has absorbed the entire impact of import compression through raising more revenues domestically.

Balochistan 330 lives lost in 2023

2023 was a year of bloodshed, fear in Balochistan

DNA
QUETTA: The year 2023 etched a grim picture in Balochistan, marred by a surge in terrorist attacks that claimed the lives of 330 people, including 149 security personnel, and injured 467 others. These staggering official statistics paint a stark reality of the challenges faced by the province in its relentless fight against terror. The victims included 139 officials and 191 civilians, martyred in various incidents, while those injured included 174 security officials. The year witnessed a record rise in attacks on civilians, police, and security forces, including the Frontier Corps (FC). Banned outfits like the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) were responsible for a significant portion of the violence, claiming responsibility for 178 and 150 attacks, respectively, as per the Counter-Terrorism Department. TTP also added to the unrest, carrying out 31 attacks in the province.

At UNSC, Russia accuses Kyiv of 'terrorist' attack on Belgorod

Kremlin said Russian President Vladimir Putin had been briefed on the situation, and that the country's health minister, Mikhail Murashko, was ordered to join a delegation of medical personnel and rescue workers traveling to Belgorod from Moscow

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: Russia accused Ukraine on Saturday of conducting a "terrorist attack" on civilians in Belgorod and using widely prohibited cluster munitions, making the claim during an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council requested by Moscow. Shelling in the center of the Russian border city of Belgorod Saturday killed 21 people, including three children, local officials reported. A further 110 people were wounded in the strike, said regional governor Vyacheslav Gladkov, making it one of the deadliest attacks on Russian soil since the start of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine 22 months ago. Russian authorities accused Kyiv of carrying out the attack, which took place the day after an 18-hour aerial bombardment across Ukraine killed at least 41 civilians. Fresh strikes Saturday caused more casualties in the northeastern city of Kharkiv, Ukrainian officials said. Images of Belgorod on social media showed burning cars and plumes of black smoke rising among damaged buildings as air raid sirens sounded. One strike hit close to a public ice rink in the very heart of the city, which lies 40 kilometers north of the Ukrainian border and 670 kilometers south of Moscow. While previous attacks have hit the city, they have rarely taken place in daylight and have claimed fewer lives. Russia's Defense Ministry said it identified the ammunition used in the strike as Czech-made Vampire rockets and Olkha missiles fitted with cluster-munition warheads. It

provided no additional information, and The Associated Press was unable to verify its claims. "This crime will not go unpunished," the ministry said in a statement on social media. The Kremlin said Russian President Vladimir Putin had been briefed on the situation, and that the country's health minister, Mikhail Murashko, was ordered to join a delegation of medical personnel and rescue workers traveling to Belgorod from Moscow. As Russia's emergency situations ministry issued a statement updating the Belgorod toll, a UN Security Council meeting called by Moscow to discuss the attacks got underway in New York. It was "a terrorist attack by the Kyiv regime against a civilian city," Russia's ambassador to the UN Vasily Nebenzya said. "In order to increase the number of casualties of the terrorist attack they used cluster munitions," Nebenzya continued, claiming that Kyiv targeted a sports center, an ice rink and a university. "It was a deliberate, indiscriminate attack against a civilian target." "UN Security Council members have an opportunity to do their duty and assess the damage done to a Russian city, Belgorod," Nebenzya added, holding up a QR code linking to what he said was video of the attack's aftermath. Ukrainian allies quickly retorted, saying Russia had started the war. Ukraine's ambassador to the UN Serhiy Dvornyk said that "as long as this war, unleashed by the Kremlin dictator, endures the toll of death and suffering will continue to grow." "As Ukraine is still recovering from yesterday's horrendous strikes, new raids of Russian terror persist. Just hours ago... Russia again terrorized Kharkiv with its

S-300 missiles hitting a residential area." The US representative John Kelly also put the blame squarely on Russian President Vladimir Putin. "This is (Putin's) war, it is his choice," he said. "Russia could end this war today... We call for the protection of all civilians on all sides of every conflict." The British envoy Thomas Phipps said London "deeply" regrets any civilian losses, but also called out Moscow for having started the war with an invasion two years ago. "There are hundreds of thousands of Russian soldiers in Ukraine. There is not a single Ukrainian soldier in Russia," he said. "If Russia wants someone to blame for the deaths of Russians in this war, it should start with President Putin." Phipps likewise said that Russia was the side to blame for targeting non-combatants, saying: "After having failed to to defeat Ukraine militarily, Russia has now turned to indiscriminate attacks on civilians." The French envoy Nicolas de Riviere said Ukraine was simply defending itself under UN laws, while Moscow was "trampling" over the UN Charter. Ukraine, which has been resisting a Russian invasion for nearly two years and earlier this week came under a huge Russian missile and drone assault, has not officially commented on the strike against Belgorod. "As the war continues we will see more Ukrainian and Russian civilians killed," said UN assistant secretary-general Mohamed Khari, warning there were "very real dangers of escalation and spillover of this war." West to blame. Speaking to Russia's state news agency, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Britain and the United States were guilty of encourag-

ing Kyiv to carry out what she described as a "terrorist attack." She also placed blame on EU countries who had supplied Ukraine with weapons. "Silence in response to the unbridled barbarity of Ukraine's Nazis and their puppeteers and accomplices from 'civilized democracies' will be akin to complicity in their bloody deeds," the ministry said in a statement. Earlier Saturday, Moscow officials reported shooting down 32 Ukrainian drones over the country's 32 Ukrainian regions, Bryansk, Oryol, and Kursk regions. They also reported that cross-border shelling had killed two other people in Russia. A man died and four other people were wounded when a missile struck a private home in the Belgorod region late Friday evening and a 9-year-old was killed in a separate incident in the Bryansk region. Cities across western Russia have come under regular attack from drones since May, with Russian officials blaming Kyiv. Ukrainian officials never acknowledge responsibility for attacks on Russian territory or the Crimean Peninsula. However, larger aerial strikes against Russia have previously followed heavy assaults on Ukrainian cities. Russian drone strikes against Ukraine continued Saturday, with the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces reporting that 10 Iranian-made Shahed drones had been shot down across the Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, and Mykolaiv regions. Local officials reported that three people had been killed by Russian missiles: a 55-year-old man in the Kherson region, a 43-year-old man in Stepnohirska, a town in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region, and a 32-year-old in the Chernihiv region.

President felicitates Nation, Muslim Ummah on new year

DNA
ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Sunday felicitated the Pakistani Nation, the Muslim Ummah and the international community at the beginning of the new year 2024. In a message, he said, "I would like to extend my heartfelt felicitations to the entire Pakistani Nation, the Muslim Ummah and the international community at the beginning of the new year." "As we bid farewell to the passing year and welcome the dawn of a new year, I pray to Allah Almighty that may the coming year bring prosperity, political and economic stability for Pakistan as well as the entire world." "At beginning of the new year, we should not forget our brothers and sisters in Palestine who continue to face the brutal and barbaric attacks at the hands of Israeli forces." He urged the international community to take urgent steps to stop genocide in Gaza and work for just and lasting peace in Palestine. "Similarly, my thoughts are with the people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, who have been enduring atrocities and the longest siege by the Indian occupation forces.

Imran assets increased manifold

DNA
LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's assets surged by more than Rs277.2 million in the past five years, DNA News reported on Sunday. In 2018, the former prime minister's assets were valued at Rs38.69 million. It was revealed in the asset details submitted by the PTI founder to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) while filing nomination papers for the general elections slated for February 8, 2024. Khan had filed his nomination papers from Lahore's NA-122 and Mianwali's NA-89 constituencies - both of which have been rejected by the electoral body. According to the nomination papers, the value of his assets in 2023 stands at more than Rs315.9 million. As per the details of assets mentioned in the documents, he inherited a house of 148 marlas in Zaman Park Lahore.



ISLAMABAD: President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sakib Rafiq, Group Leader Sohail Altaf and others greet the newly-elected President of the FPCCI Atif Ikram. - DNA

National security top priority, says Asim Munir

Says we stand with and pray for the resilient people of Palestine and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir and hope that the New Year will bring relief in their sufferings from Tyrannical regimes

RAWALPINDI: A challenging yet momentous year of 2023 is over. Pakistan Armed Forces wish a happy new year to the proud and honourable people of Pakistan. Year 2024 is of immense significance for Pakistan both internally & externally. Pakistan Armed Forces reinforce the patriotic spirit of serving the motherland, a land of immeasurable bounties and countless opportunities. Undoubtedly, our great nation will rise, in line with the dreams of our forefathers and aspirations of the people of Pakistan. Surely a bright future for the coming generations awaits us, InshaAllah. In line with the directive of the honourable PM of Pakistan, we stand with and pray for the resilient people of Palestine and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir and hope that the New Year will bring relief in their sufferings from Tyrannical regimes. Pakistan Army as a National Army will leave no stone unturned to contribute to the cause of national security and development. We take pride in our unwavering commitment to the people of Pakistan, said Army Chief General Asim Munir. - DNA

UK allows visa-free entry for several Islamic countries

LONDON: The United Kingdom government has announced to grant visa-free entry to travellers from various Arab countries from February 22 next year onwards. In a significant change to its visa policies, the UK intends to make entry easier for the residents of Jordan and all the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Citizens of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Jordan and Bahrain will not need visas for entry into the UK. They will just need an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) to enter the UK from February next year. Qatar's residents travelling to the UK are already using ETA since November 15, 2023. A statement released by the British government said the move towards an ETA system is poised to simplify the entry process, doing away with the necessity of obtaining a visit visa. Under this new system, tourists of all age groups will be required to electronically apply for a travel permit, priced at £10, which will then be issued for their travel purposes to last for two years. This strategic shift in visa regulations aims to streamline entry procedures, fostering smoother and more accessible travel for citizens of these nations intending to visit the United Kingdom. Earlier this year, the UK government announced plans to introduce a new ETA scheme as part of a digitisation of the UK border by 2025 to further enhance border security and the customer experience. An ETA is a digital permission to travel for those visiting or transiting through the UK who do not need a visa for short stays, or who do not currently hold another UK visa. - Agencies

Disqualified as my victory was assured, claims Rashid

FAISAL SHEIKH
RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, while addressing the media outside Lal Haveli on Sunday, asserted that while the country was sinking, a band of thieves was being put at the helm of power. "The biometric data of one thief was recorded at the Islamabad airport," he said in an indirect reference to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif. Regarding the rejection of his nomination papers, the former interior minister argued that he had been falsely accused of three charges. He emphasised that despite serving as a minister multiple times, he had never stayed at the Murree rest-house. According to Rashid, the returning officer informed him that he had not paid for his alleged stay. "All these charges are baseless," he asserted. Rashid pointed out that the Supreme Court not only declared the PTI founder honest and trustworthy but also bestowed the same accolades upon him. "I will live for the sake of truth. I will stand tall." The former minister disclosed that he had not yet received a copy of the rejection from the returning officer. He added that he learned about his ineligibility to contest the elections through television. Rashid urged what he referred to as "[the] higher authorities" to let the people choose their representatives, observing that the country was weakening economically and politically.

North Korea says it will launch three new spy satellites in 2024

PYONGYANG: North Korea plans to launch three more spy satellites next year as part of efforts to ramp up its military, the country's state media has said. Last month Pyongyang put a spy satellite into space - and claims it has since photographed major US and South Korean military sites. Setting out his aims for 2024, Kim Jong Un also said his dealings with South Korea would see "fundamental change". And he said he had no option but to press ahead with his nuclear ambitions. Speaking at an end-of-year meeting of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, Mr Kim said unification with South Korea was now no longer possible. He said Seoul treats his country as an enemy. It appears to be the first time Mr Kim has said such a thing and marks an official change in policy - although in practice there has been little prospect of unification for some years, with no progress and little effort being made. Relations between the two countries are in a poor state. Last month, following the spy satellite launch, Pyongyang ripped up a deal with Seoul that was aimed at lowering military tensions. North Korea also continued regular tests of its missiles throughout 2023 - and earlier this month fired its most advanced long-range missile, defying UN curbs. The launch of the intercontinental ballistic missile - which has the range to reach the North American continent - drew

immediate condemnation from the West. Meanwhile North Korea is unhappy over South Korea ramping up defence cooperation with the US, after a US submarine armed with nuclear weapons arrived in its waters. Following Mr Kim's comments on Sunday, South Korea's defence ministry condemned any plans to use nuclear weapons against Seoul. In a statement, the defence ministry said South Korea would retaliate "overwhelmingly", with the support of the US, "and the Kim Jong-Un regime will face its end". Speaking on Sunday, Mr Kim hit out at the US, saying, according to state media: "Because of reckless moves by the enemies to invade us, it is a fait accompli that a war can break out at any time on the Korean peninsula." He said South Korea had been transformed into a "forward military base and nuclear arsenal" of the US, and added: "If we look closely at the confrontational military actions by the enemy forces... the word 'war' has become a realistic reality and not an abstract concept." Mr Kim said 2024 would see more military development, including strengthening nuclear and missile forces and building drones. "We must respond quickly to a possible nuclear crisis and continue to accelerate preparations to pacify the entire territory of South Korea by mobilising all physical means and forces, including nuclear force, in case of emergency," he said. - Agencies

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